Making Peace (Peacemaking) in Uganda: Theological Underpinning and Pastoral Ministries

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MAKING PEACE (PEACEMAKING) IN UGANDA: THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING AND PASTORAL MINISTRIES

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By
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ABSTRACT

MAKING PEACE (PEACEMAKING) IN UGANDA: THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING AND PASTORAL MINISTRIES

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December 2010

Dissertation supervised by Dr. George Worgul

This dissertation is a study about peacemaking in Uganda. The people of Uganda have suffered from frequent, long running violent political conflicts for many decades. In particular, I focus on the war in northern Uganda that started in 1986 and gradually developed into the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement (LRA) war that is currently being led by Joseph Kony. The dissertation studies the causes of violent political conflicts in Uganda and tries to understand why Uganda as a country has never been stable politically, socially and economically since its’ independence in 1962.

The second and the most important aim of this work is to study the role of the Church in Uganda in the political conflicts that has rocked the country for so long. Going back to the founding of the Church in Uganda by the two main Churches,
namely the Anglican and the Catholic Churches, the dissertation assesses the achievements and the failures of the Churches in peace-building in Uganda. This work then calls upon the Churches to do more by correcting some of the mistakes made during the founding of Christianity in the country that has contributed to the current ongoing political instability in Uganda.

This work calls for unity between the two main Christian churches as a major step toward peace-building in Uganda. Disunity makes them preach a divided gospel and a divided Christ to the people of Uganda and therefore, it makes them fail to witness to Christ and to play their prophetic role as needed in the political instability that is destroying the people of Uganda.

The dissertation also studies the underpinning theological and pastoral reasons as to why the Church must be actively involved in peacemaking and peace-building in Uganda. The study goes back into the biblical roots of the Churches' peacebuilding mission on earth. Building on the Bible and on the teachings of the Church during Vatican Council II, and other Catholic social teachings, the dissertation calls upon the Church to seriously play its prophetic role to help bring peace in Uganda.
DEDICATION

To my dear deceased parents who have already gone before us into eternal peace (RIP). They were peace lovers and peace-building parents who taught me the first class about how to love and live in peace with other human beings. I also dedicate this work to all my siblings, and to all people of Uganda and to all other people who lost their lives due to the wars and political conflict in Uganda. And I finally dedicate this work to all peace lovers and peace-builders in Uganda and in a special way I dedicate this work to all the members and supporters of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiatives (ARLPI).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation is a true testimony of many blessings received, opportunity, and support from families, communities, mentors, individuals and many others. I am deeply grateful to God for the lives, wisdom, courage, and countless daily blessings through the different people I encountered that made the writing of this dissertation possible.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of my parents, Mr. Alfonse Okello (RIP) and Anna Lalam Okello (RIP) for the life, education and all the support they gave me. Their contribution was fundamental and upon that foundation this dissertation is built. I also would like to acknowledge the contribution of my entire family. Their prayers and other support made this work possible.

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I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my earlier teachers throughout my formal education beginning with my Primary Education, Minor Seminary Education and Major Seminary Education in Uganda. May God bless you because this dissertation is also the fruit of your contribution to me.

I am very grateful to the entire family of Duquesne University and in particular to the administration of the University for their invaluable contribution to my education that made this work possible. I also would like to acknowledge the contribution of the faculty of Liberal Arts and the Department of Theology for the excellent and caring Professors they have in the department. In particular I am very grateful to the Chair of Theology Department, Dr. George Worgul who is also my dissertation director, for his advice, critical insights, encouragement and organizational skills. I am equally grateful to my readers Rev. Dr. Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, C.S.Sp. and Rev. Sean P. Kealy, C.S.Sp. for their very critical and useful advices and comments.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS – Acta Apostolica Sedis

AFER – African Ecclesial Review

AMECEA – Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa

ARLPI – Acholi Religious Leader’s Peace Initiative

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CDA – Christian Democratic Army

CMS – Church Missionary Society

Co - Company

COU – Church of Uganda

CSSp – Congregatio Sancti Spiritus (Congregation of the Holy Spirit)

DP – Democratic Party

Dr – Doctor

Ed – Edited by or Editor

Eds - Editors

EDF – Equatorial Defense Force

Eg/eg – For Example
Et al – *Et allii* (Latin), and others

Etc – *et cetera* (Latin), and so forth

HSM – Holy Spirit Movement

HURIPEC – Human Rights and Peace Center

Ibid - *Ididem*, In the same place (in the same work just cited or immediately preceding).

ICC – International Criminal Court

IDP – Internally Displaced People/ Persons

IMF – International Monetary Fund

Inc - Incorporated

LRA – Lord’s Resistance Army

LSA – Lord’s Salvation Army

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization(s)

NIF – National Islamic Front

NRA – National Resistance Army

NRM – National Resistance Movement

p – page
pp – pages
Rev – Reverend
RIP – Rest in Peace
SCC – Small Christian Communities
SPLA – Sudanese People Liberation Army
SPLM – Sudanese People Liberation Movement
Trans – Translated by/translator
UCDA – Uganda Christian Democratic Army
UDHR – United Nations Declaration on Human Right
UJCC – Uganda Joint Christian Council
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNC – Uganda National Congress
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNLA – Uganda National Liberation Army
UPC – Uganda People’s Congress
UPDA – Uganda People’s Democratic Army
UPDF – Uganda People’s Defense Forces

UPM – Uganda Patriotic Movement

US(A) – United States (of America)

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

USCCB – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Vol/vols – Volume/volumes
MAP OF UGANDA
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the role of the Church in the wars and violent political conflicts that have rocked the Republic of Uganda since its foundation as a sovereign nation in 1962. I will study the achievements and the failures of the local Church in trying to make Uganda into a peaceful country. There is a strong pastoral need for educating the people of Uganda to coexist with one another peacefully. Wars, conflicts and violence have ravaged much of Uganda since Idi Amin’s military coup in 1971 to the guerrilla war that brought Yoweri Kaguta Museveni’s National Resistance Army/Movement to power in 1986. The most protracted of all the political conflicts that Ugandans have experienced is the ongoing war in northern Uganda which have raged on for about 22 years since 1986. Even as I write now no official peace agreement have been reached between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M) rebels.

The conflict has encompassed five distinct rebellions and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths mainly in the northern and eastern parts of Uganda. Furthermore, the war has displaced over 1.4 million people, and destroyed northern Uganda’s socio-economic and cultural structures. The protracted nature of the war has created new conflict dynamics, with many of the war’s horrific consequences – such as mass displacement, perceived war economy, and a military response that often fails to protect communities – having turned into reasons for its continuation. With the population blaming the conflicting parties for such suffering, the ensuing
lack of trust has led to intense three-way tensions between the LRA, the civilian population, and the Government of Uganda, turning both the rebels and the government soldiers against the civilians who are caught in between thus compromising intelligence gathering.

The current northern Uganda conflict can be traced to deeper issues that usually do not immediately surface when many people try to understand the wars in Uganda. There are root causes to recurring conflicts in Uganda which underlie the current war in northern Uganda and other rebellions that have been fought in Uganda. One of the main purposes of this dissertation is to investigate and discuss those root causes because they are critical since they have never been resolved and may continue to resurface and cause renewed conflict if left unaddressed. The absence of consensus on the core causes of the war partly explains why there is no clear consensus on how to end the war. Competing analyses of the causes of the conflict paralyzes conflict resolution efforts, as key actors lack a firm consensus on which issues to address in resolving the conflict. A more thorough investigation into the root causes is thus needed in order to find a comprehensive solution to the wars in Uganda.

A lot has been written by the Church in Uganda about the political instability in the country, especially the pastoral letters of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda, and also many non-governmental organizations as well as individual authors have written a lot about the wars and conflicts in Uganda. I will study those sources of information
and any other available ones to develop this dissertation. My theological and pastoral analysis of the situation in Uganda will come from the many theological writings in the library about the role of the Church in the modern world as well as in wars and conflict situations all around the world. As a Ugandan born and raised in the country during these conflicts, I will also draw on my personal experience and knowledge about the conflicts rocking my home land. I will develop this dissertation in five chapters.

Chapter one is going to introduce the study by first locating Uganda and briefly describing the people of Uganda for a reader who is not familiar with the country and the people. A greater part of the chapter will describe in details the wars, especially the ongoing war in northern Uganda which has turned out to be the longest and the most destructive conflict in the history of Uganda as a country. This chapter will discuss political instability in Uganda by analyzing the causes of the wars in two categories:

The first category will be – Long term causes (remote causes) of wars and political violence in Uganda. The first categories will include major causes of wars in Uganda such as such as: The impact of colonialism and partition of Africa in the political violence in Uganda, neo-patrimonialism, poverty as a result of dad national economic policy, ethnicity, tribalism and nepotism, a history of violence and impunity in Uganda, poor and in adequate education system, the evil of corruption
and the impact of early missionary evangelization of Uganda intertwined with the scramble for Uganda by the British and the French colonial governments.

The second category will be - Immediate causes that trigger wars because of long term causes that have been brewing for a while in the country. This category will include: Violation of peace agreements which are meant to bring conflicts to a peaceful end. For example, the 1985 violation of the Nairobi Peace Agreement between General Tito Okello's government and the then NRA/M rebels that brought Museveni to power. The violation of that peace accord turned out to be the trigger point of the now ongoing war in northern Uganda. The indiscipline of Ugandan army is also another immediate cause of wars in the country. In all the regimes since independence, the Ugandan army have been involved in many cases of indiscipline and criminal offences such killing of innocent people, rape looting and many more that have contributed to triggering more and more rebellion in the country.

In chapter two, I will discuss the role of the Church in the wars and conflict situation. I will examine both the positive and the negative contributions of the Church in the wars and conflicts in Uganda. I will analyze the strength and the weakness of the Church in Uganda, and its achievements and failures in educating the people of Uganda for justice and peace.
Beginning with the arrival of the missionaries in Uganda and the founding of Christianity in the country, this chapter will study the Church-State relations in Uganda and see how it impacts the Church’s prophetic and pastoral role in relation to the wars in the country. This chapter will also investigate to see if the Christian Churches are moving toward a reconciliatory, and ecumenical approach to the political problems of Uganda. I will discuss the work of the Uganda Joint Christian Council, and the ecumenical and inter-religious efforts of the religious leaders of northern Uganda towards ending the conflict in the country. I will also specifically study the peacemaking efforts of the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda.

I will also discuss the politicization of religious institutions, weak ecumenical efforts, lack of interreligious dialogue and inadequate empowerment of lay leadership as weaknesses of the local Church in playing its prophetic role effectively in Uganda.

In chapter, I will discuss what needs to be done concerning the situation in Uganda. This is the most challenging part of the dissertation because it deals with solutions. I will investigate ways and methods of resolving the wars and violent conflicts that has bedeviled Uganda since it independence. I will argue that the methods for resolving Uganda’s conflicts will include both secular and religious (State and Church) solutions. The solutions will be both proximate and long term just as the causes to the conflicts in are also both proximate and long term.

The short term solutions will include: Dialogue and reconciliation as an immediate strategy to ending the violence in Uganda. There is urgent need for the Church and
Government of Uganda to get actively involved in conflict resolution training of public leaders. They should conduct training seminars in community-building and conflict resolution for representatives at local and national levels, across line of religion, tribes, regions, culture, language, and class, to promote healing and reconciliation as well as social reconstruction. Among other solutions I will also discuss the need for good governance in order to reduce levels of violent political conflicts in the country, the need for an ecumenical approach to the Ugandan situation.

The long term solutions will require more time, patience and resources from the people of Uganda to accomplish. These solutions will include: civic education of the citizens in order to avoid ignorance of democratic principles, creating structures that will liberate the people of Uganda from poverty and injustice, peace education in schools as a strategy for long term peace and stability in the country, the role of the family in shaping a peaceful future for Uganda, working against corruption at all levels, and a fair distribution of national resources and services and equal opportunity for all the Ugandans. Sustainable development is an integral factor to making peace and maintaining justice in Uganda.

Chapter four will investigate the theology of the Church’s involvement in wars and conflict situations. This key chapter will study the underpinning theological and pastoral reasons as to why the Church should be actively involved in solving
conflicts in war situations. The Church has a divine and unique mission that requires it to get actively involved in the Ugandan situation.

Christian theology is rooted in the bible and so this investigation will be both biblical and theological in nature. I will study both the Old and New Testaments foundations for the theology of the Church’s peacemaking mission in the world. I will also discuss the official teaching of the Church about its peacemaking mission in the world, the papal teaching of John Paul II about the Church’s peacemaking mission in the world, and I will conclude with the central theological dimension of the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament of peace that calls upon the Church and all its members to take seriously in words and actions peacemaking mission all around the world.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter that will present and discuss some practical pastoral plans of actions as way forward that should be taken in an effort to make a positive change in Uganda’s situation of long running wars and conflicts. In this chapter I will argue that there is need for re-evangelization of Ugandan which may be referred to as new evangelization. This new evangelization of Uganda should be “reign focus.” This means that the local Church in Uganda should be fully aware that its mission is to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ, and this salvation should concern humanity in its entirety. This evangelization must emphasize to the people of Uganda the connection between evangelization and human promotion. For the
Church, to evangelize is to develop the human person in all the dimensions of his or her vocation as a child of God.

I will also discuss the importance of Catholic Bishops Conference and the role of national and diocesan offices of Justice and Peace Commissions as tools or weapons given to the Church by Vatican Council II to actively facilitate the Church's peacemaking mission in the modern world. The Bishops conference needs to work for peace hand in hand with a strong team of peace loving lay Christian leaders. This means that the Church must take seriously the formation of lay people as agents of peace-builders in Uganda. In connection to the formation of lay people, I will recommend that the Church in Uganda need to change it understanding and attitude towards politics. The Church has to embark on a prophetic mission of teaching the government of Uganda and the Ugandan people that politics is a holy mission and not a ‘dirty game.’

I will conclude this chapter by recommending political reform in areas of: respect for the rule of law, need for consensus regarding the rules of political game in Uganda, need for a fair political competition. This means leveling the political field for every Ugandan in order for the country to begin experiencing a free, fair and peaceful political competition. I will call for political inclusiveness in Uganda so as to avoid regional or tribal conflicts in the country. I will also discuss the fact that since Uganda’s independence, the military has been favored by all the presidents of
Uganda at the expense of the civil society. The time has come for Uganda as a people to avoid the danger of involving the military in Uganda’s politics and start empowering the civil society to take control of the affairs of the country.
CHAPTER ONE

Uganda and its' Wars: Why the Cycle of Armed Conflicts since its' Independence in 1962.

1.1 Uganda

The Republic of Uganda as it is now was forged by the British government between 1890 and 1926.¹ Uganda lies entirely between the two arms of the Great Rift Valley in East Africa. To the west, Uganda borders Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire). This border coincides with the western Rift Valley occupied from north to south by lakes Albert, Edward, George and Kivu. On the border with Congo there is, the Rwenzori mountain ranges, the highest point of which is called Mount Margherita and it is 5,119 meters high. Further south-west between Lake Edward and Lake Kivu, there is the active volcanic Muhavura range protruding from the Rift Valley to the height of 4,127 meters.²

In the north, Uganda borders the Sudan. The final demarcation of this northern border was fixed in 1914 giving the Lado enclave to the Sudan and transferring the region of West Nile from Belgian Congo to Uganda. To the east Uganda borders Kenya. Before 1902 the eastern

boundary had extended as far as Lake Turkana. Due to gradual adjustments by the British
who were ruling both Uganda and Kenya (then British East Africa) finally fixed the eastern
boundary of Uganda in its present position in 1926.³

To the south, Uganda borders Tanzania (formerly German East Africa). Boundary
adjustments in 1910 between the British, the Belgians and the Germans fixed the southern
limit of Uganda by including in Uganda, Kigezi region which was formerly part of Belgian
Congo and Bufumbira region which was formerly part of German East Africa. Kigezi region
was formerly part of Rwanda which together with Burundi and Tanganyika, formed
German East Africa.⁴

Generally, Uganda is land of plateaus though in some areas there are hills which are 200-
500 meters high. In most places the hills are heavily eroded. In the extreme west, the
ancient tabular areas still remain. The Equator crosses southern Uganda and the climate is
equatorial but moderated by altitude. On the northern shores of Lake Victoria, it rains
almost throughout the year. In the rest of the country, a dry season or two occur in a year.
“The highest temperatures occur on the Lake Albert flats while the lowest temperatures
occur on the glaciated zone of Mount Rwenzori.”⁵

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⁴ Ibid., p. 1.
⁵ Ibid., p. 1.
Much of the southern part of Uganda was formerly covered by equatorial forests but most of these have been cleared for human activities and settlement. This has occurred particularly around Lake Victoria but some forests still exist on the Sese Islands and in the swampy zones between Lake Victoria, Lake Kioga, Lake Albert and to the south of Lake Edward along the border with Congo. In the higher regions, the vegetation groups itself in levels such that thick forest with undergrowth of liana appears at the bottom on the lower slopes. Mountain forest extends to about 3200 meters and above this, there are bamboo groves and alpine prairie.6

1.2 The People of Uganda

The original inhabitants of the political territory which became known as Uganda are not definitively known. When the British arrived in Uganda at the beginning of the colonial era, there were over 30 ethnic groups with diverse political institutions in Uganda. These ethnic communities can be divided into four major categories: The Bantu, the Luo, the Atekerin and the Sudanic.

The Bantu occupy the southern half of the country and taken together, they constitute over 50 percent of Uganda’s total population. They comprise: the Baganda, the Banyoro, the Basoga, the Bagisu, the Bangankore, the Bakiga, the Bafumbira, the Batooro, the Bakonjo, the Sudanic.

6 Ibid., p. 1.
the Bamba, the Batwa, the Banyole, the Basamia-Bugwe and the Bagwere. Generally they occupy the central, west and southern Uganda.

The Luo are a part of the larger ethnic group in Africa known as the Nilotics. They are located throughout northern and parts of eastern Uganda: the Acholi and Langi live in northern Uganda, the Alur and Jonam live in the West Nile region of Uganda among the Sudanic communities, and the Kumam and the Jopadhola live in eastern Uganda among the Iteso and the Bantu-speaking peoples. The Luo group is said to have originated from Southern Sudan. They moved away from southern Sudan in the 15th century in search of new areas for settlement.

The Atekerin people (also known as the Para-Nilotic or the Nilo-Hamites), include the Karamojong, the Jie and the Iteso. They are located in the eastern and north-eastern part of Uganda.

The final category is the Sudanic-speaking peoples. They are located in the north-western corner of Uganda known as the West Nile region. This group comprises the Lugbara, the Okebu, the Bari, the Madi, the Kakwa, and the Metu. This group also originated from the Sudan.

\[\text{J.P. Crazzolara. } \text{The Lwoo – Part I – Lwoo Migrations.} \text{ Verona: Missioni Africane, 1950, p. 5.}\]

In his book Father Crazzolara explains clearly that the Luo people who are sometimes spelled as the Lwoo (including Crazzolara himself), are only one ethnic group that belong to the larger group called the Nilotics. The Nilotics means the people of the Nile. Thus all the different categories and ethnic groups of people living along the great Nile river from its source in lake Victoria in Uganda up to the Nile Delta in Egypt where the river enters the Mediterranean Sea are referred to as the Nilotics. However, due to migrations, some of the Luo moved a little far away from the Nile basin into other neighboring African countries such as the Luo in Kenya commonly known as the Ja-Luo. They are located in the Kisumu area of western Kenya around Lake Victoria all the way down south to the Musoma area of Tanzania. Another group of the Luo known as the Barabaig, are located in the south-western part of Arusha in Tanzania.
Despite this categorization, considerable integration has taken place in Uganda over the centuries. At present, it is difficult to clearly demarcate the confines of any one of the ethnicities described above. Colonialism, education, monetization, easy transport and urbanization have led to the break up or at least the loosening of cultural ties thus, leading to intermixtures and some inter-marriages which make it difficult to categorize, let alone demarcate the confines of different ethnicities of Uganda. However, cultural ties still bind people and though intermixing has happened on a large scale since colonialism, intermarriage is not very common and people still prefer to identify themselves by their different ethnic backgrounds. This has been one of the corner-stone of tribalism in post-colonial Uganda.

The main economic activities of pre-colonial Ugandan societies were pastoralism and agriculture. These were supplemented by fishing, hunting and other economic activities. The extended family was the basic social unit in every community and above the family were the patrilineal clans. In almost every pre-colonial Ugandan society most of the social and communal activities were carried out either at family or clan level. Before the advent of colonialism the various peoples of Uganda had developed a variety of different political systems. In southern and western Uganda more centralized kingdoms developed. In other parts of Uganda, smaller chiefdoms emerged.

1.3 The Wars (Political Conflicts) in Uganda
This is an overview of the political conflicts that have rocked Uganda since its independence in 1962. It is a fact that conflicts and violence have plagued much of Uganda since independence, from Idi Amin’s military coup in 1971 to the 14 insurgencies since Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Army/Movements (NRA/M) took power in 1986.\(^8\) The most protracted of these conflicts has been the ongoing war in the northern part of Uganda, which is now in its 23\(^{rd}\) year, encompassed five different rebellions and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths from north to eastern Uganda.\(^9\) Furthermore the war has displaced about two million people in northern and eastern Uganda and has destroyed northern Uganda's economic base, agriculture. Beginning in 1986 when Museveni captured power from General Tito Okello Lutwa, the war in northern Uganda was initially a popular revolt by Okello’s ousted army troops with a lot of civilian supporters who formed the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA). “Both these rebels and their successors who came together to form the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Auma “Lakwena”, received massive popular support in the north and eastern Uganda, thus seemed to act on behalf of the northern population that was both alarmed by and angry at the new Museveni regime. Fear of national marginalization by a government they perceived to be dominated by

\(^8\)These are the Uganda People’s Democratic Army, Uganda People’s Army, Holy Spirit Movement, Uganda National Rescue Fronts I and II, Allied Democratic Forces, Lord’s Resistance Army, People’s Redemption Army, Ugandan National Democratic Alliance, Uganda National Liberation Army, Severino Lukoya’s Lord’s Army, Uganda Christian Democratic Army, West Nile Bank Front, and the rebellion of Dan Opiro in Apac district.

\(^9\)The northern Uganda conflict began with the UNLA and UPDA in 1986, but Kony founded what later became known as the LRA in November 1987. Thus the conflict in northern Uganda is now in its 23 year, but LRA is 22 years old.
western Ugandans, as well as resentment against what they believed were NRM sponsored atrocities and devastating cattle raids, were at the heart of the early insurgencies.\textsuperscript{10}

While these rebellions ended, Joseph Kony started in 1987 what later became known as the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), and the northern conflict entered an entirely new chapter. This phase is unique that the grievances of the original war remain unaddressed, and yet Kony’s LRA does virtually nothing to try to represent them. His war view is steeped in apocalyptic spiritualism and he uses fear and violence to both maintain control within the LRA and sustain the conflict.\textsuperscript{11} The current war is thus actually two conflicts in one: the original root causes that still need attending to in many people’s minds and may in fact cause future conflict, and the LRA which is a poor manifestation of these grievances. Both of these key components of the war: The long-term underlying grievances in the north and the persistent, destructive LRA, are relevant today, and each requires focused attention by policymakers in order to fully resolve the conflict.

An overview of the conflict in northern Uganda indicate that the war has gone through a series of transformations, from a revolt by former Ugandan army soldiers angry at the rupture of the Nairobi power-sharing agreement to unconventional rebel activity that combines traditional African spiritualism with Christian fanaticism and the killing of

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid. p.4.
civilians. The war in northern Uganda which encompasses all of these different insurgencies, began in January 1986 when soldiers from the former national army, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) of Milton Obote and later Tito Okello, withdrew to the north after being ousted from Kampala by Yoweri Museveni’s NRA/M. UNLA’s anger was sparked by Museveni’s breaking of a power-sharing agreement that had been brokered with the new government of Okello in Nairobi in December 1985, and common feelings among many Ugandans especially in northern and eastern Uganda reveal that a lot of people still resent the “backstabbing” annulment of this accord.\textsuperscript{12} The UNLA forces were ousted from power in March 1986, but many remnants of the former army joined with some politicians in Juba, southern Sudan to form the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA) that same month. These soldiers of former regime posed a serious threat to the new regime of Museveni and that is why they had to reach a peace agreement which was signed in 1988. That agreement brought most of the fighters out of the bush. The Gulu Peace Accord gave amnesty to the combatants (2,000 of whom subsequently joined the NRA) and attempted to address political and economic issues by calling for the discussion of a new constitution and a northern reconstruction program.

Meanwhile, another rebellion began to captivate the anti NRM government sentiments of many people from northern Uganda: the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Auma “Lakwena”. According to one study, “Lakwena” which means Messenger, offered hope for worldly as well as spiritual redemption in a dark hour of despair, since the people of

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. p.5.
northern Uganda had been ousted from power and were facing imminent persecution and possible destruction of lives and property during NRM government. Lakwena energized and disciplined her soldiers with cleansing rituals and strict moral rules of behavior, and received numerous civilian donations as a result of her popularity. She led the movement all the way south to Jinja close to Kampala the capital of Uganda, before she was defeated by the NRM government forces in November 1987.

In retrospect, both the UPDA and HSM were similar in that they tried to mobilize popular grievances in a struggle against the new government. Although the former was more about capturing political power and the latter more about rejuvenating the people of northern Uganda, they both articulated reasons for rebellion that many northerners sympathized with at the time. These popular causes can be summarized as follows: some feared of unfair reprisals for what many perceived to be northerner’s massacres in the so-called Luwero Triangle during the early 1980s;\(^{13}\) they were upset at their loss of political and economic power as a result of Museveni’s breaking of a 1985 power-sharing agreement and destructive cattle raids that they believed were sponsored by the NRM; they were afraid the new government, believed to be controlled exclusively by western Ugandans, would marginalized them, they were defending themselves against atrocities committed by the NRA troops in from 1986-1987; and fighting back was the only means to address these grievances after witnessing Uganda’s successive violent power struggles since

\(^{13}\) Ibid. p.5.

They feared unfair reprisals from the Museveni government because it was and is widely known and believed that it was not only the UNLA that killed innocent people in Luwero but Museveni’s NRA rebels also killed a lot of innocent civilians in Luwero to discourage civilians from giving information about their activities in Luwero to Obote’s government, and to also discredit Obote’s government locally and internationally.
independence. Since they were trying to gain popular support, neither the UPDA nor the HSM committed significant atrocities against its own civilians, although such a trend began during Severino Lukoya’s brief rebellion in 1987. Severino, the father of Alice Auma, tried to take over the movement following her defeat, but was unable to motivate the population and therefore turned to terror tactics, particularly against children, to sustain operations. Poor leadership and organization, however, meant the group quickly dissolved.

The UPDA peace deal, Lakwena’s defeat and Severino’s dissolution left a significant power vacuum in the northern Uganda, a vacuum that was quickly filled by Joseph Kony. Kony, an independent UPDA commander who had also tried to take over Alice’s HSM, had already been amassing a small contingent of fighters. He took over a UPDA division in February 1987, persuading a few soldiers to join and kidnapping the rest, and later incorporated a small number of UPDA fighters who refused to give up arms following the 1988 Gulu Peace Accord. While he initially targeted mostly government fighters, Kony soon turned against civilians, particularly after government sponsored “Bow and Arrow” civilian defense militias in Gulu and Kitgum were formed against him from 1991-1992. At the same time, the government launched the brutal “Operation North,” which reportedly damaged LRA capacity considerably but also generated significant resentment after the arrest of several popular politicians from northern Uganda. One of the most successful peace initiative was launched in 1994, led by then-Minister for the Pacification of Northern Uganda, Betty Bigombe. Despite achieving ceasefires and extensive face-to-face talks with Kony himself, the mission failed as a result of communication difficulties, alleged vested interests of
certain high-ranking officers and politicians, Museveni’s strict deadline ultimatum of seven
days for negotiations and the LRA’s turn to Sudan for weapons re-armament.¹⁴

The war dragged on into the tenth year and more since the Bigombe negotiations started
without any significant hope for resolution. Brief talks were held in Rome in 1997 with
exile businessmen who belonged to the LRA’s political wing, but failure ensued after the
lead negotiator was almost killed by Kony during their first meeting in the bush. After a
considerable lobbying by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLP), the
government introduced the Amnesty Act in 2000, which gave a blanket amnesty to all LRA
fighters who returned from the bush. However, two years later “Operation Iron Fist”
launched in early 2002, in which UPDF troops attempted to drive the LRA out of southern
Sudan but ended up worsening the humanitarian situation and dramatically increasing the
number of IDPs across the northern Uganda. The war spread all the way to eastern Uganda
in 2003.¹⁵

1.4 The Origin of Lord’s Resistant Army (LRA)

According to Heike, there are a number of accounts about the real identity of Joseph Kony,
the founder of the LRA. The first account holds that Kony is a cousin to Alice Auma
Lakwena. This account claim, that at first Kony joined the UPDA (Uganda Peoples

¹⁴ Ibid. p.6.
¹⁵ Ibid. p.6.
Democratic Army) and eventually Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and, like Alice Lakwena, Kony also got possessed by the spirit known as Lakwena (Messenger).\footnote{Heike, B. "War in Northern Uganda," in \textit{African Guerrillas}, edited by Clapham Christoper. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997, p. 155.}

The second account asserts that as a young man, prior to joining the HSM, Kony was close to the Roman Catholic Missionaries working in his local home church near Gulu in northern Uganda. According to this account, some people claim that he was a Catechist, while others claim he was an Altar server. I have no evidence to confirm the first two accounts. It may be true that Kony was an Altar server as indicated in Gersony’s report to the U.S. Embassy in 1997. The report claims that Kony’s father was a Catechist in one of the Catholic missions in Gulu.\footnote{Gersony, R. \textit{The Anguish of Northern Uganda: Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflicts in Northern Uganda}. A Report to the United States Embassy on the War in Northern Uganda, 1997, p.30.} I know that according to the Ugandan context, children of catechists are usually very close to what goes on in their local mission churches where their parents serve as catechists. They are introduced by their parents into their local church and they get involved into many activities of their local church at an early age because that is what they find themselves born into and that is what they grow up with during their lives as children of catechists. It is therefore most likely that Kony was once an altar server, an experience that gave him familiarity and some basic knowledge of Christianity, something that he would eventually use in his philosophy of war.\footnote{Chharles Muwunga Mwebe. “The Genesis and Nature of the LRA in Northern Uganda,” in \textit{African Ecclesial Review}, Vol. 45, # 4, 2003, p. 350.}
The third and last account asserts that Joseph Kony was a witch, and that he inherited his mystical powers from his brother who was also a witch.\(^{19}\) This account is also probably wrong because it is not in conformity with the earlier actions of Kony and his LRA’s military campaign. Kony is on record for his brutality against witches and witchcraft in general. In his plan to establish a ‘holy’ people in Uganda, he started his military campaign by killing many witches in northern Uganda and he also destroyed their homes and equipments. He was against witchcraft because he wanted to found his new government on Christian principles (the Ten Commandments). However, we can attribute some of his actions to witchcraft. Although he had the intention to destroy witchcraft, he may not have known that some of the rituals that he claims to be holy Christian rituals were actually mixed with a lot of witchcraft.

According to Mwebe, the history of the LRA/M war in northern Uganda can be divided into three major periods. The first period was from 1987 to 1993. This is characterized with LRA earlier contacts with the UPDA in 1987 and the peace negotiations which failed in 1993. The second period is from 1994 to 1998. This is associated with the LRA contacts with the Sudan government, a factor that made the conflict more complicated than it was in the beginning. During this period, the LRA started to get more international publicity. During this period, the two major conferences, one in Canada and the other in London, were organized by some Ugandans in exile (especially the Acholi people in Diaspora) to

\(^{19}\) Ibid., Gersony. The Anguish of Northern Uganda, p.30.
discuss the possible peaceful solutions to this conflict. Then the next period began from 1999 up to the peace accord between Uganda government and the government of Sudan and also the peace agreement between the government of Sudan and the SPLA of southern Sudan. The next period was from 1999 to 2005. During this period, on December 6, 1999 President Museveni of Uganda and President Bashir of Sudan signed a peace accord in Nairobi, Kenya. The peace accord was mediated by USA former President Jimmy Carter. Then on January 9, 2005 the government of Sudan signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the SPLA/M in Nairobi, Kenya. This peace accord marked the end to 21 years of war between Sudan government and the SPLA/M. Finally, the contemporary period of the war started in 2005 with the comprehensive peace agreement between Khartoum government of Sudan and the SPLA/M. This period runs up to now as we write. It is marked with less military confrontation between Uganda government and the LRA, and more efforts towards a peaceful negotiation between the parties. The peace negotiations is mediated by the government of South Sudan and overseen by a UN Secretary-General Special, Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique. This period is also marked by the ICC indictment of top LRA leaders for committing crime against humanity. Unfortunately the indictment has complicated the peace process and now the LRA have spread their rebel activities into the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as into the Republic of Central Africa.

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From 1987 to 1993, Joseph Kony’s LRA movement went through a series of name changing before it came to be known today as Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). At one time the movement was known as the LSA (Lord’s Salvation Army). At another time it was called the Christian Democratic Army (CDA). And yet at another time it was also known as the Uganda Christian Democratic Army (UCDA). The frequent changes of names, was a reflection of the struggle between those who wanted the movement to be more secular and those who wanted it to bear a Christian character. The main proponent for a more secular movement was Brigadier General Odong Latek. He was a former army officer during Obote and Tito’s governments and he was a member of the Uganda People’s Democratic Army’s (UPDA) high command who later joined Kony and he is believed to have played a decisive role in the early organization of this movement. After the General’s death, Kony again changed the name of the movement from Uganda Christian Democratic Army to Lord’s Resistance Army, a name by which the movement is still known today.

The LRA borrowed much of its war philosophy from Alice Lakwena’s HSM. The religious magical war practices in the LRA were a continuation from the HSM. Like HSM, witchcraft is evil and unacceptable among LRA fighters and the Acholi community at large. Furthermore, similar to the HSM, Kony introduced rituals of purification and initiation. Most famous was the Malaika ritual. Malaika is Swahili word for the ‘Angel’. It is the same word used by the Acholi people of northern Uganda within the Christian liturgy connoting

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23 Ibid., p.117.  
24 Ibid., p.155.
the same. According to this ritual, before going to the battle field against NRA, the LRA’s
fighters were ritually armored and empowered with *Malaika* to guard and protect them
from enemy bullets during the battle. The recruits would line up across in the defense
soldiers camp, in front of their ‘holy’ yard. Their ‘holy’ leaders would pray over them, bless
them with ‘holy’ water, anoint them with oil (Shea-butter oil) and probably some charms
were burned as incense to god. Then the recruits were made to fast for three days and they
were not allowed to mix with other people who were not ‘purified’ for the intended battle
with their enemies. All this was done in the belief that it would cleanse the fighters from
any evil acts they committed and from all witchcraft and sorcery they might have done. 25

The *Malaika* Ritual bears some similarities with some Christian rituals. Christianity also
teaches that fasting and mortification are important for purification and holiness of our
souls, especially if we are preparing for very important moments in our lives. Prayers and
blessing with holy water are common activities in our Christian way of life. As a son of a
Catechist, Kony must have seen and learned some of these practices through his father as
reported by the New York Times:

“There is no doubt that, Joseph Kony borrowed some of these practices from his
early teachings of Christianity, mixed with Acholi traditional religious practices.
This partly explains why the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement claimed to be a
Christian movement, committed to overthrow the ungodly regime of the NRA,
and lead Uganda according to the Ten Commandments.” That is also probably
why the same New York Times referred to them as “Christian fundamentalist
rebels.”26

The structural organization of the LRA also evidences some influences of Christianity. The movement was organized in three divisions. Each department was named according to the Trinity as done in Christian theology. In Acholi liturgy, God the Father is called *Won*, and the first department of the LRA was also named *Won*. God the Son is called *Wod*, and so the second department of the LRA is called *Wod*. God the Holy Spirit is called *Tipu Maleng* hence, the third department of the LRA is also known as *Tipu Maleng*.

It may be understood that the use of the Trinitarian names was an attempt by Kony to incorporate some Christian beliefs into his military activities.

It is a fact that military activities of the LRA between 1987 and 1993 continued even after the disintegration of the HSM and the UPDA peace accord with the government of Uganda. The LRA continued to engage the government army installations and the civilians whom they suspected to be enemy collaborators. For example, in 1988, the LRA attacked the small town of Koch-Goma just a few miles southwest of Gulu town and killed more than 40 civilians most of whom were chopped to death by the use of machetes. Those killed included bed-ridden patients in a local Health Center in Koch-Goma. Most of those killed during that attack were those suspected by the LRA of having taken part in the local elections ordered by the current NRM ruling government in Uganda. According to the LRA, the civilians’ participation in this activities were wrong because it was a confirmation of the civilians’ willingness to work with the government of President Museveni whom they do not like and want to remove from power in Uganda.

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According to some sources, the LRA became more hostile to the civilians after the failed peace process in 1994 when the two parties resorted to a military solution. This information is disputable since it is very clear that acts of violence and kidnappings were already in place. This may have been true in the beginning of the struggle, but it did not take long for the LRA to turn brutal. Indeed, even before 1991 there were already large scale abductions and attacks on civilian targets.

The LRA is largely made up of people from northern Uganda especially the Acholi people where the group originated. But one of the most puzzling questions is, why have the LRA been very brutal to their own people of northern Uganda that they claim they want to liberate from the oppression and brutality of Museveni’s regime? There may not be a quick and clear answer to this question, but some scholars think that the general characteristics of the intractability of ethnic conflicts may give us a clue to the answer.

Louis Kriesberg asserts that, an intractable conflict is defined as a prolonged conflictual psychosocial process between or among parties that have three primary characteristics. First, an intractable conflict resists a solution. Secondly, it has some conflict intensifying features not related to the initial issues in contention. Thirdly, it involves attempts (and/or

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success) to harm the other party, by at least one of the parties.\textsuperscript{31} It is implicit in this definition that ethnic conflicts are by nature violent for a number of reasons. There is no ethnic conflict that is supported by every member of that group. The architects of such conflicts are always convinced that military struggle and rebellions require that active participation of every member of that ethnic group.

Popular support is normally by instigating the members against the supposedly enemy. This is done to win the masses and in case of failure, the end result is always coercive and it involves all forms of brutal violence. This force can be in form of threats, actual acts such as rape, merciless killings, abduction of children and adults who are viewed as potential fighters. As for the LRA, the abduction of children is the way the movement can perpetuate its existence since it cannot survive without fighters.\textsuperscript{32} Therefore, in a situation of little support or no support from the local population, excessive violence against the civilians becomes the way of forcing them into participation and almost all ethnic conflicts in Africa share this fundamental character. For examples similar characteristics were witnessed in the conflicts in Sierra Leon, Southern Sudan, Liberia, and former UNITA in Angola. Destruction of property, burning of homes, looting of food stuffs are usually carried out to make the population have no choice but to join their aggressors.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., Mwebe. The Genesis and Nature of LRA, p. 356.
According to Mwebe, while the LRA did not have the right to inflict suffering on the civilians, on the other hand, the Ugandan military approach to curb this conflict unfortunately contributed to intensifying LRA violence toward the civilians. For example, in 1991, under the command of General David Tinyefunza the Ugandan military tried to end the rebellion. The General together with some local government officials mobilized the civilians into a “bow and arrow” defense units to fight against the LRA who are equipped with many AK47’s and other modern automatic weapons. This was one of the most unprofessional attempts by the Uganda military to solve the problem. Many people in northern Uganda believe that this was intentionally done by the government of Museveni to infuriate the rebels and turn them against their own local people in northern Uganda so that they can destroy themselves by killing more of their own people. This mistake was also noted by Gersony in his report to the U.S. Embassy in the following words. “The population was urged to organize itself to resist rebel intrusion with these implements until the NRA would arrive and join them in the battle.”

How on earth could the untrained civilians engage the LRA rebels who were experienced fighters armed with conventional weapons? This was an act of sacrificing the innocent civilians to die at the hands of the rebels. It was also militarily wrong and inappropriate to force a civilian population to fight the LRA. The above analysis can help us to understand some of the reasons why the LRA turned out to be a very brutal rebel group to the civilians. It was a “government failure in the beginning to understand the complexities entailed in

34 Ibid.
ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflicts are not only difficult to mediate, but even military solutions seem to make situations more complicated."  

During this period, there was a significant military event known as “Operation North”, commanded by Major General Tinyefunza. It was remarkable for its brutality and heavy-handedness especially against civilians. While the NRA was trying to sort out the rebels from the civilians, both the government soldiers and the rebels victimized several of the innocent civilians. On the other hand, it is argued that Operation North in spite of all its atrocities against the civilian population, succeeded in reducing the LRA to a very insignificant number. Several observers argue that the NRA had the capacity to eliminate the LRA but did not do so for selfish motives. “It is commonly argued that the NRA officers chose not to end the war in order to justify their continued receipt of operational allowances and other corrupt economic privileges.” Very few Ugandans hold a contrary view to this.

“When Museveni’s NRM came to power in 1986, its officers were as poor as many other Ugandans. But by 1993, most of them had turned into millionaires and the source of their new wealth remains debatable to date. Army officers in Uganda today belong to the elite class. Several of them own property worth millions of dollars. There is enough evidence to show that the army officers have used the war in northern Uganda to accumulate personal wealth......during war situations like the LRA war in northern Uganda, army officers are given a lot of money and resources to run the war and are not subject to accountability.”

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37 Ibid., p. 537.
More about this corruption in the army and government can be associated/linked to the issue of “Ghost Soldiers” in Uganda. Ghost soldiers are soldiers that were made to exist on the government payroll in names but did not physically exist in the Ugandan military. Military officers created their names and they were the ones corruptly enjoying the salaries of such soldiers that did not exist in Uganda.

On the part of the government, the position has always been that failure to end the war was due to lack of technical competence in the effective development of air and ground resources. However, several writers argue that what constitutes the ending of the war is in itself a tricky question. Likewise, it is difficult to assert conclusively why this war continued for about 22 years when in the eyes of the commentators its end was eminent. However, whatever makes the war to continue, must be a combination of factors.

1.5 The 1993-1994 Peace Accord

According to Mwebe, the period between 1992 and 1993 is very important within the development of the conflict. After the violent military activities of 1991, the LRA were weakened and they withdrew to Sudan and there was some relative peace in most parts of northern Uganda. On the other hand, the government soldiers were also tired and needed some rest from war. The civil society, NGO’s, churches and other religious bodies were all
asking the government to talk to the LRA. There is no doubt that both the government and the LRA had lost many soldiers in the battles and International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also threatening to withdraw its financial support if the government did not seek a peaceful solution to the war.  

There are other remarkable events worth noting during this time. In February 1993, Pope John Paul II visited northern Uganda and celebrated Holy Mass in Gulu town and also in Soroti town in eastern Uganda with the war affected people of the two regions. The visit of the Pope was very significant in many ways. To the rebels who claimed to be fighting for a Christian cause, the message was that, Christianity is a peaceful religion and dialogue between the rebels and the government was necessary. Politically, the Pope also wanted to send a message to the government of Uganda that he had seen for himself the impact of the war on the people of northern and eastern Uganda. From the social point of view, the Pope showed the civil society in Uganda his solidarity with them in their suffering.

After the Pope’s visit, the media in Uganda constantly focused on issues of peace. The churches preached peace more than ever before. The demand for peace became an issue of national concern even among the other groups. This was important because the government was forced to recant its former position of never to have peace talks with the

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40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
LRA. The government took advantage of this political situation to initiate peace talks with the LRA.

The peace talks were headed by Mrs. Betty Bigombe (a State Minister in the office of the President). Unfortunately, the peace talks failed. As usual, there are counter accusations on both sides. The government alleges that while the negotiations were going on, the LRA were busy regrouping and seeking military assistance from the Sudan government.42 It is also argued that some members within the high ranks of the LRA demanded that Kony scuttle the talks. The government also alleged that, the LRA violated the peace process by carrying some abduction of children during the negotiations.43

Amidst all these uncertainties, as part of the peace process, the rebel commander Joseph Kony asked for more time, before he could commit himself to the accord. This request raised suspicions on the government’s side. The government was suspicious that the LRA was using the cease-fire and negotiation period to conclude an agreement with Sudan government to continue with the fighting. On the other hand, some people argue that the government was to blame. It is said that some ranks within the army wanted to pursue the military solution as a sure way of making money through operational allowances, and other corrupt means by which the military officers enriched themselves.44

43 Ibid., p. 34.
44 Ibid., p. 34.
As it normally happens in all peace processes, it is probable that there were influential elements on the government side and the LRA side who opposed the peace process. On the government side, there were people within the military and some highly placed civilians. In February 1994, Museveni shocked the whole peace process by giving an ultimatum of seven days to give up the rebellion and surrender to the NRM government, or else they would be destroyed by his government army. Many political analysts argue that the ultimatum from the president was unfortunate because it made the country lose a golden opportunity for making peace with the rebels which could have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of many innocent Ugandans. They also add that his ultimatum simply revealed the decision that Museveni and his NRA had already chosen, to end the rebellion militarily. Unfortunately the military option has not been successful to date. The LRA has not given up the war neither has the Uganda government.

A critique of the unsuccessful 1994 peace talk reveals why the talks failed. In the first place there was lack of a neutral mediator. Betty Bigombe who directed the talks was a government Minister in the office of the president. She was part and parcel of the group that was fighting the LRA. This raised a question of trust. How would the LRA trust somebody who was working for an establishment that they deemed dangerous to their cause? On the other hand, it seems that even the government including president Museveni himself did not have full trust in Minister Betty Bigombe just because she was an Acholi trying to negotiate with her fellow Acholis who were fighting the NRM government. As the

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Monitor newspaper journalist Charles Onyango Obbo put it, Museveni gave the ultimatum without the knowledge of Betty Bigombe. This provides us a clue about the level of mistrust and ethnic tension in Uganda. While the role of Bigombe as a link between the government and the rebels was vital, there was a need for a neutral mediator, with the capacity not only to encourage both parties to the negotiating table, but also with the power to coerce them in some ways when necessary. Bigombe did not have such powers. It is therefore clear that the whole negotiation process was controlled by Museveni’s NRM government and as such the LRA were simply at the mercy of the NRA. The LRA were vulnerable because the NRA could manipulate the talks and the peace agreements to their advantage. The LRA as such might have felt that they had no room and freedom of expression for negotiating.

The next obstacle to the peace talks was a cultural one. Failure to identify cultural dimensions in mediation is be counter-productive in most situations. The Acholi people, like many other ethnic groups in Africa are still a male dominated society where certain roles are held exclusively for men, and conflict resolution is one of them as Dennis Pain noted in his book The Bending of Spears. Therefore, Betty Bigombe with all her good qualities posed a cultural obstacle to the peace process. It is said the rebels felt insulted when the NRM government sent a woman to negotiate with them about ending the war. The LRA must have considered this as an insult demonstrating a lack of seriousness on the part of the government to end the war. Although Betty delegated a group of elders and

chiefs, it should be noted that among the Acholi people, women still do not lead delegations of elders and chiefs.\textsuperscript{49} When assessing the qualities of mediator, depending on the nature and location of a conflict, gender becomes an issue worthy of consideration.

Another obstacle to the peace process was the exclusion of the many politicians from northern Uganda who are in exile because their lives were threatened by Museveni’s regime. Some of these politicians share a similar attitude with the LRA towards the NRM government and they act as the political wing of the LRA. They have a lot of influence in the LRA decision making process. Even if they do not support the rebels’ abduction of children and brutality towards the civilians, they still agree on the fact that Museveni deserves to be driven from power because he gained power by a wrong means, and he cheated them because he violated the power-sharing peace agreement signed in Nairobi in 1985. During the peace negotiations, some of these people should have been involved, but they were over-looked. This was a serious oversight in terms of determining those who should have been party to the whole peace process. Their involvement would have given credibility to the talks and they would have discussed the root causes of the conflict and probably found solutions to them.

The NRM’s excessive belief in its military strength was a serious obstacle to the peace process. “The history of the NRM government portrays it as an institution that does not

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., Pain. \textit{The Bending of Spears}, p. 21.
believe in nor understand peace talks.”\textsuperscript{50} In 1985, they were accused of violating the Nairobi Peace Accord. Even if they won many battles including their overthrow of the government of General Tito Okello in 1986, that does not legitimize this as the only alternative solution for resolving conflicts. Besides, not all conflicts are the same. Because of NRA’s strong preference for military means over political negotiation, they might have viewed a military victory as something easily attainable and more desirable than a peaceful settlement in the case of the war in northern Uganda.\textsuperscript{51}

1.6 The Role of the Khartoum Government of Sudan in the Conflict in Northern Uganda (1994-1998)

According to decades of experience, Uganda and Sudan are related in a number of ways. Historically, in most cases, if there is conflict in either country, the two countries have had to share the burden of the refugees and the insecurities associated with this phenomenon. Because of the SPLA conflict with the Khartoum government in Sudan, the latter has always had interest in the political leadership of Uganda.\textsuperscript{52} Sudan’s primary interest is having someone in power who would not be a close ally of the Sudan rebel groups in the South.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., Mwebe. “The Genesis and Nature of the LRA” p. 365.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
The question of Southern Sudan has always been a Pan African one towards which most governments in Kampala has always felt sympathetic. Therefore, it is true that the Uganda government has always been a sympathizer of the SPLA. This has always been used by the Khartoum regime to justify its support for the LRA. It is also true that when the peace talks failed, the LRA withdrew to Southern Sudan where they built their bases for training and supplies from the Khartoum government. The Khartoum government equipped them with weapons, ammunitions and land mines. Subsequently, Kampala severed diplomatic relations with Khartoum in 1995. From this time onward, LRA became much more notorious with child abductions, and general hostility to the public.

The second attempt by some elders to initiate peace talks with the LRA was a disaster. The elders were killed by some gun men and to date it is not clear who really killed them.

According to Robert Gersony, by 1997, the LRA consisted of about 3,000 to 4,000 fighters, the majority of whom were abducted men and women with most of them being children. From 1995, the use of land mines by the LRA became a wide spread practice. The destruction of property also became the order of the day. In 1996, during the presidential elections, the LRA adopted a kind of political platform. They promised to stop fighting if Dr. Kawanga Ssemogerere, the leader of the Democratic Party won the elections. Unfortunately, the NRM leader (Museveni) was again declared the winner of that election. The LRA accused Museveni of rigging elections and this was one more reason for them to continue with their armed struggle. It is estimated that by 1996, over eighty schools in

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northern Uganda especially in Acholi land had already been burnt and students abducted or killed.\footnote{Ibid. p. 35-36.}

According to Mwebe, the role of the Sudan government in this war became even more direct in 1998. On several occasions, the Sudan government sent their fighter planes under the pretext of pursuing the SPLA, to bomb refugee camps and some other civilian targets thereby wounding and killing some Ugandans. This was seen as an attempt to provoke Uganda into an open full scale war with Sudan.

In 1998, President Nelson Mandela initiated negotiations between Museveni and Bashir in South Africa but unfortunately, the two did not reach an agreement. They blamed one another for supporting each other’s enemies. Towards the end of 1999, through the initiative of Carter Center for International Mediation, Museveni and Bashir signed a peace accord. After this peace accord, the conflict in northern Uganda continued with both low and high intensity. However, Sudan tried to change strategy from supporting LRA to supporting another rebel group based in Western Uganda known as the ADF (Allied Democratic Front). According to Charles Mwebe, “the political agenda of this group are not officially known but from the number of captives and documents discovered in the battlefield, these are Islamic fundamentalists. Most of the fighters who were captured in battles with the ADF are Muslim youth especially from Busoga, Iganga and some from the
central region of Uganda. Likewise, according to military sources, the weapons used are from Sudan and the labels on them were written in Arabic.”

During this period some incidents of child abduction were reported by the *New Vision*, a government newspaper. On August 20, 1998, some LRA fighters made a surprise attack on *Cereleato* (a suburb of Gulu town) in northern Uganda and killed two people and abducted some children. Furthermore, the records by the Uganda Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace also shows that, between July and September 1998 there were six incidents of ADF rebel activities in Western Uganda, compared to only two by the LRA in northern Uganda. This indicates that the conflict was beginning to take yet another shape with the help of Khartoum government.

In March 2002, Kampala signed the first protocol with Khartoum regime, allowing the UPDF (Uganda army) to flush out the LRA. This protocol was extended several times to allow the UPDF defeat the LRA from their bases in Southern Sudan. Although Sudan had already started showing a change of attitude earlier as reflected in the 1999 Nairobi Peace Accord, another more urgent game changing event not directly connected to the political relationship between Uganda and Sudan and the LRA war in northern Uganda, was the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States of America. The Ugandan government used this moment to present the LRA to the US State Department as one of the

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*New Vision*, is a daily National News Paper published in Uganda.
terrorist groups that should be put at the same level with other terrorist groups in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The message from the State Department was very clear that, not only would the terrorists be pursued wherever they are all over the world, but even their supporters. The Sudan government was not ready for possible consequences. Therefore, reading the signs of the time, it is in their best interest to workout modalities with its former enemy, Uganda, to flush out the LRA.57

1.7 The Structure of the LRA Rebels

Joseph Kony’s LRA have been waging a relentless war across northern and eastern Uganda for about 22 years now. It is estimated that between 20,000 and 25,000 children, including girls used as both commander’s ‘wives’ and fighters, have been kidnapped since the LRA began operations. Indeed, the group is one of the most brutal across the globe, forcing children to kill and torture soon after capture, making them kill their own family and community members to create a break with the past, and coercing abductees to walk for miles with their hands tied together with rope. The LRA which originally consisted of a few core fighters grew to more than 3,000 child combatants. When the peace deal between the government of Uganda and the LRA failed in 1994, the LRA turned to Sudan for arms and military training and has been substantially better equipped since that time; at times better equipped than the UPDF (Uganda Army). Thus the Sudan’s strategic assistance has

58 IRIN Web Special on the War in Northern Uganda, available at www.irinnews.org/webspecials/uga_crisis/. This is based on UN estimates.
been a critical supply line. The LRA’s entire resource base rests on raiding farms, abducting children and getting a supply of arms from Sudan.

Joseph Kony himself is shrouded in a veil of secrecy: on the one hand he is presented as a disorganized criminal who can be quickly and easily crushed, and on the other he is portrayed as an invincible messenger of God which no bullets can penetrate. A BBC reporter confirmed this “mystery” in his report in the year 2000 when he said “Little is known about the rebel leader...and it is clear that this is exactly how he likes it. He has created an aura of fear and mysticism around himself which is an image difficult to dispel.” Given this confusion, numerous labels have been used to describe Kony and the LRA as: lunatics, irrational, inexplicable, terrorist bandits, and thugs. These caricatures have had important practical implications, making it hard to know what strategies would be most effective in ending the war.

In addition, there is an important spiritual dimension to the LRA, although the group is not a cult. Joseph Kony uses his spiritual and biblical revelations to manipulate people much like a cult leader, but does not appear to brainwash them heavily. Most LRA members end up believing in his spiritual power, but they are not mesmerized by his presence. Kony has a multi-layered spiritual vision, but he also uses this spiritualism to maintain control, starting with his overall vision of liberation and destruction and continuing with individual

59 BBC News online, 2 November 2000. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk
spirits’ that guide specific military tactics. The following section seeks to give a fuller explanation of why and how Kony’s LRA carry out their military campaigns.

1.8 What Drives the LRA Rebels?

1.8.1 The Spiritual Dimension

Joseph Kony has an important spiritual dimension that motivates him. He seems (at least some of the time) to believe that he is fulfilling a spiritual, not a political, vision as a messenger of God. Kony believes he is the true man of God sent to save the people of northern Uganda. Seemingly strange at first, the vision appears to have a more coherent logic upon closer examination. According to sources familiar with him during his early days as a commander with the UPDA, Kony believed he was “sent by God to liberate humanity from disease and suffering. But, he added, he had discovered that healing was senseless as long as those who were healed were killed. He had resolved to fight to destroy all those who wanted to fight. The struggle would last until no one had the wish to fight any longer. He said he had not come to topple the government, but to destroy the evil forces in the world... He wanted justice and righteousness to reign throughout the country.”

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His early actions confirm such belief. For example, Kony initially wanted to gain the support of the people of northern Uganda and broke away from the UPDA in November 1987 allegedly to punish them for their unjust plundering and terrorizing of the local population of northern Uganda. According to one researcher, he wanted to build up a trans-ethnic movement, but failed and tried to unite different rebel groups in northern Uganda into one. The origins of Kony's vision must be understood in the context of the Uganda socio-political crisis (especially in northern Uganda) as described above. Like Alice Lakwena before him, Kony believed he had spiritual powers and could lead the people of northern Uganda out of this difficult time. However, other leaders from northern Uganda rejected his prophecy, a rejection that Kony took badly. After he asked Alice for support, for example, she mocked him and told him he should use his limited spiritual powers to become a doctor or a healer, but not to lead a rebellion. Kony reportedly left in silence following Lakwena’s monologue and later allegedly told his follower that he was deeply insulted by her rebuff.

The LRA's spiritual dimension can in part be explained by traditional cultural beliefs. In many African communities, as well as elsewhere in the world, social and cultural problems are in many cases interpreted through spiritual dimensions. In particular, calamities afflicting communities are seen as punishment for wrongs that the people themselves committed, and therefore there is need for atonement and cleansing, to repulse the evil spirit tormenting them. This is similar to the attitude of the Hebrew people in the Old

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63 Ibid., p.86.
Testament part of the Bible (Job 4: 7-8, 11;6, Psalm 73, Psalm 145; 20, Jeremiah 30: 12-15). Kony believes that there is something wrong with the people of Uganda including his own people (the Acholi) in northern Uganda, and thinks he can engage in spiritual cleansing to address that wrong. However, while he interprets the problem within this traditional spiritual worldview, he then perverts it to fit his own views rather than the accepted local standard. His justification of violence comes because the local people refused to back him. This is where he departs from his own Acholi tradition where life is held sacred, to his personal interpretation of the Bible where he can select certain verses to justify the use of violence on those who refused to support him. The Acholi traditional leaders as well as other traditional leaders in Uganda reject Kony’s spiritual vision and denounce him as a false prophet. Many traditional leaders hold the opinion that Kony’s spirit should be traditionally investigated because, they do not see it in the way Kony does. They believe that the origin of the conflict is based on genuine grievances, but any misguided person can try and abuse it.64

Despite Kony’s early dismissal by his potential allies, he continued to claim to have biblical revelations into the 1990s, visions that have allegedly become increasingly apocalyptic and destructive over time. During the 1980s, the LRA concentrated its attacks mainly on government troops but from 1992 began focusing on civilian targets. Common opinion is that the change in strategy is explained by Kony’s desire to take revenge on a civilian population that from 1991-1992 fought against the LRA in a government sponsored “Bow

and Arrow" civil defense units instead of lending their support to the LRA. Reports from abductees and from my personal experience confirm this hypothesis. Kony said to one abductee that if the people of northern Uganda (especially the Acholis) don’t support us, they must be finished and then justified his new approach by a different spiritual revelation. He is also alleged to have told his LRA members in the bush, “God said in the Bible, I will unleash my wrath upon you and you will suffer pain. And in the end you will be killed by the sword. Your children will be taken into captivity and will be burnt to death.”

1.8.2 A Political Agenda?

In addition to the spiritual dimension, there is considerable debate within the discourse on the war as to whether or not the LRA has a political agenda. Having a political agenda is seen by many of those commenting on the war as a precondition for conducting negotiations with Kony’s LRA. His apparent lack of a clear political program has generated considerable confusion. This lack of clarity was reflected on the ground: some respondents in the conflict zone expressed the belief that he has no political agenda, while others said that Kony may have an agenda but that it was not yet articulated. Actually many people from northern Uganda are profoundly confused about the fact that Kony claimed to be fighting for them, yet was killing and abducting them at the same time.

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The apparent confusion over the LRA’s political agenda is partly due to the fact that LRA does not fit conventional definitions of political insurgency: it does not engage civilians in political mobilization or indoctrination, and has rejected several attempts by people outside the LRA command structure to take on a political agenda. However, while it does not appear to fit easily within accepted paradigms, that does not necessarily mean that it is devoid of political content, or that political issues relating to northern Uganda are not part of his grievances. Indeed two possibilities emerge from what is known of the LRA.

First, Kony has a political agenda but is very poor at articulating it and making it known. It is true that he does not have a clear understanding of political processes and state power, and is therefore unable to translate his dissatisfaction with the government into a recognizable political insurgency or even an opposition political party. His rejection of previous political agendas from UPDM mobilizers, Ugandan exile leaders, and politicians from northern Uganda does not mean that Kony does not have political goals, but that he was either turning away ambitious leaders who want to put their own agenda onto the LRA for their own purposes, or their agenda did not fit well with his worldview and understanding of the situation on the ground.

Secondly, it is possible that Kony is motivated by both power and fear, that is, the power that he and his commanders derive from controlling an armed insurgency, spreading fear among the population in northern and eastern Uganda, and fear that if he is brought out of the bush, he will be tried for war crimes and executed. The fact is that, whether the LRA
does or does not have a political agenda should not become the pivotal point for understanding Kony or for resolving the conflict. Instead, a more flexible approach to understanding what motivates the LRA is needed: trying to force rigid definitions onto this protracted conflict only generates confusion and prevents more nuanced understandings of Kony's worldview from emerging.

1.8.3 Some Dynamics within the LRA

In addition to the spiritual and political dynamics we have seen above, three additional factors have played a significant role in further fuelling the LRA conflict.

First, LRA’s inner-core fighters fear being killed if they surrender. This is an anxiety that is fed by three factors. Historically many Acholi army officers as well as many other army officers from other tribes in Uganda were rounded up and killed by government forces after being called to the army barracks to disarm in 1971 under former dictator Idi Amin. The memories of this are still fresh in the minds of many Ugandans including LRA commanders and it makes them skeptical of the government’s Amnesty Act. This suspicion is unfortunately confirmed by the fact that some ex-rebels are killed when they surrender, for example a former UPDA commander Kenneth Kilama was reported killed by some gunmen in a dubious circumstance after Gulu Peace Accord was signed and he and his soldiers joined the government of president Museveni. So the LRA officers fear that if they

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surrender, the same will happened to them. In addition the LRA’s vicious atrocities mean that their commanders are also partly haunted by their own crimes. Furthermore, the government’s persistent sarcastic war of words about annihilating and hunting down the LRA add fuel to this fear, making it difficult to believe that they will be safe if a peace deal is reached.

Second, after 22 years of war, many people speculate that Kony and his LRA continue fighting because it has become a way of life that both allows them easy access to resources, and gives them influence and authority they could never have achieved as peasant farmers in Uganda. They have attained a life which they can’t sustain if they surrender and come out of the bush. They are now used to freely getting what they want. All the good foods such as chicken, cow beef, goat meat, peanuts are freely looted by the rebels from the local people of northern and eastern Uganda. The commanders choose “wives” freely from among the abducted underage girls. Photographs of some LRA commanders relaxing with many “wives” and children in new army uniforms and sitting alongside highly sophisticated weaponry are common in the public media. This can make one to believe that the LRA is better armed than most African armies. They have shoulder-fired missile launchers, many “wives”, and more. So what better can be offered to them if they surrender and come out of the bush?

Although Sudan had previously assisted the LRA out of national interest, its interests started to change during the Sudanese peace process in Naivasha, Kenya. Since then,
Khartoum had been under pressure from the US and UK to stop supporting the LRA. The NIF regime is seeking to restore diplomatic relations with the international community, in particular so it can begin exporting its newly found oil reserves. Furthermore, following the peace “Agreement on Security Arrangements” signed between Khartoum and the SPLA in September 2003, some EDF militia commanders have begun making deals with the more powerful SPLA (who will take over security for all of southern Sudan under the agreement) and have even been allegedly fighting the LRA near Juba. Permission by Sudan government to allow the UPDF to cross into its territory during Operation Iron Fist greatly reduced the LRA access to ready weaponry. It is not clear whether Khartoum has given up entirely on its long-time ally because there are rumors that the LRA are still getting supplies from the Sudan government. This rumor could be true because the LRA not only causes insecurity in Uganda, but has also worked together with the Sudanese army in attacking strategic SPLA locations such as Torit in 2002. However, two factors indicate that the LRA may be able to sustain its’ war against Uganda government without Sudanese support. First, the group uses few high-tech weapons because most of their attacks are against soft-targets (civilians) and so are carried out using machetes and a few guns. The fact that it operated for eight years before Khartoum started supplying them in 1994 is testimony to this. Secondly, the LRA have stockpiled sizeable amount of arms at their hideouts from previous supplies. Besides, while their supply needs are very low but at the same time they also know how to surprise the UPDF and grab more weapons from them.

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67 Ibid., p. 19.
68 Ibid., p. 19.
1.8.4 Child Soldiers

Reliance on abducted children has enabled Kony to maintain his internal grip on the LRA for a number of reasons. First, as has been witnessed in Cambodia, Sierra Leon, Iran and elsewhere, children are easily malleable to whatever purpose Kony wants and are very quick to obey his orders. They copy exactly what is taught during training. Kony likes children because he can model them into what he wants them to be. Many rebel groups in Africa and across the globe understand the power that children can bring to their group and so Kony commands thousands of children whose allegiance is unquestioned. Although many children escape from the LRA every year, the fact remains that Kony uses children as a vital resource for his military campaign.

Second, children in their teens are used by Kony as slaves because they are cable of walking faster and not tire soon. This is a fact that increases LRA mobility and enhances their capacity to carry looted goods over long distances as a critical source of the group re-supply line for food and other items they need.

Third, forcing children to kill their friends or family members while other abductees are looking on instills fear into them and discourages them from escaping. As one former abductee said, “sometime they get the new abductees to kill, and you never refuse to kill, 69

otherwise they kill you.” It also psychologically forces a clean break with the past, as they are less likely to return to a community where they have murdered someone.

Finally, atrocities against soft-target civilians spread fear and chaos through the population, a guerrilla warfare tactic that denies intelligence to the government and leaves the rebels free to loot. A single vicious murder can force hundreds of people to flee from their villages, leaving behind their valuables and food crops in their farms for easy looting. Thus, Kony’s manipulative control is comprehensive.

1.8.5 Military Operations

Although the LRA is often portrayed as a band of criminals, such characterization is inaccurate for a group that has now wreaked havoc in Uganda for a little over two decades now. Not only are LRA tactics appallingly effective, but they also have stock piles of weapons and a significant number of fighters. Unlike the other rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone or Angola, there are not yet any known rebellion-inducing resources such as diamonds, gold, oil, making the LRA’s about two decade existence remarkable. They have survived for a little over two decades on next to nothing. In the absence of natural resources, the LRA uses guerrilla ambush attacks with extreme effectiveness, skills that were probably acquired from UPDA splinter commander

70 Interview with former-abductee in Gulu, Uganda, July 4, 2008.
Brigadier General Odong Latek in the mid 1988. Fear of the LRA runs across all corners of north and eastern Uganda, from civilians to the government soldiers, because of their persistent surprise attacks on villages and ambushes undertaken by highly mobile small rebel groups (in many cases less than 20 rebels) that then break up into even smaller groups after the attacks.

One of the reasons why the LRA attacks civilian targets is because they want publicity, that is, it demonstrates that the rebels are active and the government has failed to protect its’ citizens. This works as a propaganda tool to turn the people against their own government.

In summary, simply dismissing Kony and his LRA as a gang of criminals or terrorists is not only inaccurate but dangerous, as it underestimates the level of military planning and effectiveness of the LRA. This is a group that has prove they are a force to be reckoned with by holding the people of northern Uganda hostages for over twenty years. So it is important to honestly explore ways in which their motives can be better grasped since gaining understanding is vital in bringing resolution to the war.

1.9 Causes of the Political Conflicts in Uganda:

The issue of the root causes of the conflict in northern Uganda continues to be debated as the conflict becomes more and more complicated. A conflict always has a trigger point. Root causes have a bearing on understanding of the dynamics, variables and constants in
any conflict. This gives a picture of the driving force of the conflict. Sustenance of enemy images is what keeps the conflict going and the process creating new causes of conflict, building on top of old ones. That is why it becomes complex because the earlier causes continue to be unresolved while new ones are created.

Interestingly, the issue of the causes of the conflict in Uganda has itself become a political issue. I believe this is reflected in a number of ways as reflected in the work produced by the Human Rights and Peace Centre at Makerere University in October 2003. The work indicates that “there is a group of people who have felt constrained to enquire into these causes of conflicts in Uganda because of the prevalence of an atmosphere of intimidation and fear. For example, the Acholi community living in Botswana in their presentation to a peace conference in London, (commonly known as Kacoke Madit), in 1997 on the causes of the current conflict in northern Uganda demonstrated that anyone attempting to analyze the underlying causes of the war will sooner or later get entangled into politics and all its consequences including finger pointing and apportioning of blame.” This forced the group to jump over efforts to finding causes of the war, all the way into finding solutions of the war.

By avoiding entanglement in the ‘ordinary’ politics of finger-pointing and apportioning blame, participants in the conference opted out of it in order to get on with another model

of politics. This demonstrates the danger of avoiding facing the causes of conflicts in Uganda and hence trying to find answers outside the political system. This must be avoided unless the attempt at national reconciliation is totally abandoned. In that case the people of northern Uganda would be entitled to the right to self-determination. Consistent pursuance of the root causes to the conflict cannot avoiding finger pointing and apportioning of blame.

In 1997, the Human Rights Watch in their report: *The Scars of Death*, argued that the intensity of the conflict lent a certain urgency to the problem of understanding the roots and sources of the conflict. It added that during their investigations, the research team had heard many tentative theories about why the conflict continues, but few people were willing to hazard a definitive explanation, and the rebels themselves are a black box. They had listened to stories and counter-stories, some more persuasive than others, but none ultimately satisfying. The team, perhaps mystified by this situation, nevertheless wanted to make sense of some kind by concluding that this however, does not mean that there is no reason for the violence; it instead suggests that the reasons are many and deep, and fully disentangling them may not be possible in the end. With this pessimism, the research team attempted to investigate the roots of the conflict but stopped at the level of appearances with quotations of views from disparate groups of people with no attempt to analyze and synthesize them. In the end the report ended with a number of calls to both sides, which have never been heeded.

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The issue of the roots and underlying causes of the conflict has therefore not gone away. It has continued to engage even the on-the-spot organizations that are actively engaged in helping the communities face the consequences and effects of the conflict. In the year 2000, 50 civil society organizations in Uganda formed a loose coalition called the Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda to promote peace in northern Uganda. They came to the conclusion that it was necessary to debate the underlying causes of the conflict in order to resolve the conflict and thus make peace. The root causes of the conflict need to be identified and dealt with. According to the group, this would mean looking beyond the surface and addressing the substantive and emotional issues, the interests and needs of the parties that are at the root of the conflict.\textsuperscript{73} In order to contribute to this debate and understanding the group came out with a document analyzing the root causes of the war, which has informed much of their advocacy and lobby activities aimed at bringing peace in the region.

Those in the government have tended to argue that the causes to the conflict have been over-explored and that in their view the real issue is to find a solution by concentrating on how the rebellion can be brought to an end. Those who keep on raising the issue of causes are then either labeled “academic” or, when their explanation of the conflict points to the government side, are accused of being collaborators, which has now become worse than being categorized as a “terrorist.” Yet others have argued that the causes have to be explored on the ground that these causes are being created and recreated in a dynamic

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., HURIPEC. \textit{The Hidden War}, p.45.
manner as the conflict becomes more and more complex. This creates a situation whereby complications get defined as new causes with the result that the underlying and root issues are forgotten or brushed aside as no longer relevant to the dynamics of the conflict. “Yet in their official documents of government and those of the UPDF, they continue to give their own rather one-sided explanations about the causes and factors contributing to the perpetuation of the conflict.”

Nevertheless, the demand that the fundamental causes must be explored even further continued to persist. In April 2003 some attention to this issue emerged at a higher level when the US delegation to Uganda issued a statement in which it urged the Uganda government and civil society to work together to address the underlying causes of the conflict in northern Uganda.

Thus re-enforcing the argument that, the root causes of the conflict have to be seen as part and parcel of the process of resolving the conflict. And, perhaps baffled by the failure of the many peace initiatives that have been undertaken to find a peaceful resolution to the deepening conflict, the Uganda Parliament also found itself addressing the issue of causes. In a spirited debate on the ministry of defense statement on the security situation in the country that took place on April 29, 2003, a motion was moved by Hon. Omara Atubo, on Peace and Security in the Country to the effect that government should address the root causes of the persistent rebellion and cattle rustling in northern and eastern Uganda. The resolution instructed the Sessional Committee on Defense and International Affairs to

74 Ibid., p. 45.
75 Ibid., p. 45.
regularly monitor the implementation of these resolutions and report back to the whole house every three months on the state of affairs as well as on the steps that are taken by government to implement the resolutions.\textsuperscript{76}

All these concerns go a long way to suggest that although some attempts have been made to investigate the causes of conflicts in Uganda in connection with the war in northern Uganda, there is still a nagging feeling that they have not been fully explored and that further investigation of the root causes should be seriously undertaken at a national level if the conflicts in the country are to be tackled.

\section*{1.10 Long-term Causes of Wars (Political Conflict) in Uganda:}

The war in northern Uganda traces its core to deeper issues that do not immediately surface in the day-to-day fighting of the LRA. The root causes which underlay the initial UPDA and other rebellions, are critical since they have never been resolved and may again re-surface and cause renewed conflict if left unaddressed. The absence of a consensus on the core causes of the war partly explains why there is no consensus on how to end the war. Although some people think that the war in northern Uganda is a continuation of the” Luwero Triangle” war, a report from HURIPEC argue that it is the NRM that initiated an ethnic war against people from northern Uganda even before the Luwero Triangle. So the

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 45.
The main ethnically oriented complaint from Museveni that triggered the Luwero war is revealed in his statement when he said “The problem in Uganda is that the leadership has mainly been from the north. The southerners who are mainly Bantu have played a peripheral role all these years since independence in 1962.” That was a false allegation against the people of northern Uganda to generate ethnic conflict in Uganda between the south and the north and Museveni used it to mobilize the Bantu ethnic groups of southern Uganda against the people of northern Uganda.

Museveni’s strong urge to grab power in Uganda became more and more violent because he could not win his way to the presidency through the ballot peacefully since his political party (UPM) won only one seat in the Parliament because it was a very insignificant and unpopular party in the country. He claims that it was the rigging of election by Obote in 1981 that drove him into the bush. But the truth is that it was the Democratic Party that was the only democratically formidable challenge to Obote at that time not Museveni who was not even close to winning that election. Therefore, it was his insatiable urge for power

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78 Ibid., p. 25.
that drove him over the top into dirty ethnic politics against the people of northern Uganda by making alliances with Yusuf Lule (leader of a group dedicated to restoring monarchism in Buganda), and even making another alliance with former Idi Amin’s soldiers led by Moses Ali who was getting military support from President Ghaddafi of Libya in an attempt to overthrow Obote as a revenge against Tanzania for overthrowing Amin and bringing Obote back to power in Uganda.\textsuperscript{79}

These and other competing analyses paralyze conflict resolution efforts, as key actors lack a firm consensus on which issues to address in resolving the conflict. A more thorough investigation into the real root causes of political conflicts in Uganda is thus needed, particularly at a time when there is renewed hope that the conflict may soon be resolved and the root causes dealt with more comprehensively. Based on an analytical literature review and my own experience, I can say that the following are the long term causes of frequent wars in Uganda: The impact of colonialism and the partition of Africa, neoprimonalism, Bad (poor) colonial economic policy, undisciplined army, ethnocentrism (tribalism) and nepotism, a history of violence and impunity, poor education system, inconsistency between faith and life style, the evil of corruption, disunity between Catholic and Protestant missionaries, the Buganda factor (poor relationship between the Baganda and people of Uganda),

\textbf{1.10.1 The Impact of Colonialism and the Partition of Africa}

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 24.
The long-term causes of violent political conflicts in Uganda and in Africa as whole goes back all the way to the time of colonization and partition of Africa by European powers mainly the British, the French, Belgium, the Germans, the Portuguese, and Spain. When these powers became very interested in Africa in the late 1800s, they scrambled for Africa and just divided it among themselves according to their interests without paying much attention to the political structures, cultural and anthropological needs of the Africans themselves. The political jurisdictions that we have in Africa in general were imposed upon the Africans by colonial powers. These jurisdictions did not develop gradually into sovereign states through political consent of the native people. People just woke one day and found themselves bundled up together into a country called Uganda or Sudan, etc., without their knowledge, and they were told by their colonial masters to live in peace. Major ethnic groups and tribes were cut into halves by new international political borders assigning them to different countries against their will. This is how major ethnic groups and tribes that have never before been under the political authority of their rival found themselves together in one political pot. Paul Gifford confirms that the legacy of colonialism and partition of Africa is one of the root causes of wars and political conflicts in Africa:

The greatest single effect was the totally artificial boundaries which united at least two but usually many more recognizably distinct peoples, and conversely divided homogeneous groups between two or more different countries. Besides the heterogeneity of citizens, the colonial state left other negative legacies. Colonial administrations were both centralized and authoritarian. Just as important, the rulers manifested a sense of superiority over those they ruled,
and power was experienced as coming from above rather than flowing from below. Thus the ruled developed a sense of the state as an alien institution, to be feared but also to be deceived and exploited, since it existed on a plane above the people whom it governed, beyond any chance of control.\textsuperscript{80}

Thus the colonialists were not really interested in helping Africans organize themselves into authentic political jurisdictions known as States. They had their own agenda for going into Africa as Gifford continues with his analysis.

Colonial states had been above all about control: they were essentially about securing the obedience of an alien people. They were hierarchical, with primary aim being the maintenance of order. Moreover, the colonial states had to pay for themselves; they were geared to extracting resources from the domestic economy, or from the trade flowing from the economy’s incorporation into the global trading system. Only after that, was the state concerned with the provision of services. So the African state from birth was essentially an agency for control and extraction. There was never any merging of state and society as common expressions of shared values. Thus there has been little in the way of legitimacy, or popular commitment to public institutions.\textsuperscript{81}

One factor, now obvious, is that many of Africa’s states were unviable as autonomous entities. “An important distinction here is that between empirical and juridical statehood (or between positive and negative statehood, exercised by substantive and quasi-states respectively). Real states in the modern time like those in developed world came into existence because they had developed the machinery of statehood: they controlled all the territory they claimed, could enforce laws, collect taxes, offer protection to their citizens, and repel invaders. As a result, they could demand recognition of their statehood from

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p.4.
other states.\textsuperscript{82} Uganda as well as many African states cannot claim all of these, but does have a share of some of them. Thus for many African states professed statehood does not derive from any ability actually to do the things that are expected of a state- to impose a proper taxation system, build roads and maintain them well, provide good education and health services, enforce the law and protect its citizens; many of our states have no capacity to accomplish such things. They are states because the colonialists drew them up and the international community chooses to regard them as such, and the rules of the international game prevent fragmentation and interference on the part of others, or the recognition of other claimants who might perhaps be able or at least willing to provide such services. We can say that Uganda and most of the African countries have juridical statehood, but not empirical statehood (or negative but not positive statehood). Though they are recognized legal entities, they are not, in a functional sense, states.\textsuperscript{83}

This notion of quasi-statehood explains why so few African governments can properly be described as totalitarian. “Many, perhaps most, have been authoritarian, some repressive and even brutal, but few have the techniques and ability for total control which is the prerequisite for a totalitarian regime. They simply have not had the capacity to be totalitarian. The incapacity of the state has preserved some private living space for Africans, and the depredations of the state have led many to retreat into this free space.”\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p.8-9.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 10.
So I should say that the partition of Africa has so many negative consequences upon the Africa political systems or jurisdictions. For example, most African countries have no common language that gives them a sense of belonging, and a sense of oneness. The colonial powers imposed their own language upon the Africans as a common language but it is not natural to them and it does not work. Since language plays a very important role in uniting us into a people, many African countries face a lot of conflict because the citizens look at each other as enemies because they do not understand themselves. There is a natural tendency for each ethnic or tribal group to speak their own language and to care about their interest and not for the other groups. This creates a lot of suspicion and hatred among the tribes in one country. The ethnic groups also have different cultures because of different languages and ways of life. A common language play a big role in forging the unity of a people.

1.10.2 Neo - Patrimonialism

According to Gifford, neo-patrimonialism is another long term cause of violent conflicts in most African countries, and Uganda is suffering from the same disease that is bedeviling many African countries. The strong lack of shared values makes African states very different from real States in the developed world. Real States in the developed world rest on “rational-legal authority; power has come to be exercised through legally defined structures, for a publicly acknowledged aim. Operating these structures are officials who in exercising the powers of office treat other individuals impersonally, according to criteria
which the structures demand. This rational-legal ideal (admittedly nowhere achieved in its fullness) has proved to be the most efficient and legitimate way of running a complex modern State.”  

Most African states have yet failed to meet this rational-legal mode of operation. They can best be described as patrimonial states. “This, as the name implies, is based on the kind of authority a father has over his children. Here, those lower in the hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions of their own, but retainers whose position depends on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.”  

Africa’s modern patrimonial systems have two particular manifestations namely: corruption and clientelism. As Gifford puts it:

In the classic patrimonial system, the idea of corruption makes no sense because there is no distinction between the public and the private, the very distinction that underpins rational-legal ideal type. In a neo-patrimonial system, however, the system is formally constituted on the principle of rational-legality. African states function with the apparatus of modern nation state, but government officials tend to exercise their powers as a form not of public service but of private property.

In Uganda the distinction between public and private is hard to recognized, because in most cases public office is taken as the route to personal wealth and power. This attitude is commonly expressed in some proverbs like ‘The goat eats where it is tethered.’ This

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85 Ibid., p. 5.
86 Ibid., p. 5.
87 Ibid., p. 5.
attitude may have its root in our African traditional society or tribal societies where loyalty to one’s kin group is the primary social and moral value.

One very good analysis that Gifford makes in his book is that, in a neo-patrimonial state, support is ensured by clientelism, that is, a relationship of exchange in which a superior provides security for an inferior, who as a clients then provides political support for his patron. Control of the state carries with it the ability to provide (and, of course, to withhold) security, and to allocate benefits in the form of jobs, development projects which government leaders in Uganda commonly refer to as the ‘national cake’ and. Where the government is under no obligation to allocate benefits according to recognized criteria such as justice or efficiency or need, it may do so at its own discretion to encourage political support. Often this clientelism works through local power brokers, in which case the central authority looks around for political support from a local leader with a following in his own home area. "The central figure delivers benefits to the local grandee, who in turn delivers the support of his area to the supremo. The local leader thus becomes a broker between his own community and the central government, passing benefits in both directions," and usually taking a significant share for himself in the process. Most often in Uganda like in other African states given the totally artificial colonial boundaries which have left few states corresponding to ethnic identities, clientelism functions to mobilize ethnic support. The leadership obliges itself to look after the interests of its constituent tribe or group, and in return acquires a kind of legitimacy as the authentic representative of

89 Ibid., p. 6.
that group, regardless of the enormous gulf between the leader and his followers. In this way according to Gifford, clientelism both maintains ruling class interests and at the same time effectively prevents the rise of class as a political factor. Clientelism has thus militated against the rise of real revolutionary movements in Africa as a whole.

To the extent that there is a dominant class, we can say that it has arisen from what Gifford describe in his book as ‘hegemonic alliance’ or from the ‘reciprocal assimilation of elites.’ That is,

There exists between the administration, party, bureaucracy, army, intellectuals-sometimes even traditional leaders like chiefs-a privileged zone of interpenetration and mutual reinforcement, to produce a relatively homogeneous social group, an elite group with college education and well-paid jobs, and often the former colonial residences. All the educated have tended to coalesce in this privileged group through processes described as ‘straddling’ or ‘concatenation.’ Even in single-party states the tendency has been to incorporate rather than to eliminate. Links are maintained through churches, and social functions; in this web of personal relations, the private order is not separate from that of the state. The system involves co-option, which extends to civil servants; to academics seeking preferment or appointment to commissions and diplomatic posts; to journalists who need access to information; to businessmen requiring contracts; to even clergymen wanting tax-exempt status – in fact to all branches of the elite.90

And so through clientelism as described by Gifford, the state’s tentacles stretch everywhere, from ethnic dependents in rural villages to all sectors of the elite. It is like a ‘rhizome state’ in which all sorts of ‘little men or women’ are linked through numerous capillaries of patronage like a network of a plant’s roots and influence to some big man or

90 Ibid., p. 7.
woman through whom they can get a share of the good things of life (national cake). Where there is no effective electoral process that offers real choice to clients, such a system may admittedly bring some benefits to a few who belong to the network but its defects are obvious, not least that it does nothing to develop the efficiency, accountability and legitimacy necessary in the modern state.

Such a description of African states is as true of military as of civilian regimes. To a large extent, a clear civilian-military dichotomy is difficult to use in categorizing African states. Many regimes have the army behind them. In many cases, a military leader just simply discards his uniform for a civilian suit and goes on to ‘win’ an election, but the difference this makes is often not clear.

1.10.3 Economic Factor (Poverty as a Consequent of bad Colonial Economic Policy for Uganda)

The current economy of Uganda shaped by poor colonial economic policy is another area where further parameters of division in Ugandan society were rooted in the planting of colonialism. As Karugire describes it,

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“Right from the early beginnings of the protectorate, colonial officials were charged with the task of raising local revenue to pay for the administration of the protectorate so that the Imperial treasury be relieved of such expenditures which were considerably unpopular with certain sections of the British public. When Sir Harry Johnston was appointed Special Commissioner for Uganda in 1899, his attention was specifically drawn to the fact that Uganda was costing the British Treasury close to 400,000 (British Pounds) annually in grants – in – aid.92

And so, one of Johnson’s early tasks, therefore, was to correct this unsatisfactory financial standing of the protectorate by vigorously and immediately exploring ways of raising revenue locally in Uganda. One of the obvious ways of raising revenue was to tax the Ugandans but this had several limitations, they might provoke a native uprising and thus be the cause of greater expenditure to suppress such an outbreak. Fearing that taxation would cause uprising in the whole country, the British government through their man (Johnson) decided that taxation was an avenue to be approached with caution and yet, the financial problems of the protectorate appeared to call for immediate rather than gradual solutions. This is the context in which the introduction of ‘cash crops’ in Uganda was stumbled upon. This had the double advantage in that, by obtaining cash from their crops, the peasants’ ability to pay taxes would be enhanced, and the protectorate government would earn more revenue from export taxes, and so on.93

In spite of this official interest, however, the introduction of cotton growing in Uganda owed its initiative to the missionaries (CMS) whose industrial arm, the Uganda Company,

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93 Ibid., p 27.
obtained seeds from the British Cotton Growing Association and introduced them in Uganda in 1903. Cotton growing by Ugandan peasants, without European supervision or coercion, was an immediate success, so successful that, by the 1915-1916 financial year, the protectorate was able to dispense with imperial grants-in-aid. From Buganda in the south central part of Uganda where the British colonial headquarters was located, cotton growing was introduced to other parts of Uganda mainly to the northern and eastern parts of Uganda where cotton grows best. However, it is important to emphasize that in all these areas, cash crops were being produced on small peasant holdings and this was true when eventually coffee overtook cotton as the most important export crop in Uganda in the 1930’s.

According to Karugire, by the 1930’s, however, the primary concern of the colonial government was no longer merely to raise local revenue to meet the expenses of running the protectorate, since this had been achieved in the early years of the protectorate, as we have seen, but rather to orient the protectorate’s economy to the larger British economy. As Brett tells it: “Whatever the importance of the strategic or philanthropic concerns among those who originally took Britain into Africa at the end of the 19th century, those who kept her there in the twentieth were obsessed with the need to create an export economy which would draw her directly and profitably into the British system of international trade.” Thus, whereas the Ugandan peasants were the cash crop producers,

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94 Ibid., p.28.
95 Ibid., p. 28.
the processing and marketing were placed in the hands of the Asians (as the inhabitants of
the Indian subcontinent are known in East Africa) and European companies by a series of
colonial regulations. Moreover, as Mamdani tells us: “Building upon pre-colonial
differences, Britain turned the southern part of Uganda (Buganda, Busoga, Ankole) into
cash crop growing areas. But cash crop production was discouraged in northern areas.
Acholi, Lango, West Nile, and in Kigezi in western Uganda, were developed as labor
reserves, from whence were recruited not only soldiers and policemen (excluding Kigezi
for this purpose), but also workers for factories and plantations in the south.”

To cap it all, the protectorate's commerce was firmly in the hands of Asians. Because of
their customs and business practices, the Asians, mostly to be found in the urban areas and
trading centers of Uganda were buttressed by a well-disposed colonial administration, a
fact which tended to make the Asian community apolitical in the larger affairs of the
protectorate. As this community had no rapport with the Ugandans at all, it was vulnerable
when Africans began to assume a leading role in the affairs of Uganda, as a matter of fact I
think this contributed a lot to a back-fire against the Asians during Idi Amin’s regime that
sent Asians away from Uganda. Thus, by the end of colonial rule, a section of the Ugandans
had become the cash crop producers, and others were not, while the commercial sector

While it is true that lots of plantation works came from northern Uganda to work down in the southern part
of Uganda, it is not true that the British colonial government did not promote cash-crop growing in northern
Uganda. As I have indicated above, cotton grows better in northern Uganda than in the south so the British
did a lot to encourage cotton growing in northern Uganda because they knew that most of the cotton had to
come from northern Uganda. They also did encourage the growing of tobacco in northern Uganda as another
cash-crop that does well in northern Uganda. Coffee was not really encouraged in northern Uganda because it
grows better in southern Uganda. However, the point remains true that the British colonial government did
not do much to balance Uganda economically in terms of regional divides.
was controlled by Asians and, to a lesser extent, by the few European companies operating in Uganda. In other words, the Uganda protectorate was not only differentiated at the level of politics but also in the sphere of economic pursuits.

1.10.4 Modern Weapons and Pre-modern Armies

Something needs to be done about the role of the army in Ugandan politics. The army is directly and indirectly responsible for some of the violent conflicts that have rocked Uganda since its independence. According to Mazrui’s analysis, at independence, weapons in Uganda and in most African countries were not very advanced, but the armies were relatively disciplined and professional. Now the weapons have become more advanced, but the armies have become less disciplined and less professional. Both the standing army and modern weapons, it may be added, were yet another legacy of colonialism. Advanced modern weapons, in the hands of an undisciplined and unprofessional army is a true recipe for violent conflicts, abuse of human rights, and unfair political systems in most African countries. One of the few African countries to consider, even briefly, whether to do without a standing army was Tanzania. In 1964 president Julius Nyerere had the opportunity to disband his entire army and not build an alternative one. He did disband the old one, but he did not follow Costa Rica’s example and do without an army. Instead he reconstructed a
national army. Uganda and most African countries entered independence with this dysfunctional twin inheritance.\(^9^8\)

This combination of modern weapons and less than modern armies has proved to be a menacing and destabilizing one in most African countries. Uganda’s rather fragile government institutions are all too easily destroyed by the predominant power in the country, the gun. Soldiers have proved to be the most powerful force in Ugandan politics since independence. Unfortunately, most African leaders make the so-called national army into personal armies. The army is not an independent body from the ruling leader or ruling party it is manipulated by those in power to do their will and that is why we have so many unfair elections and military takeovers in Africa. Uganda alone has seen about five coups and never a single peaceful transition of power since its independence; and Africa as a whole has seen over seventy coups in a quarter of a century.\(^9^9\) The habit in Uganda is for the president to flood the army with men and women from his tribe or ethnic group because he or she does not trust his security and political agenda with Ugandans from other tribes. The president surrounds himself with his tribes-mates by promoting them to most of the high offices in the army. Then he uses them to suppress the other tribes in the country and to carry out his political agenda. Historically Ugandan army commits a lot of human right abuses which are then covered up by the president and his government.

\(^9^9\) Ibid., p.39.
1.10.5 Ethnocentrism (Tribalism) and Nepotism

Ethnicity and tribalism is among the major long-term causes of conflict in Uganda and in most Africa countries. Tribalism is commonly understood as the exaggerated strong feeling of loyalty to a tribe which causes an individual to discriminate against members of other cultural groups. Nepotism is favoritism based on relationship and friendship. Ethnocentrism, “tribalism” and nepotism are very evident realities in Ugandan society. The ethnic conflicts in Africa flow directly from the colonial partitioning of Africa that did not pay attention to a natural sense of political order that existed in Africa. Ethnicity is one of the major causes of divisions including “tribalism,” regionalism and nepotism. Uganda suffers from a deep-rooted regional divide based on ethnicity. We have two major ethnic groups in Uganda that seem not to get along: the Bantus and the Nilotics. The Nilotics as well as the para-nilotics occupy mainly northern and eastern Uganda. The Bantus occupy mainly south-central and western Uganda.

The deep-seated division between northern and southern Uganda has engendered a fear of being dominated by either region’s ethnic groups, and fear has served as a barrier to national unity. The north-south divide is symptomatic of other regional divisions that exist throughout Uganda. Many Ugandans do not view Uganda as one country. It is probably difficult for us Ugandans to answer the question what is Uganda? We generally look at

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ourselves in terms of tribes, region and ethnicity instead of understanding that we are a nation. The concept of nationality is yet very weak in the citizens beginning from the president down to the citizens. The members of parliament don’t think and work as a nation but as regions and tribes. They do not work for nation building but for tribal, regional and personal building. That is one reason why political conflict in Uganda is viewed by Ugandans as a regional or a tribal issue and not as a national issue. Even the national parliament gets divided in finding a common solution to the problem of wars in Uganda. The members of parliament are at each others’ throats and stand up against each others during their debates in terms of regional or ethnic affiliation.

The law enforcement authorities are also compromised in doing their jobs. The law of the country is not enforced fairly because of ethnic or tribal affiliation. A criminal may get away with the crime he or she committed just because of members of his ethnic or tribal group in the government system. And on the other hand, an innocent person may get thrown into jail or even killed because of some politically generated allegations just because he or she does not have a member of his tribe or region in a high ranking government office to defend him or her. This is why each ethnic or tribal group is afraid and suspicious of the others if they are not represented in positions of power in any government of Uganda at all times.

This lingering attitude among many Ugandan and even some policy makers has its roots in the policies and actions of previous governments that concentrated power and resources in
the hands of specific groups in certain regions to the exclusion of other regions. In particular, political and economic patrimonialism occurred along a north-south dividing line, with leaders, enflaming anti-regional or ethnic sentiments. Such political decisions have engendered fear among those regions not in power, and have been one of the chief catalysts of conflict, with leaders using ethnic sentiments to mobilize political support.

Regional divisions were accentuated by post-independence regimes. At the root of such divisions lay each government’s failure either to identify and prioritize the issue of nation-building, or their use of approaches that only partially solved the problems or inadvertently reinforced them. Narrow individual political interests including exclusion and intolerance to alternative ideas and groups were the root issues in these regimes. In order to help minimize disloyalty and the chances of revolt, successive governments in Uganda have promoted and surrounded themselves with relatives, friends and people particularly from their own ethno-regional-religious group. The system of government in Uganda has so far not been transformed into a fully representative national entity. The perception of political domination by a particular ethnic group has fuelled several regional conflicts in Uganda. It is still a common feeling among Ugandans that as long as one’s ethnic group is not represented in government, one’s security is not guaranteed. Unfortunately, their fear is usually confirmed and proved right by each successive ruling government.

The aftermath of these policy choices is a divided Uganda with a fragile sense of nationhood such that political conflicts become geographically localized or regionalized, and are perceived by other Ugandans as distant and unimportant, as long as it doesn’t directly
affect their own home region. While this in itself does not cause conflict, lack of concern by
the general public not directly affected, and ‘official blindness’ to a people’s suffering
creates fertile grounds for security-threatening elements to fester and destabilize whole
communities, which in effect creates the motive and incentive for conflict.

Thus the failure of successive governments in Uganda to analyze and correctly diagnose the
problems facing different parts of Uganda led them to adopt policies that failed to address
these problems, and to adopt strategies riddled with inconsistencies that inadvertently
permitted contentious issues to degenerate into violence. In particular, the lack of clear
leadership that could stand above prejudices both at a national and grassroots level is a
recurring issue in each successive regime. Such absence of leadership has led to failure to
address root causes of conflicts and allowed wars to continue in Uganda. In the context of
the ongoing war in northern Uganda, much of the current government’s policy response to
the physical and human security challenges has been to delegitimize the conflict by
focusing on the LRA as criminal elements or terrorists that can be quickly squashed.
However, the reality on the ground shows that the war in fact encompasses a number of
broader root issues that must also be considered when dealing with the conflict today.

1.10.6 A History of Violence and Impunity
Uganda’s post-colonial history of violent coups, numerous armed rebellions and a lack of accountability for such violence provides the critical backdrop for understanding why the war broke out the way it did in northern Uganda. Indeed, given this history of accessing power through violent means, the current ongoing war in northern Uganda may be seen as the normal course of political business. The political system in Uganda has, since the first post-independence government, had a strong military character. Previous regimes, such as those of Idi Amin, Milton Obote and Tito Okello were also marked by a lot of unrest and human rights violations, such as torture, rape, extra-judicial execution and mass murders, disappearances and displacement.101 Many of the perpetrators of these crimes got away with impunity, and thus was created a trend for successive governments to hunt down and exact extra-judicial revenge on soldiers and civilian populations associated with the ousted regimes. This practice culminated in a cycle of fear, hate, anger, mistrust, and violent vengeance, which served to entrench prejudices that had, since the colonial period, labeled and split Ugandans along regional and ethnic lines. Such a culture of impunity also made recourse to violence the easy and normal method of retaining or gaining access to and control of state power because so far all successive governments in Uganda did the same thing including the current NRM government of president Museveni. Thus, political repression carried out by the former leaders and their undisciplined army became only symptoms of a culture of revenge and exclusion entrenched by historical incidents under various regimes.

Periods of uncertainty following Uganda’s numerous military coups highlight the cycles of violence that are still relevant today, including the aftermath of Obote’s ouster in 1971 and again in 1985, Idi Amin’s overthrow in 1979, and the overthrow of General Tito Okello by Museveni in 1986. At the same time, new governments pursued vendettas against the remnants of previous regimes, following them to their home areas and committing gross human rights violations against the local population. After Idi Amin overthrew Milton Obote in 1971, for example, he ordered soldiers who had served in Obote’s government into the barracks and killed many of them before going on to exact revenge against unarmed civilians in Acholi and Lango.\(^\text{102}\) The war in northern Uganda is similar to the overthrows of government in our past. Once a team of people have been overthrown by violence, there is always resistance in the hearts of people. This system of transferring power is deeply rooted in this country, leaving a trail of bitterness.

The absence of viable political structures allowing for the free entry and exit from the political process, as well as inadequate channels to express grievances or disaffection, further fuelled violent political change. The purging of previous army officers forced many into exile, while others were persuaded by their leaders to go into hiding or join other disgruntled groups, to fight either to restore their control of political power with incumbent socio-economic advantages, or to push for popular support to overthrow the government. Many people in Uganda believe in a mentality of ‘If you don’t like the government, you go to the bush!’ On this note then it is no coincidence that for many people

in northern Uganda, the sense of betrayal by the NRM government on the power-sharing provisions of the 1986 Nairobi Peace Accord was one of the immediate causes of the ongoing war in northern Uganda. Many people in northern Uganda including the LRA fighters themselves are angry at Museveni for violating that agreement and they wanted Museveni to apologize for breaching it. So the violation of Nairobi Peace Accord have given all the different rebel groups that sprang up in northern and eastern Uganda including the LRA the *Lapii* (justification) to start a war against Museveni’s NRM government.

Resentments related to the war in northern Uganda have arisen because trends in official government policy were deliberately designed to exclude, discriminate, neglect and exploit certain groups with regard to political participation and access to the so-called “national cake.” Many people in northern Uganda also believe that the conflict originated because of the distance between the people of northern Uganda and Museveni’s NRM government. They were frustrated with the new government for not giving them anything and for constantly saying they are not going to share in the national cake.

Rebel groups have also perpetuated a political culture of violence by committing their own share of atrocities against the local population for non-support, while at the same time attracting reprisals from the government for alleged collaboration. One of the most notorious examples was the massacres in the ‘Luwero Triangle’ between 1980 and 1985, where the then-insurgent NRA/M of Museveni (the current president of Uganda) killed many people for informing the then government of Milton Obote of the whereabouts of the rebels. At the same time, the UNLA government of Obote exacted reprisals against the
civilians for alleged support of or collaboration with the rebels through mass killings, looting and destruction of property.\textsuperscript{103} As documented in the Refugee Law Project Working Paper, an interviewee from Luwero told them that “If the rebels were told you were informing the government, they would come and warn you not to do it again. If you said what they told you, they would come and take you, and give you a hoe to dig your grave then hit you with the hoe and you fell into the hole. Or they just killed you and left you.”\textsuperscript{104} Other interviewees also disputed to the same Refugee Law Project that the crimes committed in Luwero Triangle were exclusively perpetrated by army officers from northern Uganda, or the Acholi in particular: “Some people from here who were in government would come and ask for your identity card, and ask where you came from, especially if you had something they wanted to take from you. Even if they know you, they would call you a \textit{muyekera} (rebel) and kill you. We know them.”\textsuperscript{105}

So these cycles of violent politics and revenge perpetuated by previous regimes have created a political environment in which armed mobilization is seen as a legitimate means to address the grievances of one’s group and the only means to access political power.

\subsection*{1.10.7 A Poor and Inadequate Education System/Curriculum}

The right to knowledge and awareness is no doubt the basis for the realization of other human rights. An ignorant person is not aware of the existence of human rights he or she is

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., Lomo. “Behind the Violence.” p. 9  
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 9.
entitled to. Learning equips an individual with the education necessary to know about other rights that accrue to citizens and human beings. Strand in this argument relates to the liberation theories in which ignorant members of society are oppressed by the power-holders (of economic, political and intellectual might) of their own societies.

The denial to the masses of benefits accruing from the power of education has been deliberate. To free these members of society from this bondage of ignorance therefore, they need to be conscientized – they must be educated. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights was the first human rights instrument to establish the fundamental right to education (UDHR, Article 26). The world summit held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand re-affirmed and upheld this fundamental right by adopting a declaration on Education for All.106 Throughout the 1990s both the international community and national communities have re-echoed this declaration as a fundamental human right that will lead to sustainable development and peace within and between countries. Emphasis has been laid on basic/elementary education as a means to learning to know, to do and to live together harmoniously in order to improve on one’s life and transform society. Jomtien and other subsequent world gatherings (The World Conference on Human Rights, 1993; the International Conference on Adult Education, 1997) went a step further and stressed Adult Education to include those persons who might have missed an opportunity for schooling.107

107 Ibid., p. 115.
The 20th century has been an era for promoting the realization of human rights, human freedoms and human development – however, much work remains unaccomplished particularly in the developing countries like Uganda where wars and political conflict is causing severe violation of human rights. Several declarations, conventions, charters and other documents have detailed the fundamental rights and freedoms of humankind. These rights include political rights, minority rights, cultural rights, the rights of the child, as well as the animal and environmental rights. In this work, however, the focus is the poor education system in Uganda as one of our long term causes of frequent political conflicts in Uganda.

The right to education in Uganda has not yet been accorded as much attention as needed. It should be noted that education is primordial in the development of a country. It is a prerequisite for civilization. A progressing society can be judged by the quality of its education. The right to such a requisite tool cannot be overemphasized. The right to quality education is enshrined in most of the International Human Rights instruments. Since Uganda is a signatory to most of the above covenants it is held accountable when any of the rights stipulated in those documents is violated or abused within its territory.

Since Uganda’s independence in 1962, its education policies have not adequately prepared Ugandans to accept one another and to learn to live together as a people of one nation. Keeping in mind that Uganda is going through a lot of wars and political conflicts due to ethnic, regional, and tribal hatred, there is probably nothing we urgently need in Uganda
more than an education policy that can help to make Ugandans love their country and one another. In Uganda, we spend a lot of time and resources learning other things (most of which are good) but basically very little or nothing is done to teach Ugandans about patriotism, nationhood, acceptance of one another, tolerance and things like good governance and civility. I am sure that there are many adult Ugandans who do not even know what Uganda is. If they happen to know what Uganda is, then I doubt if they have a fairly clear idea of the boundary of Uganda as a country and who are the different tribes or people who make up the country called Uganda. This is all because of lack of national education policies that should teach Ugandans about themselves and about their country. How can we be a nation? How can we be Ugandans without a serious national education program to prepare us for such a difficult task? No wonder that we cannot get along well with one another, because we have never been prepared, never been educated to be together as a people of one nation.

A similar lack of good national educational policy to help fight ethnic and tribal conflicts is also reflected in our national parliament which is a law-making institution of the country. The parliament of Uganda has never stood up clearly to categorically fight against regional, ethnic and tribal conflicts in the country. Since our independence in 1961, the parliament has not taken upon itself the task of building Ugandan into a nation by passing laws that promote unity and condemn tribalism, regionalism or ethnicity conflict. If such a law exists, it is only in writing without any serious affirmative action to implement it. Our parliament and law enforcement authorities would have by now cut down drastically the rate of wars
and political conflicts in Uganda if our parliament had taken a serious step toward building the people into a nation. Members of parliament themselves are deeply engaged in regional, ethnic and tribal operation instead of doing a good job to help solve the recurring problem of national unity. Our members of parliament operate in ‘gangs’ for regional and tribal benefits. They don’t think about building Uganda as whole but about building their tribes and regions. And in the process of operating in ‘gangs’ the parliament becomes an arena to destroy Uganda instead of building it.

1.10.8 Inconsistency between Faith and Life Style

Faith in Jesus Christ is not just to be restricted to the interior life of the believer. Christian faith is to be lived and practiced in words and actions. It is a transforming faith that does not only change the life of the believer but it is also to change the world of the believer according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. As Tusingire puts it “The Christian faith by its very nature, if genuinely accepted, cannot leave the believer’s life unaffected. In fact, the Christian faith is supposed to give new bearing; a kind of new style of living to the one who embraces it. But what we observe in Uganda seems to go against this nature of the Christian faith. Many people have received Baptism and are therefore legally members of the Church. Thus statistically the number of Christians in Uganda is high. But the lifestyle of
many does not correspond to their Christian faith.”

The positive statistics and the actual Christian practice of the population in general seem to be in contradiction.

And so according to Tusingire, these inconsistencies in the Church in Uganda need to be understood within the context of the Church in Africa. Specifically, Churches in the countries neighboring Uganda provide bitter testimony to the reality we are discussing here. Uganda’s neighbors such as Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya, are among the most Catholic Countries of Africa, all face similar situations. The fact that these ‘Christian’ countries are the very countries where serious atrocities are being committed leaves one wondering what role Christianity is playing in the life of these communities. This should not be taken as a justification of the situation in Uganda, but as a witness of the dangers involved in living an uncommitted Christian faith.

Tusingire reminds us about the sad story of genocide in Rwanda which is still fresh in the minds of many people around the world. Rwanda was looked at as an example of a success story for the missionaries, with a Christian presence which had been estimated at about 90% of the Rwandan population, of which Catholics alone were about 50%. The Catholic Church was reported to be “after the government, the single most powerful institution through its network of social, educational and medical institutions run by the many

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108 Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p.158.
109 Ibid. p. 158.
religious groups.”111 Yet what took place there between 1990 and 1994 left many terribly disappointed with unanswered questions about the Church’s role. The problem here is not whether people go to Church on Sunday or not. As an evangelical missionary observed, “On Sundays in Rwanda we used to see well-dressed neighbors walking to Church on every road. Yet last year these same neighbors slaughtered each other.”112

Uganda is just like Rwanda because we have witnessed the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people in the Luwero Triangle, parts of western Uganda, north-western part of Uganda (West Nile region), Teso (eastern Uganda) and the worst of it now going on in Acholi and Lango areas in northern Uganda. So the reality is that Uganda is not exempt from contradictions between being Church-going and living the true Christian faith. The impact of a big Christian presence in the country is still not felt and reflected in most levels of society, especially in the area of politics and civil service. On the other hand, the tendencies in the general population which are inconsistent with the Christian faith such as exaggerated and unrestrained tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, corruption, still need to be overcome.

1.10.9 The Evil of Corruption

Another major cause of conflict in Uganda is corruption. Corruption is so rampant in Uganda that it seems it has become a way of living. Father Tusingire also tells us that corruption has become so common in Uganda that many people tend to take for granted some of its aspects. To dilute or make some acts of corruption acceptable, people have invented nicknames and ‘pet’ names for corrupt acts. Practices of corruption have become so common that some people take them as the normal way of doing things; they may not even know another way.\footnote{Ibid. Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p. 168.} The word “corruption” seems to have lost its meaning. In our context, the word corrupt is used to describe a person who is “Willing to act dishonestly in return for money or personal gain.”\footnote{Catherine Soanes, ed. Concise Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: University Press, 2008, p. 321.} Corruption may be further described as the state of moral perversion, depravity, a lack of integrity, dishonesty, or bribery. It is correctly applied to a person in public office who acts on mercenary motives or without regard to morality, honor, right or justice, corrupt people make both the public and private system of services to the people unreliable.

In the case of Uganda, the description, of a public servant as one originally honest who has succumbed to temptation and begun questionable practices is inadequate. To be corrupted implies that one was originally upright and honest. In Uganda one may not talk of some politicians or public servants as having been originally honest, especially if some of them gained their positions and retain them through corruption.
Uganda has been identified as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In fact, according to the survey conducted by Transparency International in 2001, Uganda was ranked third most corrupt country in the world.\textsuperscript{115} While we may doubt the accuracy of this information, especially regarding Uganda’s rank, what we may not doubt is the fact that Ugandan society has been infiltrated by the evil of corruption. Corruption in public life is endemic. It is clearly reflected in the misuse of power by those in public offices and in their lack of a work ethic. The situation has reached alarming proportions. The above mentioned report of Transparency International indicates that only in one year Uganda slipped nine places backwards. Whereas other countries have improved their record, Uganda’s is getting worse and out of hand.\textsuperscript{116}

What is more baffling is the fact that the majority of Ugandans are supposed to be Christians or God fearing people. In fact, Ugandans consider Uganda a God fearing country as is indicated in the nation’s motto, “For God and my Country.” One might wonder, therefore, how it is possible that corrupt tendencies are prominent here. Yet the truth is that majority of the perpetrators of corruption are also believers in God, with the Christians being the majority. Worse still, corruption seems to have increased with the growth of Christianity in the country. Here I am not implying that Christianity is the cause of corruption. On the contrary, the two are contradictory to one another. But we cannot fail to observe the fact that Christianity has not yet made a positive corresponding impact on the


\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, pp. 168-169.
Ugandan Society. This is real challenge, an irregularity that needs to be addressed because poor and weak people can never get what they need in such a system. The whole government is infected by corruption and cannot render needed services to the citizens hence causing tension and violent political conflicts.

As Christians we believe that when the Gospel values have infiltrated the life of a people, then the life of those people must reflect the Christian values. The teaching of Christ is an invitation to love, to build a more just and peaceful society. As long as these values are not yet embraced in our society, then there is cause to think that ours is not a Christian society. It is not enough to have massive numbers of people who have been baptized in the Church. It is more important to have people who live according to what they profess. In Uganda today the greatest need is to have people who witness to their faith. This is the priority that the Church in Uganda needs to focus on.

1.10.10 Disunity between the Catholic and Protestant Missionaries during the Colonial time in Uganda

The competition between Catholic and Protestant missionaries had a greater impact in Ugandan politics than in many other African countries. Missionary activities during the colonial period created religious divisions in most parts of Uganda in spite of giving many

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117 Ibid., p. 169.
118 Ibid., pp. 169-170.
parts of Uganda a head-start in education. The most significant impact of the Christian differences was the polarization of political support around two political parties in the 1950s and 1960s, with the Democratic Party (DP) and Uganda People’s Congress (UPC). The Democratic Party was created by some Ugandan Catholics in 1954 as a party for the Catholics and Uganda People’s Congress was founded by some Ugandan Protestants (Anglicans) as a party for the Protestants. Party politics in Uganda as such settled down along fundamentally religious lines, based upon long established religious divisions. Missionary activities therefore, reinforced conflict in Uganda, depressing development and undermining the effective administration of the region.

The history of the missionary and colonial impacts on political conflicts in Uganda started with the arrival and activities of a British explorer known as Henry Morton Stanley. According to Karugire,

In 1875 on one of his cross continental journeys in Africa, Stanley stumbled upon the Buganda Kingdom (one of the kingdoms in south-central Uganda). The King of Buganda at that time was Muteesa I. He and Stanley appear to have got on well; so well in fact that Stanley, allegedly on Muteesa’s urging, wrote a letter to Britain appealing for Christian missionaries to be sent to his kingdom. However, this was not the first time that the idea of sending missionaries to Uganda had been floated in Britain, for in 1862/3, a Captain Speke had put the same idea to the Church Missionary Society (CMS), but it was not taken up as it appeared to be far-fetched. But when Stanley’s letter was published in England, there was an immediate favorable response. Generous financial donations poured into the coffers of the CMS to promote the Uganda adventure. Despite their earlier misgivings, the first CMS missionaries arrived in the south-central part of Uganda (Buganda Kingdom) on June 30, 1877; followed, no doubt to the
great annoyance of the CMS, by the Roman Catholic order of the White Fathers (now known as Missionaries of Africa) at the beginning of 1879.\textsuperscript{119}

This is the real beginning of the story of missionary and colonial activities as one of the remote root causes of political conflicts in Uganda today.

Each of the two missionary groups started claiming that their brand of Christianity was a more valid one than of the other. King Mutessa and his courtiers were bewildered: here were two sets of white people, each representing competing brands of Christianity. Bear in mind that neither Mutessa nor his subjects initially understood what this argument was all about since they did not even know what Christianity was about. The daily disputations between the Christian factions before the King of Buganda and his courtiers seemed more and more pointless and all the more irritating since neither faction was of any apparent value to Mutessa’s kingdom and its geopolitics. To complicate this picture further, there was also the Muslim factor. Arab traders had reached Uganda in the 1840’s and, to cement these relations, Mutesa exchanged gifts with the Sultan of Zanzibar in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{120} By the time the Christian missionaries arrived in Uganda, there was already a considerable presence of Arab Muslims. Despite their earlier presence in Buganda kingdom however, Muslims had not made any special effort to convert the people of Uganda to their religion largely because their principal interest was trade and commerce. But with the coming of

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., Karugire. \textit{Roots of Instability in Uganda}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. 9.
Christian missionaries whose avowed intention was to convert the Ugandans, the Arabs also began to exhibit keen interest in converting Ugandans to Islam.

Amid this somewhat fluid situation, conversion of the people of Buganda Kingdom to the new religions went on, beginning with the Kings’ palace and then spreading to the surrounding areas. First to be converted were the chiefs of the kingdom and the numerous pages who, at any time, were to be found at court performing a variety of functions for their king. According to Samwiri Karugire, in the Buganda kingdom’s political system, the king’s palace was also the training ground for the future chiefs and military leaders of the kingdom. This means that conversion began with the leaders and future leaders of the kingdom, and then progressed to the ordinary members. This was an important development for the future of Buganda Kingdom because of the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of the Buganda government; it meant that the new converts had obtained an important footing at the core of the structure of the governance of Buganda and they were not slow in realizing the importance of this.\textsuperscript{121}

Things were going downhill very fast for the king of Buganda as religious and political tension mounted in his kingdom. Things got even worst by the death of king Muteesa I as Karugire describes it. Then in October 1884, King Muteesa I, who had presided over Buganda kingdom while these momentous and contentious events were unfolding, died. He was succeeded by his son Mwanga who was far less experienced in the management of

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., pp. 9 – 10.
public affairs than his father. It must be stressed from the outset that Mwanga had succeeded to a bewildering throne that would have, in all probability, overwhelmed even a more talented person than himself. First, there were the Christian missionaries, their numbers swollen by reinforcements from their home countries; there were also the Arabs, always on the lookout for any opportunity to embarrass their Christian rivals and who often engaged in intrigue to create such opportunities; and, finally and more importantly, there were the local people of Buganda Kingdom converted to new religions who were increasingly becoming more and more unwilling to give unquestioning obedience to their King who had not yet converted to the new Christian faith. The new converts were divided into Catholics, Protestants (Anglicans) and Muslims, and then there were the majority of the local people of Buganda who had not yet succumbed to the new religions. In other words, the integrity of the Kingdom had been compromised by these divisions. It was no longer the vibrant and United Kingdom as it used to be.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 10-11.}

The young and inexperienced king Mwanga fearfully watched those developments and did not like what he saw. His pages were becoming more and more disrespectful of his authority, something that used not to happen. Foreign missionaries were taking an unhealthy interest in his kingdom’s affairs and the Christian chiefs were openly siding with them. Mwanga perceived all these developments as a sinister challenge to his authority and the well-being of his kingdom. He decided to act but, unknown to him, it was too late. By 1888 when he decided to stop or control the influence of foreigners in his kingdom’s
affairs, the converts had become too powerful to dislodge. Each missionary group had fashioned a private ‘army’ of supporters who owed loyalty to them rather than to the King, against whom they were even willing to deploy if needed. The intemperate actions of king Mwanga himself precipitated a crisis. In 1886, the king had nearly 200 converts to Christianity, who refused to renounce their faith, burned to death at Namugongo to teach a salutary lesson to his erring subjects and his increasingly irreverent visitors, the missionaries. Those burned to death at that time are now the honored Holy Martyrs of Uganda.¹²³ The so-called lesson, as so often in the march of Christianity elsewhere, had misfired very badly. Instead of shunning missionaries and their churches, the local people of Buganda Kingdom flocked to the missionaries to be baptized to the king’s increasing alarm. More than this, the missionaries and their converts had come to the conclusion that they had to take active measures to defend themselves against royal excesses aimed at them. For this they were more than adequately prepared, just as Mwanga was ill-prepared to suppress them. They were prepared because, as we have seen by and large conversion had taken place among the kingdom’s leadership and, by persecuting Christians, the king was threatening that very leadership without whose support he could not have effected any meaningful political change in his kingdom.¹²⁴

Thus, according to Karugire, when king Mwanga decided to round up all the missionaries and the prominent converts so as to maroon them on some island in Lake Victoria (then, known as Nalubaale in Buganda), the three religious factions combined their forces and

¹²⁴ Ibid., Karugire. Roots of Instability, p.11.
deposed the king on September 10, 1888. The alliance then quickly fell apart, and soon afterwards the Muslims staged a counter coup and installed a new king, while Catholic and Protestant missionaries fled into hiding. Now the Catholics and Protestants joined with the exiled king Mwanga again, and in 1889 overthrew the Muslim regime and restored him. In 1892 the two groups, Catholics and Anglicans, declared war on each other. These events have been described as the Christian revolution in Buganda Kingdom and, as it turned out, in Uganda (an entity yet to be created but whose creation these events were shaping).

There were an number of wars between Muslim and Christians and between the Catholics and the Anglicans, which ‘ended’ in the Protestant victory over the Catholics in 1892 mainly as a result of support of a British Captain Lugard, his troops and his Maxim gun. And also as Gifford puts it, Lugard sided with the Anglicans because they were British, whereas the White Fathers were French. National allegiances of the missionaries were so evident that the Anglicans were known by the local people as the Bangereza (the English) and the Catholics the Bafaransa (the French). Lugard’s intervention ensured victory for the Anglicans, although they were the weaker side, against the king and the Catholics, something which has affected the politics and the religious makeup of Uganda up to now. The deposition of king Mwanga in September 1888, and his eventual restoration in March 1892 by the same Christian chiefs who had deposed him earlier, constituted a revolution in more than one way. For the first time in the history of the Kingdom, a small clique of

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125 Ibid., p. 12.
126 Ibid. p. 12.
converts had seized power and changed the essence of kingship in the space of a single
decade. With Mwanga’s restoration in 1892, it was clear that henceforth he was a client of
the Christian chiefs rather than their master. 129

Secondly and most importantly as Karugire explains, the wars in Buganda Kingdom
between 1888 -1892 married religion to politics in a manner that was to prove irreversible
over the whole history of Uganda to the present day. The factions who were battling it out
in Buganda Kingdom were not fighting for the protection of their faiths, but rather for the
political control of Buganda Kingdom and eventually for the whole of Uganda. Henceforth,
political alignment was firmly welded to religious faith and, as the Uganda protectorate
expanded to include other parts of the present Republic of Uganda, this pattern of
alignment was transplanted intact all over Uganda.130

Throughout the Protectorate, missionaries continued to exert enormous influence through
their schools. All education was in their hands; only in the 1950s did the British
Protectorate administration decide to open just a few of its own schools. The two separate
and competing school systems reinforced the divide between Catholics and Anglicans.131
Most of the elite who are currently heading political parties and important political offices
in Uganda were raised and fed on this divisive education system. As missionary schools
multiplied in Uganda, this division was faithfully and aggressively propagated in those

130 Ibid., p. 13.
131 Ibid., Gifford. African Christianity p. 113.
schools so that generation after generation of Ugandans elite were nurtured on it. The way missionaries and colonialists carried out their activities during the evolution of Uganda into a country is still one of the major underlying causes of political conflicts in Uganda today. Any attempt to understand or reconstruct Uganda’s recent history will be incomprehensible without the full appreciation of this fact: the intimate relationship between religion and politics in Uganda.132

Against the background of the disorders caused by religious factions in Buganda Kingdom between 1888 and 1892, in the final stages of which the British chartered company’s agent, Captain Lugard, had decisively intervened to ensure a Protestant victory, there was mounting disquiet in Britain about the company’s activities and the extent to which such activities might commit a British government which under Gladstone’s liberal administration, had made up its mind about what attitude to adopt on the Uganda question. Additionally, as Karugire puts it, Lugard’s military campaigns both in Buganda and to the west of the Kingdom had made the chartered company bankrupt, and the shareholders were insisting on withdrawing Lugard from Uganda to neighboring Kenya even before the battle at Mengo was fought between the Catholics and Protestants on January 24, 1892.133

So in brief, by the time British government agents arrived in Buganda Kingdom, the kingdom had already been divided, principally by the political factions which grouped

133 Ibid., pp. 13 – 14.
themselves around the new religious faiths. This made it comparatively easy for the British to establish their control over Buganda Kingdom since they had the ardent support of the Protestant party and the grudging support of the Catholic party (who had given up any hope of Uganda becoming a French colony). Thus, in order to ensure their relative power positions, particularly against Muslims, the Christian chiefs welcomed the British agents with open arms. In 1894 a Protectorate over Buganda was declared and Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Busoga were included in 1896; in the late 1890’s treaties were also made with chiefs to the north of the Nile river (northern Uganda). Arising out of this, the 1900 Buganda agreement (in which the power of the Christian chiefs was entrenched as was British overrule) was negotiated and signed with the active participation of Christian Baganda chiefs and their missionaries. By 1919 Britain had taken control of the whole area of modern Uganda, but only with difficulty and with Baganda alliance. Through collaborating with the British in this conquest the Baganda gained themselves a privileged position (and much new territory), but also earned the resentment of many other tribes that now make up Uganda, which has lasted to today. The relationship between the Baganda and the other groupings constitutes, after religious division, yet another enduring tension, an underlying cause of political conflict in Ugandan.

1.10.11 The Buganda Factor (A Poor Relationship between the Baganda and other People of Uganda over the Issue of Federalism)

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134 Ibid., pp. 17 – 18.
136 Ibid., p. 113.
A major cause of tension and political conflicts in Uganda is a very poor political relationship between the Baganda (the biggest tribe in south-central Uganda) and the other tribes that make up Uganda. The Baganda and their kings have always been looking for favors since the arrival of the Arabs and Europeans in that region. It is that bad habit of looking to be favored over their neighbors that made them to actively collaborate with the British and other foreigners in the colonization of the whole of Uganda in exchange of political privileges over their neighboring tribes. Since then, the Baganda have always behaved like Uganda belongs to them alone and the other tribes are just an appendix or some kind of footnotes in the politics of Uganda. Because the headquarters of the British colonial rule was built on their land as well as many other government infrastructures, the Baganda believe that all those privileges belongs to them and the other Ugandans should not have a share of it. They have proclaimed themselves as the best and the other Ugandans backward. Because of such self-rating, they have since the independence of Uganda in 1962 been causing political instability in Uganda by claiming that they would like to break away from Uganda and be on their own because they have all the infrastructure of government they need which the British and post-colonial governments built on their land. However, they should remember that the capital city of Uganda though on their soil was built by the sweat and with money from tax-payers all over Uganda.

The attitude of the Baganda has militated against any nationwide nationalist movement since the colonial era. In 1952 the first nationalist party was founded, the Uganda National
Congress (UNC), but it was plagued by factionalism. In 1954 the Democratic Party (DP) was established which was indeed nationwide, but its main aim at that time was to promote the interests of the Catholics against the Anglican ascendancy. In 1959 the Uganda Peoples’ Congress (UPC) was founded, which the following year uniting with a section of the older UNC, became the UPC led by Milton Obote, a Lango from northern Uganda.\textsuperscript{137} In the run-up to independence as Gifford explains, the rise of any properly nationalist movement was hindered because the Baganda, seeking a separate state, refused to countenance any proposal which treated Buganda as an integral part of greater Uganda. In the event, in the elections just before independence, a coalition of the UPC and an exclusively Baganda party, the \textit{Kabaka Yekka} (the King Alone), defeated the incumbent DP. So Uganda came to independence on October 9, 1962 with Milton Obote as Prime Minister. In 1963 it became a Republic with Kabaka (King) Muteesa II as federal President. This attempt to address the problem of dominance of Buganda over other parts of Uganda by giving it federal status came to nothing in a regional and ethnic conflict which was clearly manifested at the highest level of government, in the conflict between Prime Minister Milton Obote (from northern Uganda) and federal President King Muteesa II (from southern Uganda). In February 1966 Obote staged a coup against Muteesa, who fled into exile, and in April Obote declared himself the Executive President of Uganda. In September 1967 he abolished the four kingdoms, bringing Buganda directly under the central government of Uganda, and introduced a new constitution. In 1969 he banned all opposition parties.\textsuperscript{138} Currently, the political situation in Uganda is even grimmer over the same issue because it is not only the north verses the south, but it is now most of the tribes verses the Baganda over their

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., p. 114.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 114.
insistence for a federal status. Most of the tribes including those from western, eastern and south western Uganda are very much against Buganda trying to seek federal status and national dominance over them. Some serious solution needs to be ironed out about the issue because it is delaying political stability in Uganda and it may escalate into more violent conflict in the near future.

1.11 Short-term/Immediate Causes of the War in Northern Uganda

We have considered the long-term (underlying) causes of frequent conflicts in Uganda which are responsible for causing frequent wars as well as the ongoing war in northern Uganda. Now I will look at some immediate causes that triggered the ongoing war in Uganda, namely: The violation of the Nairobi Peace Agreement, indiscipline of Museveni’s army (NRA), and the looting of people’s wealth in northern Uganda.

1.11.1 The Violation of the Nairobi Peace Agreement

The violation of the Nairobi Peace Agreement by Museveni’s and his NRA rebels is one of the most glaring reasons for the war in northern Uganda. When General Tito Okello overthrew the government of president Obote in 1985, he had the good will to unite the whole country by bringing together the various rebel groups in Uganda that had been
fighting Obotes’ government because they were not happy with his rule for one reason or another. General Tito “established a Military Council and promised general elections one year later. All opposition movements reached agreement with the Military Council except for the NRA, which took possession of Kampala in 1986 and dissolved the Military Council.”

Museveni was the leader of that rebel group in the southern part of Uganda known as the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRA/M). Although General Tito succeeded in bringing the other rebel groups to work with him, Museveni’s NRA guerrilla group continued to fight the new government of Tito Okello. The NRM/A’s refusal to work with the new Military Council toward a general election after one year called for an international and regional concern to restore peace in Uganda. So the former president of Kenya, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi took up the task of mediating peace talks between Tito’s government and Museveni’s NRA. Consequently, the first Peace Agreement was signed in Nairobi in 1985. Unfortunately, the totality of this agreement was never respected by Mr. Museveni and his rebel group and this fact is also recorded by Prisca in her article in which she says that “The setting aside of the Nairobi Peace Agreement of 1985 by NRA” was one of the immediate causes of the war in northern Uganda. Museveni continued to push on with the military option until he also took over power from General Tito by force in January 1986.

Some political analysts as well as many Ugandans believe that the failure of Museveni and his guerrilla group to abide by the Nairobi Peace Agreement, which was a political peace

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139 Ibid., pp. 114 – 115.
settlement based on power sharing, became the trigger which finally sparked off the current war in northern Uganda. At the same time it commenced an era of mistrust and hatred between Museveni’s current government and the people of northern Uganda especially his political opponents behind the current war in northern Uganda.

1.11.2 Indiscipline of Museveni’s Army (NRA)

Although Museveni was an arch critic of all the former governments in Uganda concerning the indiscipline of the army, his new army that took over power from Tito Okello in 1986, did not make any difference concerning the indiscipline of the army in Uganda. The NRA were also very undisciplined, full of revenge, brutality, rape, looting, the same old stuff that Ugandans are fed-up with. Here again Prisca noted the indiscipline and brutality of Museveni’s army in her article in the following words “the lack of discipline among some NRA soldiers in both Gulu and Kitgum districts…..fueled this anxiety…..the 35th Battalion of the NRA that was sent to Kitgum…..took the opportunity to loot, rape and murder. They were driven by a spirit of revenge. To escape the wrath some of the Acholi ex-soldiers took up their weapons and escaped to Sudan to join those who had preceded them.”141 This how Museveni’s new army soon drove the people of northern Uganda to take up arms against their new government. When Museveni took over power, Tito Okello’s soldiers retreated to the northern part of Uganda and some of them crossed into Sudan. Their retreat to northern Uganda and into Sudan scared the local population in northern Uganda of the

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141 Ibid., p. 335.
wrath that would follow them in the form of the NRA forces. The NRA also worsened the situation by confirming the fear of the people of northern Uganda by abusing and murdering people in northern Uganda especially in Acholi land. As a reaction to the NRA abuse and killings the people of northern Uganda especially the Acholis formed the first rebel group known as the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA) and started launching attacks on the NRA forces in northern Uganda. This military resistance to the NRA in northern Uganda has evolved through different phases up to now but has been the nucleus of the present persistent war in northern Uganda.

1.11.3 Looting of People’s Wealth in Northern Uganda

There was massive looting of people's wealth in northern Uganda especially in Acholi land by the NRA who were masquerading as liberators after overthrowing Tito Okello’s regime. They masochistically plundered live cattle, de-roofed iron sheets from houses, extracted steel doors and windows, machineries like grinding mills, vehicles, tractors and implements, other valued property, etc., with measured arrogance that the “backward” people of northern Uganda must have plundered those items and thus don’t deserve them.

The looting of cattle in Acholi land by Museveni’s NRA was one of most provokative acts that made many Acholis to take up arms against Museveni’s NRM government. Cattle has for long been the main repository of Acholi wealth. By 1985, there were about 300,000
cattle in Acholi land representing not only the Acholis savings, but also their contingency reserve for sickness, drought, retirement, education and marriage dowry. There were even more numerous goats, sheep and other livestock. The NRA are accused by the people of northern and parts of eastern Uganda of collaborating with the Karamojong cattle raiders to confiscate the wealth of the people of northern and eastern Uganda. “In many areas where both Karamojong and the NRA soldiers were present, many farmers reported that the latter colluded in these activities.”

Data provided by veterinary officers indicated that the cattle population of the Acholi people alone in 1985 was 285,000. The cattle raids removed almost the entire herd. In 1997, ten years after the raids, the total herd of cattle of the Acholi had been reduced to a mere 5,000 only, less than 2% of the earlier figure before the NRA arrived in northern Uganda. The replacement cost of the plundered cattle herd alone is estimated at close to 25 million dollars. In an instant, the Acholi farmers were deprived of the milk their cows provided; the additional acreage and higher yields which their oxen permitted them; their fallback for marriage dowries and education; and the savings which carried them through drought, hard time, sickness and old age. The self-respect which is attached to cattle ownership and the cultural functions upon which exchange of cattle had relied were disrupted. It was one of the greatest economic and morale blows to the people of northern and parts of eastern Uganda.

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142 Ibid., Gersony. The Anguish of Northern Uganda. p. 27.
143 Ibid. p. 27

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Further evidence that makes the people of northern and parts of eastern Uganda believe that the looting of their livestock was a systematic move with the backing of the NRM government was “The disappearance of the police tracking force which during the past regimes had restricted the Karamojong raiders to sporadic incidents along the eastern border with Karamoja contributed to the lawless environment in which these raids occurred. The Acholi people, except its active insurgents, were disarmed. That there was no reported confrontation in Acholi land between the cattle raiders and the police, the army or other government authorities led the local population to believe that they were tolerating the plundering, which occurred in north and eastern Uganda. The attitude of the people who lost their livestock ranges from deep suspicion to absolute conviction that lawlessness of this magnitude could not have occurred if it had not been instigated or at least approved at the highest level of government.”144

Authoritative government sources acknowledge some of the NRA raids in Gulu area (the headquarters of northern Uganda), which they attribute to corrupt elements in the military at that time. Efforts at restitution by the government have been made for a very small fraction of these thefts. Government sources also concede that the Karamojong raids were carried out with little armed government opposition.145 The enduring political fact, nonetheless, is the widespread belief in northern and eastern parts of Uganda that Museveni’s government instigated or at least approved the raids, a source of irreconcilable and continuing bitterness against the present administration of president Museveni. To

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144 Ibid., p. 28.
145 Ibid., p. 28.
date the people of northern and parts of eastern Uganda have not forgotten about the loss of their cattle and they talk very bitterly about this issue. It is bad news because it is an indication that they have not forgiven Museveni’s government about the looting of their livestock. If a proper compensation method is not worked out by the NRM government to the people of northern and parts of eastern Uganda who lost their livestock during the looting, this could be a reason for future conflict in Uganda.
CHAPTER TWO

The Role of the Church during (in) the Wars in Uganda

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the role of the Church in the cycle of violent armed conflicts that has bedeviled Uganda since its independence in 1962. In order to better understand the role of the Church in the wars of Uganda, this chapter begins with the arrival of missionaries in Uganda. I will examine how they laid the foundation of Christianity/Church in Uganda. It is important to do this because the Church in Uganda rests on that foundation and the Ugandans are continuing to build the Church on that foundation. Investigation into the origins will give us a better understanding of the Church in Uganda and how it plays its public role in Uganda. The chapter will evaluate the prophetic role of the Church in Uganda’s political conflicts and will also evaluate the strength and the weakness of the Church in Uganda, its achievements and failures in educating the people of Uganda for justice and peace.

2.2 Arrival of the Missionaries in Uganda and the Founding of the Church (Christianity) in Uganda
The first Christian missionary group arrived in what is now known as Uganda on June 30, 1877. They were the CMS (Church Missionary Society) from England. The CMS were soon followed, no doubt to their great annoyance by the Roman Catholic order of the White Fathers from France who arrived in Uganda on June 25, 1879. The encounter between the two groups was disappointing right from the start. The phenomenon of religious rivalry appears to have been curiously exaggerated to the extent of causing untold suffering, both to the individuals involved and to their work. The relationship between the CMS (commonly known in Uganda as the Protestants) and the Catholics continued to worsen day by day. From dogmatic conflicts and mutual mistrust, it turned into serious intolerance which later culminated in a full blown armed war between the two groups of missionaries.

According to Tusingire, the key figure who determined the initial relationships between Catholics and Protestants was Alexander Mackay, one of the Protestant missionaries who had arrived in Uganda a few months before the Catholics. He had been recommended to the White Fathers by the Holy Ghost Fathers at Bagamoyo when they passed there on their way to Uganda. He had been presented as a trustworthy person on whom the White Fathers could rely during their first days in the country. So when they arrived in Uganda Father Lourdel, trusting that Mackay would be of help, immediately sent a letter to him explaining who they were and why they had come, and also asking Mackay to help them get connected with king Mutesa of Buganda so that he might agree to meet with them.146 But Mackay

146 Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, pp. 46-47.
betrayed their confidence and turned out to be the greatest enemy of their mission in its initial stage. As Matheson reports: “Mackay did indeed go to Mutesa but not with a view to assisting Catholics whose friends had assisted him in his hour of need; instead he urged Mutesa to refuse them any entrance into his kingdom.”\textsuperscript{147} It is interesting to note that it was a non-Christian man from Madagascar called Toli who saved the situation. Toli had come with Arabs from the coast at Zanzibar and stayed at the King’s palace teaching him the Arabic language. He had earlier accompanied the Sultan of Zanzibar on his visit to France in 1875 and was thus thought to be competent to advise the king about the French missionaries. When the King consulted him, Toli advised him to ignore the words of Mackay. Thus the King greed to meet with the Catholic missionaries, which he did on February 23, 1879.

As described by Tusingire, this did not discourage Mackay in his attempts to block the Catholic Mission. He seemed to have seen the Catholics as people who had come not to convert non-believers, but to fight Protestantism. Thus he had to do his best to resist them. So when the King eventually offered an audience to the Catholic Missionaries, Mackay openly tried to discredit them before the King and his court. On that day, Father Lourdel tried to explain to the King their aim of coming into Uganda and requested him to allow the other fathers who were still left behind to enter his territory. But due to language problems he could not explain himself well. So he asked Mackay who had already learnt Swahili (a common language in East Africa), to explain, saying that after all he knew enough about

\textsuperscript{147} E. Matheson. \textit{An Enterprise So Perilous.} London: Mellifont, 1963, p. 52.
Catholic priests as he had stayed with some of them at Bagamoyo. However, Mackay took advantage of Lourdel’s ignorance of the language and grabbed the chance to give a negative report about the Catholics. He addressed the King as follows: “I know Catholic Missionaries, but I ought to tell you that they entertain a multitude of errors. For instance, they worship images, which is condemned in scriptures; they pray to Mary and to Saints and demand obedience to the Pope….the French do not like Kings at all – they killed off all their Kings many years ago. I don’t answer for the consequences if you permit them to settle in your kingdom.”

There should be no doubt this kind of mediation was aimed at influencing the King to reject the Catholic Missionaries. As Tusingire Notes it, the fact that although these words in themselves may stand for Mackay’s individual attitude and views, yet the reality they reflect is representative of what, in Uganda, the Protestant attitude towards Catholics tended to be from that time on. Here it is not about making any judgment in favor of either side, but only to point out the facts. These events contributed to the poor relationships between the two groups. But based on the facts, regardless of the contribution of Catholics to the mess, it is important to observe that in these initial troubles the Protestants had the most significant part to play. There is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate this. The reality is evident in the chronicles of the above interview, for as Matheson a Protestant author, observes, “Whichever version one takes of this dreadful interview, whether that of

148 Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p. 48.
149 Ibid., Matheson. An Enterprise so Perilous, p. 54.
150 Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p. 49.
Mackay’s journals, or that from the accounts written by Pere Lourdel, Mackay is shown in a poor light.”  

The magnitude of the above events is not to be underestimated in as far as they seem to have had a lasting effect on Catholic–Protestant relationships in Uganda. They have had a serious bearing on the whole Christian mission in Uganda up to today. Matters did not just end with the bad introduction that Mackay gave to the king about Catholics. Tusingire said:

When the poor introduction failed to achieve the desired end, the Protestant party tried other ways to have the Catholics rejected. They now tried a more direct attack to see to it that the people whom they saw as intruders were expelled. They put pressure on the King to expel them by threatening to withdraw the help they had offered in securing British protection over his kingdom. In their efforts to win his favor, the Anglican missionaries had assured the King that the British government had blocked the advance of his enemies who had planned to invade through northern Uganda. Now they wrote a letter to him demanding the expulsion of the Catholics threatening that otherwise he would lose British protection for good.

This however was also counter–productive for the Protestants. It in fact caused the king to doubt their reliability and inclined him to befriend the Catholics. Therefore, in the years following these initial conflicts between the two groups of missionaries, the tensions between Catholics and Protestants worsened. As either side got more converts, religious

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151 Ibid., p. 52. Also refer to P. Smith. *Uganda: Its Story and Its Claims*. London: Church Missionary Society 1892, pp. 11-12. Smith under the heading "Intrusion of French Priests" presents the arrival of French Catholic Priests as a source of difficulty for the Protestants greater than Arab Muslims. His quotations from Mackay’s records of what took place at the King’s palace on June 29, 1879 when the two parties had an encounter clearly express the bitter attitude Mackay had towards the French missionaries in Uganda.

152 Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda. p. 50.
divisions and hostilities entered more the political field. Apparently, the Protestant bitterness was aggravated by the fact that the Catholic missionaries were more accepted by the local people and easily won more followers. It is interesting to note that this fact is not only reported by the Catholic literature, but also Protestant sources acknowledge it. As a result of all this, war broke out on January 1892. This was the scandalous war of Christian against Christian in the name of religion. The war was particularly destructive and led to heavy loss of human life and property especially on the part of Catholics who lost the war. The Protestant party who, with the help of the British government, commanded by a captain Lugard, came out of the war victorious, set mission houses of the Catholics on fire and destroyed a lot of property. The Catholics were forced out of the country and for some time many of them had to live as fugitives on an Island in Lake Victoria.\textsuperscript{153}

Even when the Catholics finally came back into the country the wounds endured on. The Catholics were allowed to come back into the country under certain conditions which were laid down in an agreement made by the British administrators. To the Catholics, this agreement favored the Protestants, and although the Catholics were forced to sign it, they were never content. The war had among other things, succeeded in instilling intense rivalry and hatred among members of both parties. Sir Gerald Portal, an important British political figure in pre-independent Uganda, was to report in 1894:

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 51. Also refer the report on the causes and outcome of the war produced by the Catholic Union of Great Britain, Memorandum on the War in Uganda – 1892. London: CUGB, 1894.
The acceptance by a great chief of the Protestant creed may mean the addition of 1,000 fighting men to the Protestant cause, while the appointment of a Catholic Governor to the command of a province may mean that every chief, sub-chief, and villager in that province has to make up his mind quickly between embracing the same faith, or being forthwith turned adrift and deprived of his house, dignity or position…. the race for converts now being carried on by the Catholic and Protestant missions in Uganda is synonymous with a race for political power.\textsuperscript{154}

A closer look at the interactions between the two Christian parties could demonstrate more distressing and absurd realities. The relationship was far from being exemplary as it had nothing to do with charity and tolerance or any other Christian virtue. In fact the contrary was true as can be attested by the words of Portal who, writing about Uganda, said: “Catholics and Protestant here seem to look upon each other as natural enemies; no doctrine of toleration, if it has been taught on either side, appears to have been received by the native Christians.”\textsuperscript{155}

The major factor that contributed to such poor relationship between the Christians are to be identified as going beyond the time and even the personalities of the Christian mission in Uganda. This is probably why none of the missionaries of either side took these initial conflicts on a personal level. The root of the intolerance and friction among the missionaries was based in the events of European history. In this context Piroute rightly observes: “…one piece of the missionaries’ cultural and historical luggage was the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants, and the firm belief that each held that members of the

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., p. 14.
other group were heretics and would undoubtedly go to hell. Each group competed with
the other to win the allegiance of kings and chiefs in order that the right kind of Christianity
might be established.”

This explains why the missionaries in Uganda on either side right from the outset were
never at ease with the presence of the other. It might explain as well why initially the
bitterness was confined to the two groups of missionaries and was not expressed with the
same intensity among the Ugandan believers. However, these missionary antagonisms do
not justify the violence that seems to be unique to the Ugandan early Christianity. One
would agree with Pirouet that there were other contributing factors when she notes: “The
same antagonisms between missionaries existed elsewhere, but not with the same results.”

This was true in spite of the fact that in the context of Uganda, besides the obvious
advantages of common fundamental beliefs, both groups of missionaries had been blessed
with a few other common things relating to their mission. All the favorable factors seem to
have counted as nothing. Later on, a factor that contributed to the deterioration of
relationships was the fallacious view which prevailed among the two parties that religious
affiliation corresponded to one’s political affiliation and nationality.

As a result, to be Catholic meant being French and being Protestant meant being British.
The harm caused by this mentality became worse when politics got involved and supported
it. So from July 1, 1890 when officially Uganda became a British political territory

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156 L. Pirouet. Rivarly, Evangelism and Politics in Western Uganda. White Fathers’ Generalate Archives
157 Ibid., pp. 1 -2.
(Protectorate), the Catholics seemed to be considered a different class of citizens. Uneasiness with the presence of Catholic missionaries seen as agents of the French government was accelerated. The Protestant asserted that if the country belonged to Britain, it must as well be Protestant. As a result, it is held that many acts of injustices were committed against Catholics. In all the struggles between Catholics and Protestants, the British government identified itself with the Protestant party.

Among the accusations made against Catholic missionaries is the claim that it was a mistake on their part to undertake a “mission” to Uganda, a country where the Protestant missionaries had already arrived. The Protestant saw it as an intrusion into their territory. The words of one of the first Protestant bishops in Uganda, A Tucker, are an eloquent testimony to this view:

….fierce struggle was at hand not only with the forces of heathendom and Mohammedanism, but sad to say, with the emissaries of a Christian Church – the Church of Rome. It is hard to speak in terms of charity of the actions of a Church which, with the whole of heathen Africa before her, deliberately sets herself to oppose the efforts of another Christian communion to evangelize and save the outcast and downtrodden. As though anxious to prove that she held the Christian religion rather than the religion of Christ, with eyes open, and with solemn protests sounding in her ears, with the same ears deaf to the cry as of pain proceeding from countless millions of souls lying in heathen darkness – with the one fell purpose of opposing Protestantism, rather than heathenism – the Church of Rome in the year 1879, commenced that career of aggression which was destined to bear such bitter fruit in the days to come.158

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No doubt, for the Protestants the presence of Catholics in Uganda was seen as a deliberate move with its primary objective to fight Protestantism. Moreover, they blamed the Catholics for settling near their place next to the King’s palace.

Catholic missionaries faced difficulties from the Protestants as well as the British government on account of their nationality. In view of this, Tusingire said:

the French White Fathers offered to give part of their mission territory to a British Catholic religious order known as the Mill Hill Fathers. This appears to have been a wise move to build some kind of middle ground between the Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Uganda. It was more difficult and even perhaps absurd for the British colonial administration in Uganda to support the British Anglicans against the British Catholics in their territory. Consequently, by decree of July 13, 1894 the Catholic Vicariate of Uganda was divided and a part was entrusted to the pastoral care of the Mill Hill Fathers.\(^{159}\)

Concerning the Mill Hill Missionaries' role in this, Winston Churchill, the then British Under secretary for the Colonies was happy during his visits to Uganda in 1907 because the arrival upon the scene of an English Catholic mission prevented national rivalries and religious differences from mutually embittering one another.\(^{160}\) However, the truth is that the arrival of the Mill Hill solved the problem only partially. It helped ease the tensions between the Catholics and British administrators but seems to have done very little in solving the difficulties between Catholics and Protestants. In fact even the Mill Hill missionaries faced similar tensions in their own territory, and this is reflected in their lamentation of lack of Catholic Chiefs in their territory: “Our part of the Country was

\(^{159}\) Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, pp. 55-56.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., p. 56.
allotted to the Protestant Chiefs who naturally showed no zeal for our cause. Hence we had to use great discretion in order to make these Chiefs consent to our sitting down in their midst."\textsuperscript{161} So in reality the tensions between Protestants and Catholics in Uganda continued. The conflicts, suspicions and rivalry between the two “brands” of Christianity in Uganda persisted.

2.3 Church-State Relations in Uganda since Independence in 1962

The reality is that Churches in Uganda have traditionally been the Catholic and the Anglican since the colonial time. As Gifford also noted in his book, the Anglican or Church of Uganda (COU) normally called the Protestant Church, since the British government did not encourage other religious groups as we have seen above. President Amin’s edicts in 1973 and 1977 outlawed all other Churches except the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and the much smaller Orthodox. The Catholic and Anglican Churches are an essential part of the social fabric of Ugandans, and have become fused at a deep level into the political, social and cultural life of the people of Uganda.\textsuperscript{162} The most salient feature still is the rivalry between the Anglicans and the Catholics as I have discussed earlier in this work. This stems from the religious wars in the nineteenth century and has become institutionalized in different political parties. The UPC is still linked with the Anglican Church, and the DP is linked to the

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., Gifford. \textit{African Christianity}, p. 116
Catholic Church, although a too simplistic identification should be avoided because there are some Catholics who belong to UPC and also there are some Anglicans who belong to DP.

In Uganda, there are far fewer Catholics in top political positions because it is dominated by the Protestants. This is a matter of genuine resentment. The Catholics consider that they were cheated out of political power in the pre-independence elections of 1962, not just by politicians who happened to be Anglicans but by the Church of England itself; the Catholic leader of pre-independence government laid a good deal of the blame for his defeat in the 1962 elections on the Archbishop of Canterbury himself. In 1980 as well, the DP (though in this case it was supported by Anglican Baganda too) considers itself to have been robbed of victory again. This led the Catholics into a kind of ‘chronic’ political grievance against the Anglicans in Uganda. This feeling of discrimination lasts up to the present day. To illustrate this discrimination, for the last 22 years of Museveni’s NRM leadership in Uganda, there is a common saying in Uganda that: ‘When an Anglican bishop is ordained, President Museveni gives him a Mitsubishi Pajero (SUV). When a Catholic bishop is ordained, he gives him just a cow.’

The Anglican Church has been intimately tied to the state. It was a quasi-establishment entity during the colonial period, and has tended to cling to this position since

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163 See Ben Kiwanuka, “How Ben Lost the 1962 Elections,” written soon after losing that election, and reproduced in Veteran Yearbook, Jan-April 1994, pp. 3-15. Kiwanuka claims the DP was fighting not just the UPC, but three other forces, viz. the Church of England, the British government, and the expatriate civil service.
independence. The Catholic sense of being deprived of their rightful position in government made them appear as the only powerful critical voice vis-à-vis the State. But this critical voice has not been very evident since independence.\textsuperscript{164} This is also reflected in the remarks of Louise Piroute that, as elsewhere in Africa, the Churches were extravagantly deferential to the independent government. She lists matters on which the Churches should have raised their voices. The erosion of civil liberties in independent Uganda clearly antedated Amin’s military coup. Detentions without trial came into use in 1965. Why did the Churches do so little when the security forces themselves harassed the people and threatened their civil liberties? The Churches became so preoccupied with trying to maintain their own positions and privileges without realizing that the wider threat should also concern them.\textsuperscript{165}

The grievances between the two Churches was so strong that Gifford said: “Even under President Amin’s wild excesses the Churches could not easily transcend their historical grievances.”\textsuperscript{166} Some Church leaders, both Catholic and Anglican, welcomed Amin’s military coup. The Baganda were mad at Obote for abolishing the monarchy and exiling their King who soon died in exile and they wanted his body brought back home. They welcomed Amin with the hope that he would bring back the body of their king and restore a monarchical system in Uganda. For whatever reasons, no one demanded a just government.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., Gifford. African Christianity, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., Gifford. African Christianity, p. 118.
It is true the Churches did not do enough to confront Amin, but on the other hand it has to be noted that once the Amin regime was in power, many of the classic forms of protest against oppressive regimes were hardly viable options. His rule was arbitrary, whimsical, dictatorial and anarchical. To protest was to risk unspecified ills involving looting of property, torture, imprisonment and death, not to mention reprisals on one's family or tribe. Some few individual Christians did offer opposition to Amin because it was unimaginable having an organized protest against him within the country. However, Churches became full as they never had been before; they came to provide alternative structures and foci of loyalty at a time when most structures had broken down.167

However, as the Amin regime continued with the violation of human rights, the Churches were forced into some form of opposition. Partly this resulted from Amin's apparent drive to Islamize Uganda. By late 1976, particularly after Muslim-Christian violence in Ankole (western Uganda) in August 1976, the Anglican Archbishop and the Cardinal decided that insecurity had reached such a point that action had to be taken nationally. They invited all bishops and senior Muslim leaders to meet near Kampala (capital city of Uganda) in September 1976; the Anglican Archbishop Luwum was elected chairman. The meeting expressed deep concern about the state of the country and the indiscipline of the security forces, and amounted to a wide-ranging denunciation of the regime. President Amin was

167 Ibid., p. 119.
furious when he obtained the minutes of that meeting and on the other hand he was nervous that the religious leaders were getting united against him.\textsuperscript{168}

It is to be noted that Amin was also angered by the plans of the Anglican Church to celebrate its centenary in 1977. In addition, it was collecting funds to build a church headquarters in Kampala’s city center. Amin was always nervous about the Churches’ collecting money, fearing that they might use it to fund opposition to him. This particular project though was especially infuriating to him, because his much-touted Muslim Cultural Center had never materialized, and the large sum donated for this by Saudi Arabia had simply disappeared. Meanwhile Archbishop Luwum was also actively canvassing abroad for help for Ugandan refugees in Kenya. On January 25, 1977 there was an attempt to assassinate Amin. He probably concluded that the Church leaders were to blame; soldiers raided the house of the Anglican Archbishop on February 5, 1977. The Cardinal immediately visited the Archbishop to discuss what needed to be done, and joint action was decided on. Eventually, perhaps because they believed they were under more immediate threat, the Anglicans felt they could not wait to be as cautious as the Catholics would have liked. They went ahead to write a courteous but firm letter to Amin along the lines agreed at the conference the previous September, and more recently with the Catholics. Despite the letter written to Amin, Archbishop Luwum was murdered on February 16, 1977.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p. 119 - 120.
One of the Anglican responses to the murder of their Archbishop was to elect Silvanus Wani, a kinsman of President Amin, as the next Archbishop. By the time Wani came to retire, Amin had been overthrown and Obote had returned to power as president for a second time, whereupon the Church elected a prominent Obote supporter, Yona Okoth, to succeed Wani as the new Archbishop of the Anglican Church. This pattern has manifested, according to many political analysts, a tendency in the Anglican Church of Uganda to elect their leaders not necessarily because of their leadership ability but simply because they were in the good books of government in power at the time. This perception is widely held, so much so that the Anglican Church of Uganda newspaper, in an article in May 1994 speculating on the successor to Okoth, could ask ironically, in the light of established procedure, since Museveni was now the new President of Uganda: “Is it possible to have an NRM Archbishop?”

Likewise, an APS news bulletin could end a report on Uganda’s Archiepiscopal succession: “Since independence it has been the practice to elect an Archbishop who had a working relationship with the country’s incumbent head of State. If this tradition is to be followed to the letter, Ugandan Anglicans would be having an Archbishop from the western part of Uganda possibly Ankole where President Museveni hails from.”

However, it is too simple to see these elections as manifesting just an uncritical deference to the rulers of the day and a servile attempt to side with them. However, it is important to note that the recent history we have discussed above indicates that the leadership of the Anglican Church in Uganda has so far been prevented from playing any significant prophetic role in the country because of their habit of always seeking the protection or patronage of the sovereign. This mentality which is so deeply

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170 New Century, May 1994, p. 3.
171 APS Bulletin, April 25, 1994, p. 2
rooted in their psyche may go back all the way to king Henry VIII’s nationalistic resistance to the papacy. The Anglican Church in Uganda at the very top level has not been able to fulfill its prophetic role as the conscience of the nation, or moral commentator on national issues.\textsuperscript{172}

The Catholic leadership, too, has not been able to transcend its history. Catholics’ sense of chronic grievance has not encouraged them to confront governments. Also, as Pirouet has written, after the death of Luwum, it was difficult to re-establish the liaison between Catholics and Anglicans. Catholics are said to “have felt that the Anglicans acted precipitately and unwisely and so brought the Archbishop’s murder upon themselves, and endangered the Catholic centenary celebrations held in 1979.”\textsuperscript{173}

### 2.4 The Problem of Ethnicity, Tribalism and Regionalism in the Ugandan Church

In his book \textit{Religions for Peace}, Cardinal Francis Arinze, a Prince of the Church and one of the leading figures in the Roman Catholic Church said “There are problems and challenges that do not respect religious frontiers: corruption in public life, wrong attitude to work or the good of the country, and discrimination against people because of their color, ethnic background, or sex.......All these and similar challenges are best faced when all believers.......work together to find adequate solutions. The role of their leaders in

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 121.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., Pirouet, Religion in Uganda, p. 26.
encouraging such cooperation is important.”

Certainly discrimination because of tribalism, regionalism and ethnicity is a problem and challenge that does not respect religious frontiers in the Ugandan Church. Church leaders in Uganda have a lot to do concerning this issue. As discussed in chapter one, Uganda is one of the countries with ‘intractable’ forms of ethnic division and it must be said that the Churches in Uganda are seriously affected by these tribal divisions. The tribal divisions are clearly noticeable in both Catholic and Anglican Churches.

Kevin Ward testifies to this tribal tension in his writings when he said, “The Church of Uganda has reflected or, rather, embodied the tensions and conflicts operating within state and society.” Gifford also describes very well the tribal and ethnic tension as a big challenge to the Churches in Uganda. He indicates that:

The most obvious problem is that between the Baganda and other groups that make up Uganda. This has frequently led to a movement for the Baganda to form their own separate ecclesiastical province. The 1961 church constitution created a Province of the Church of Uganda (COU), with five dioceses from the old diocese of Uganda, and three from the diocese of Upper Nile. The Archbishop was to be elected from the diocesan bishops and would retain his own diocese. However, in 1965 when Erika Sabiti, the Bishop of Rwenzori was elected Archbishop, the Baganda were outraged that the first African Anglican Archbishop was not a Muganda (not from their dominant tribe). The other tribes were even more outraged that the Muganda Bishop of Namirembe took the former Bishop of Uganda’s house, with the Archbishop of the Province relegated to the guest house. When in 1967 President Obote introduced a new national constitution and abolished the old Kingdoms and any trace of federalism, the Baganda Anglicans became even more intransigent and determined to retain their cathedral and keep the Province in its place.

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176 Ibid., Gifford. *African Christianity*, p. 133.
In Sabiti’s case, in Fort Portal (a city in western Uganda) – the realization grew that the church constitution had to be changed. But President Obote’s 1967 national constitution, with its stress on the unitary state and powers of central government, made the Baganda all the more determined to cling to their institutions and traditions, not least in the Church. In 1970 a draft Church constitution for the Anglicans recommended that a new diocese of Kampala, carved out of the Namirembe diocese, be created as the Archbishop’s see; that the Archbishop’s powers be strengthened; and the Church Commissioners be established to administer all land held by the Anglican Church of Uganda. Most of the Church land was in Buganda, much of it given under a 1900 agreement or by individual Baganda landowners, and the plan would alienate the land of Buganda. This Obote constitution, seen as a UPC blueprint for the Church, was strongly resisted by the two Baganda dioceses of Namirembe and West Buganda. At the provincial assembly in Mukono in 1970, when they were unsuccessful in modifying it, the Baganda dioceses walked out, and openly talked of seceding from the ecclesiastical province. A synod of Namirembe diocese on January 23, 1971 voted to secede, but this event was rapidly overshadowed less than twenty-four hours later when Amin’s coup deposed Obote. In the aftermath Archbishop Sabiti was accused by the Baganda of being behind Obote’s ‘master plan’ to control and manipulate the Anglican Churches, and he was even denied entry to Namirembe Cathedral on January 31, 1971.177

177 Ibid., p. 134.
According to Gifford, President Amin tried to heal the division within the Anglican Church of Uganda, and at a conference held in the International Conference Centre in Kampala on 25-29 November 1971 he forced the reluctant Baganda to agree to the new Church constitution. Since then, the desire of the Baganda to secede and set up their own province has never disappeared – just as the non-Baganda Anglicans have persisted in their determination to keep the Baganda in the one nation-wide province. Even today as I write, this is a live issue, running simultaneously with the national political debate on Buganda becoming a self-governing but ‘federal’ state.178

This splitting or divisional tendency has long been very evident in the Anglican Church of Uganda and it is amazing how they quickly split and create new dioceses without any proper infrastructures for the new dioceses. In line with this strong tendency, Gifford said: “There is a strong impulse towards an ethnically homogeneous diocese, with a local person, of the tribe and area, as bishop. In the debate before the adoption of the 1972 Anglican Church constitution, the idea was floated that the episcopate should be tied to a particular locality and ethnic group; however others believed that bishops should not be tribal but should represent the whole Church and be available for transfer to any part of Uganda.”179

At the time the Baganda were violently opposed to this, for it smacked of Obote’s policy of mobilization – the creation of a political core of civil servants and politicians responsive not to factional and regional divisions, but to national priorities as formulated by the central organs of party and government. This thinking received its coup de grace in 1981, when a

reshuffle of Anglican bishops occurred in which a number (as part of the normalization process after the overthrow of Amin) returned to their home areas as bishop, and in their places new bishops were created from those localities. When Obote came to power again in the same year (1981), he criticized this as creating a ‘tribal Church,’ again he started advocating his ‘mobilization’ concept by which bishops would be appointed by a central secretariat of the Church.180

To conclude this section on the Anglican Church of Uganda as one of the mirrors that reflects the evil of tribal, ethnic and regional conflict in Uganda, the Anglican newspaper itself addressed this phenomenon in an editorial in May 1992. It acknowledged that since the 1960s the Anglican Church of Uganda had broken up into small dioceses some of which have been created out of tribal and linguistic differences. It recognized that administrative wrongs often lay behind the splits, but that in permitting the establishment of such new ethnic or tribal dioceses, the Anglican Church was addressing the symptoms rather than the cause of violent conflicts in Uganda. It called for the revising of the constitution of the Anglican Church of Uganda to give sufficient power to the central leadership to demand reasonable administrative accountability within the structures. The editorial lamented that without such accountability, presumably of local bishops in their dealing with minority groups in the dioceses, many archdeaconries will break away to become dioceses.181

180 Ibid., Ward, ‘Church of Uganda.’ p. 94.
Ethnicity, tribalism and regionalism are also a problem for the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda. However, the Catholic Church has a different approach than that of the Anglican Church in Uganda. Although even the Catholic Church tries very hard to follow some natural language, tribal or ethnic demographics in creating new dioceses, the habit of ‘tribal church’ or ‘tribal diocese’ is very much avoided in the process. As I write now, there are still many Catholic dioceses in Uganda that are made up of more than one tribe and more than one ethnic or language group. These are some examples of multi-lingual Catholic dioceses in Uganda: Archdiocese of Tororo, Arua diocese, Jinja Diocese, Kabale diocese and Fort-Portal diocese. There are also still a good number of Catholic dioceses being run by bishops who do not originate from the local people or tribe of those dioceses. As I write now in 2010, some Catholic dioceses have bishops from outside the local area and also from a different language group. My own home Archdiocese of Gulu is one example of this case. Our neighboring dioceses of Nebbi, Arua and Moroto are more examples of the same. We even still have two Catholic dioceses in Uganda being run by European bishops i.e. Lira and Kotido dioceses. To the best of my knowledge, these bishops are pretty much accepted by the local people and they are doing their job just like all the other Catholic bishops of Uganda are. This is probably because Catholic bishops are not really nominated or appointed by the local people or their dioceses but are elected/appointed by the Pope (Holy See) on the advice of the Apostolic Delegate after a wide consultation.

It is true as Gifford puts it that it is the policy of the Catholic Church that, where practicable, bishops should be made as trans-tribal as possible. And the Catholic Church has always
used the image of Church-as-Family to educate Catholics about transcending ethnic exclusivism. “Even many Anglicans would applaud this Catholic approach. However, there are many people who believe that the local community is the local church, so it should have its own language, liturgy and leaders. In a country like Uganda where any serious sense of national identity is so underdeveloped, no such identity will develop until each constituent people feel equal. This means it must be taken seriously, which includes providing its own leaders.”

With all that said, it does not mean that tribal or ethnic tensions are not rocking some of the Catholic dioceses in Uganda just like what we have seen above with the Anglican dioceses. The only difference may be that the Catholic Church has a better way of handling or suppressing this problem that troubles Churches all over Uganda and Africa in general. In the 1990s there were major crises in both Catholic and Anglican Churches that received extensive publicity.

The Catholic example is the diocese of Kabale, on the borders of Uganda, Rwanda and the Congo. The Bishop of Bukoba in Tanzania was initially appointed Apostolic Administrator of the new diocese, and in 1969 Barnabas Halem’Imana was appointed its first residential bishop. The people in this area are Banyarwanda (both Hutu and Tusti) and Bakiga. In 1995 there were five Kinyarwanda-speaking parishes, and twenty-two Bakiga-speaking ones. Bishop Halem’Imana is a Munyarwanda, which immediately caused some resentment.

among the Bakiga. He probably did not handle that ethnic tension very well by being fair and balance to both ethnic groups in his diocese. Although there were no serious problems for several years, later on, there were allegations of poor diocesan administration during his term of office. The diocese had a synod in 1985, at which all sorts of things were agreed. There were again allegations that the bishop’s administrative failure to implement the synod’s decrees seems to have triggered serious conflict at the next diocesan synod in 1990. After the second synod, conflict intensified between the two ethnic groups in the diocese (the Bakiga and the Banyarwanda). It finally led to a break between the bishop and the priests, of whom about half rebelled against his authority; another quarter supported him, and a quarter tried to remain neutral. The bishop suspended a number of the ‘rebel’ priests but they simply ignored the ban, and carried on as normal. There were cases of violent confrontation in some parishes during that time. The bishop could not enter about eight or nine parishes without threat of serious violence. The entire diocese became polarized, and almost all church groups collapsed.  

The media covered all this very closely. The Archbishop of Kampala with the heads of men’s and women’s associations of religious orders attempted to mediate, but with no success. In 1994 the Uganda Conference of Catholic Bishops appointed a commission to look into the problem. The investigation was conducted by three canon lawyers (two bishops, and a professor of canon law at one of the national seminaries). Although some people complained about this approach, many however, approved it because they believed

183 Ibid., p. 123.
the problem was being resolved through proper procedures. In mid-1994 the report was completed and it was discussed at a plenary meeting of the Catholic bishops; eventually Bishop Halem’Imana himself chose to resign.\textsuperscript{184}

It was very difficult for a new bishop to be chosen from among the diocesan priests right away because of the violent ethnic conflict between two groups of priests as well as parishioners that exists in the diocese. So to walk a fine line in between the ethnic groups, the Apostolic Delegate to Uganda appointed a French Canadian White Father to take over the diocese as a Diocesan Administrator and later on the Pope made him a full diocesan bishop. As a French Canadian he was trusted to be outside the local politics. He had the added advantage that he had begun his missionary life in that part of Uganda, and had learned one of the local languages. He occasioned little resentment among the local clergy. Because he worked there before as a missionary, he had a lot of prior knowledge about that diocese including their ethnic tension. So he took his time to listen to the stories of everyone involved and asked for advice about how to resolve the problem. In this way he was able to get all eight lawsuits pending at the time of his arrival withdrawn. He lifted the suspension on the priests after a while to avoid claims that the ‘rebels’ had ‘won’. Quietly he redeployed the clergy of almost half his parishes. The tension was gradually reduced. Later on the Pope made one of the local diocesan priests (Bishop Callist Rubaramira) a Bishop of the diocese after the French Canadian Bishop retired.\textsuperscript{185}

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., p.124.  
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., p. 124.\end{flushleft}
There are similar ethnic and tribal tensions in a number of Catholic dioceses of Uganda. Even my own home Archdiocese of Gulu went through a similar hard time when on January 11, 1987 Monsignor Martin Luluga was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Gulu. At that time Gulu diocese was under the leadership of bishop Cyprian Kihangire who was also not a man from the local area; he was a Munyoro from the western part of Uganda. The local people of Gulu diocese expected that after the reign of Kihangire, a local priest would be elected to lead their home diocese; but it did not happen that way. So when Martin Luluga was announced as the Auxiliary bishop elect of Gulu, ethnic tension rose to a record high in our diocese. The local people looked at the appointment of Bishop Martin as a slight to them. It was difficult for Bishop Martin to be accepted to work in Gulu diocese. However, ethnic tension did not explode into open, violent conflicts in Gulu like it did in Kabale diocese. Three diocesan priests and a deacon were suspended by bishop Kihangire on suspicion that they were ring-leaders of resistance against the appointment of Bishop Martin to Gulu diocese. They were all later re-instated. Bishop Martin was at first accepted as long as he remained an auxiliary bishop, but with time, the Pope gradually made him the substantive bishop of Gulu from April 12, 1990 up to April 10, 1999.

2.5 Efforts towards Ecumenism and Reconciliation

The missionaries share a big portion of the blame for laying a poor foundation of unity in Uganda as well as in other parts of Africa. They realized that they had sown seeds of hatred especially after witnessing religious wars which caused the loss of lots of lives. Father
Vincent Donavan CSSP observed that the colonialists had sown the seeds of Protestant-Catholic conflict and they ought to repair the damages and heal the sin. “...The European missionary has brought hatred to Africa in the name of religion....It’s time to realize that we have a serious responsibility to repair the damage we have done.”

On realizing the differences they had caused among the African peoples, the missionaries, particularly the Roman Catholic and the Protestants, embarked on a mission of reconciling the two fighting Christian Churches. The first Catholic – Protestant ecumenical efforts started as early as 1960. Thirteen Catholic priests and thirteen Protestant priests met in Arusha, Tanzania and decided to have monthly discussions aiming at bringing about unity and reconciliation between the two fighting Churches in Africa. Members of each group accepted to be bound and to observe rules of fair play to speak with sincerity and accept good will of the other side. They tried to discover some affinity between themselves.

In Uganda, the efforts at religious reconciliation were mostly organized between 1964 and 1976, when religious wars were centrally involved in Uganda’s political arena. It was at this time that some missionaries embarked on efforts towards reconciliation by starting an ecumenical discussion group at the academic level involving only academicians from higher institutions of learning. The participants were from the Department of Religious Studies of Makerere University, the Catholic National Seminaries of Ggaba and Katigondo, the Anglican Theological College of Mukono as well as participants from Ggaba Catholic Pastoral Institute. During one of the discussions, Dr. Louis Pirouet (a European missionary)

presented a paper in which he explained that “...religious tensions in Uganda were deeply rooted in the historical background of Anglican – Catholic relations in England.”\(^{187}\) In addition, Father John O’Donolue noted that “Christians in Uganda and Africa should simply refuse to accept the divisions which have been imposed upon them by outsiders as a result of old quarrels in Europe which have nothing to do with Uganda and Africa and initiate a movement of unity that could become Africa’s present mission to the rest of the Christian world.”\(^{188}\)

The two mainstream Churches have shown a strong will for reconciliation since the 1960s. However, the gap between these Churches has instead grown wider because of political influences and the popular tactic of divide and rule by some political opportunists. Each group fears losing grip on ‘supremacy’ if they compromised their interests. Secondly, the seeds of hatred have been sown so deeply in people’s hearts and minds that many only give lip service to the efforts of reconciliation even after public confessions had been made by many missionaries themselves.

**2.6 The Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC)**

The Uganda Joint Christian Council is a joint action of three main Christian denominations in Uganda. It is made up of the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church (commonly

\(^{187}\) Ibid., p. 60.
\(^{188}\) Ibid., p. 60.
known as Church of Uganda COU), and the Orthodox Church. The Council was founded and inaugurated at Makerere University in 1964. The UJCC was a brainchild of Archbishop Joseph Kiwanuka, Roman Catholic and Archbishop Leisue Brown of the Anglican Church of Uganda. The two Archbishops were the ones who worked hard to develop UJCC. The original vision of UJCC was to try and reconcile the religious differences among the three Christian denominations, with the hope that even the political tensions between the Catholics and Anglicans be reconciled. The birth of UJCC followed soon after president Obote’s visit to the Catholic Archbishop (Joseph Kiwanuka). That was an apparent sign of reconciliation with a State headed by a Protestant president with the Catholic Church whose members make up the majority of Uganda. The president also appointed Benedict Kiwanuka (a Catholic) as Prime Minister of Uganda. It was the first time a Catholic was given a high office in government. A few other Catholics were appointed to high offices to try and ease tensions between the ruling Protestants and the ruled Catholics.

The first meeting of the UJCC to resolve the strained Church relations was held in Fort-Portal (western Uganda) under the chairmanship of a Catholic bishop Mcaulely. The main objective of the council was to forge cooperation between the two Churches and the government of Uganda. When UJCC was created, religion was directly in the middle of the political scene in Uganda. The council provided a forum for political and religious leaders to discuss both theological and political issues which undermined the relationship between the Churches and the State. The UJCC persuaded the government of Uganda to declare a public holiday for the Uganda Martyrs day which is now celebrated yearly on June 3rd.

When president Amin expelled Asians from Uganda in 1976, the Church leaders condemned the move strongly saying “Yes we agree with the policy of Africanizing the country’s economy but we do not agree with the manner of deportation, breaking up families, robbery and violence.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 68.}

In early 1976, Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga and Archbishop Janani Luwum of the Anglican Church of Uganda reacted towards government violence against students and academic staff of Makerere University. As religious leaders they could not keep quiet when people’s rights were being violated. They were interested in negotiating peace as Margaret Ford, Luwum’s secretary wrote in her diary with Luwum that, “Neither the Catholic nor the Anglican Church in Uganda had any tradition of social or political criticism, but now they were forced to take up political positions.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 68.}
The religious leaders resolved to meet with president Amin to negotiate ways of creating peace in the country. President Amin in his dictatorship turned down the request. He became alarmed and furious that even his fellow Muslim religious leaders had connived with Christians to criticize him. And as mentioned earlier, within a few weeks in February 1977 the Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum was tragically murdered together with two government ministers.

When president Amin was overthrown from power, the religious leaders continued to make joint submissions to the government about the state of the country. In their memorandum prepared in July 1979 by the Catholic Cardinal, the Orthodox Bishop and the Anglican Archbishop, they expressed concern about the state of human rights. The memo expressed concern about the intrusion of the army into government politics and the breakdown of law and order. The army was accused of killing innocent civilians and robbing their property almost every night throughout the country. They also complained about the administrative system in the country which they feared was not democratic and would not help to restore stability in the country now that Amin was gone. They noted that people’s right to live and private property were being violated.

After the disputed elections, Milton Obote came back to power in Uganda for a second time and Ugandans continued to experience gross violations of human rights. The country seemed lawless again because there was no security provided to civilians and to their
property. There was not much freedom of expression, and many people were arrested without warrants, and some were never seen again without being tried in courts of law.

Being an Anglican, Obote used a divide and rule method with the Churches, which had tried hard to reconcile their differences. He made sure he favored the Anglicans and suppressed the Catholics. He tried to win support from the Anglican Church of Uganda and suppressed criticism. Bishop Kivengere (An Anglican Bishop) admitted as much as quoted by Josephine in her article when he said that

We have a government in Uganda which is almost entirely made up of the Church. That should make things very easy for us you may think, but I am sure you know that it makes things difficult for us. The government does not stand in our way at all in fact we are constantly appealed to by members of the government to take lead in spiritual rehabilitation...This sounds tremendous but underneath it is very difficult because words do not mean action. When the government is putting us in this position of favor, speaking the truth becomes doubly difficult.\textsuperscript{192}

Obote indeed bribed the Anglican Church of Uganda to the extent that even after the murder of 80 people at Uganda Martyrs’ Shrine at Namugongo, the leaders of the Anglican Church of Uganda were silent about the murder. The Catholic leaders condemned the barbaric acts. They demanded that the responsible soldiers be brought to justice. A visitor from overseas was quoted by Josephine as having commented: “the bishops of the Anglican Church of Uganda are divided in their response to the barbarism of the regime and in

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., p.70.
particular to the massacre at Namugongo and the Archbishop refuses to blame the army preferring to try to extend influence privately on the government whose members including Obote are predominantly Anglican.”

So over the years that the UJCC tried to be a Christian voice to the Uganda government and reconcile the warring Churches in Uganda, not much has been achieved. As of now they are trying to work hard to offer civic education to Ugandans towards a peaceful democratic political system and they are also involved in monitoring national elections. Despite acknowledged shortcomings, this exercise was a new thing for Ugandan Churches. On a number of occasions they issued joint statements before national elections, stressing that Christian values of justice, peace, equality, freedom and leadership in service were cornerstones of democracy, calling on all sectors of society to ensure that the elections be successful.

2.7 Peacemaking Efforts of the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda

As we have discussed above, the environment in which the Church is operating in Uganda is depressed with many of the people having very little confidence in the present and even less hope in the future because of a series of violent political conflicts and instability which actually started even before our independence in 1962. The sociopolitical experiences of

193 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
the immediate past and present in Uganda have made many people especially the youth throw hope overboard. By sliding into despair many are surrendering to a death-wish. As a result of this widespread death-wish, the culture of violence reigns in the land. Therefore, the Church in Uganda is confronted with the task of explaining the hope that is in us, in the midst of a people held under siege by greedy leaders. The salvation that the Church proclaims in Uganda should be a more dynamic engagement in the process of seeing, judging and acting, armed with the gospel of Christ. Uganda needs a Christian faith that challenges the status quo and those who are satisfied with the current situation of the country. That is why on September 9, 2003, Pope John Paul II in his “ad limina” address to all the Catholic bishops of Uganda in Rome said:

As Bishops you have a serious duty to address the issues of particular importance for the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country to make the Church even more effectively present in those areas. Working out the implications of the Gospel for Christian life in the world and applying it to new situations is crucial to your ecclesial leadership: this is the time for Catholics – together with other Christians – to bring the freshness of the Gospel to the struggle of defending and promoting the fundamental values upon which a society truly worthy of humankind is built.

In line with the Pope’s exhortation, the Church in Uganda has tried and is trying to get more involved in helping to bring to an end the destruction of lives and property in Uganda due to long running wars and political violence. However, there is still a lot left to be desired from the Church in Uganda. The bishops are trying harder to play the role of mediators between the government of Uganda and the LRA rebels. They have held direct talks with the government of Uganda and they also sent their representatives to the rebels for a direct

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194 See I Peter 3; 15
talk with them. The bishops have also become more active in using their teaching authority through the publication of a series of Pastoral letters and other means of advocacy, all aimed at encouraging and educating Ugandans about finding and loving a peaceful solution to political disagreements in the country.

The Catholic bishops have also put a lot of pressure on the government of Uganda, the rebels and the international community to encourage and play their roles to help bring the conflicts to an end. In their Easter Pastoral Letter of 2004, the Catholic bishops of Uganda said "The war in northern Uganda, which started in August 1986, has posed a serious challenge to all of us, the people of Uganda. The loss of so many human lives, the maiming and disfiguring of so many people, the disappearance of so many young and innocent children, the destruction of property and the resultant poverty are all a cause of great shame to our country and to our conscience. We can never, never keep silent on this great evil in our country. We can never say enough has been done to restore peace. We can never give up the search for peaceful means to end this long and bitter war."\textsuperscript{196}

The cry of Ugandan Catholic bishops prompted the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) through their Office of International Justice and Peace to join the struggle for peace in Uganda by issuing a message that

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 'A Concern for Peace,' pp. 3-4.
For the past 21 years, the people of northern Uganda have endured a brutal conflict involving the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), the Government of Uganda, the Government of Sudan, and others. The roots of the conflict lie in economic inequality between northern and southern Uganda. The conflict is exacerbated by the perceived political marginalization of the northern Acholi people after Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni’s assumption of power in 1986. By the 1990s, however, the LRA rebellion that had started as a northern movement against the government of Uganda had devolved into a pseudo-mystical terrorist operation. The LRA was largely funded by the Government of Sudan and sustained itself by kidnappings of children in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. The LRA captured more than 30,000 children over the past two decades. These children have been held hostage as soldiers, sex slaves, and bondservants, with many forced to kill loved ones to break off family relations and dissuade future desertions. To avoid this grim fate, an estimated 35,000 ‘night commuters’ walk miles each evening from their villages to sleep in the relative safety of town centers.197

And the US Catholic bishops recommended the following steps to help speed up the process of solving the political conflicts in Uganda: “The U.S. government should support a political resolution of the conflict. The Juba talks represent a historic opportunity for the people of Uganda and cannot be allowed to fail. The U.S. should publicly support the talks as well as appropriate increased resources for mediation, justice system reform, peace incentive packages for combatants, and community reconciliation efforts. The United States Government should also coordinate with and support the newly appointed UN Envoy for Northern Uganda, Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique’s former president.198 The U.S. Catholic bishops also recommended that civilian protection be prioritized. They said, “it is critical that the U.S. Government invest additional financial and diplomatic resources with two goals in mind: 1) improving the health and security conditions in the IDP camps and if violence begins again, the U.S. should work with the Government of Uganda to ensure

198 Ibid., p. 2.
civilians are adequately protected; and 2) encouraging the Government of Uganda to provide more robust security for IDPs returning to their homes when it is safe to do so.”199 And finally the bishops recommended that a U.S. Special Envoy for the conflict in northern Uganda be appointed, and “The envoy should travel to the region to see the crisis firsthand, demonstrate its priority status for the U.S., and promote a broad, inclusive process of political reconciliation.”200

The Catholic Bishops of Uganda have continued to teach the people of Uganda through their Pastoral Letters and other ways to accept one another and learn to live together as a people of one country. The bishops have not yet succeeded but through their Pastoral Letters, they have made several recommendations that if followed can help the country achieve a lasting peace. In one of their Pastoral Letters entitled *A Concern for Peace, Unity and Harmony in Uganda*, published in 2004, the bishops called for a move away from the culture of war, violence, revenge, intolerance and use of extra-legal means in pursuit of any goal to fully embrace a culture of peace, peaceful resolution of conflicts, tolerance, genuine forgiveness and reconciliation and culture of Constitutionalism. They believe this is a way to consolidating unity, peace and harmony in the country, and the best means to end the armed conflicts in northern and eastern parts of Uganda and to prevent more of such conflicts in the future. They taught that all Ugandans must build peace in their hearts as individuals, we must build peace in our families and communities and then we shall be able to build peace in our nation. They made this call to all pastoral agents and leaders in the

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199 Ibid., p. 2.
200 Ibid., p. 2.
country to build a culture of peace, security and tolerance among all individual and
communities in Uganda.\textsuperscript{201}

In the same Pastoral Letter, the bishops also recommended that strong institutions for
peace be built in the country and in every community, using fully both the good traditional
means and the modern ones and particularly the Christian means of peace making,
forgiveness and reconciliation. Both Church and State should set up coherent peace
strategies to address conflict in the country. The bishops expressed their readiness to work
closely with the government of Uganda in realizing this noble cause. They also believe there
should be a good national agenda for inculcating a strong and genuine sense of patriotism,
unity in diversity and respect for legitimate differences.\textsuperscript{202}

And they would like that there be a national commitment to peace education aimed at
demilitarizing the minds of the people of Uganda, replacing a language of violence with a
language of peace, eliminating acts of violence and replacing them with acts of peace, thus
building a permanent culture of peace among all people.

Finally, the bishops recommended that the government of Uganda should develop a sincere
will to fight corruption and violation of human rights at all levels of society by

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., p. 15.
strengthening the anticorruption institutions such as the Inspectorate of Government, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, Directorate of Ethics and Integrity, together with the judiciary. The bishops made this recommendation because earlier on in another Pastoral Letter they had made a strong observation that “Ugandans are beginning to become impatient with Government’s apparent incapacity to deal with, fight and eventually eliminate corruption. It is believed that millions of shillings of public funds end up in the pockets of individuals, and this creates frustrations and erosion of confidence in public authorities. Legislation which exists to ensure proper accountability and transparency in the use and administration of public funds must be enforced; where it is lacking, new laws should be enacted to stamp out the evil practice of corruption.”

As indicated in chapter one, corruption is one of the major causes of violent political conflicts in Uganda. So, if the bishop’s recommendation is seriously put into practice, the country will have overcome at least one of the causes of conflicts in Uganda.

In 1981, the Bishops spoke out against tribalism in Uganda. They knew that Uganda was torn apart by tribalism, regionalism, religious intolerance and ethnic hatred. This kind of evil attitude creates a lot of indifference and selfishness in the country. So the bishops said:

It is no secret that Ugandans do not yet feel as members of the same family. Examples abound, both in rural areas and in the towns and cities....So it happens all too often, that people in need face life totally alone and neglected, even if they live in crowded flats. Why? Because perhaps they belong to a tribe

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203 Ibid., p. 15.
that is ‘unacceptable,’ or practice the ‘wrong religion,’ or belong to a different party…..Christian charity and nation building go hand in hand. Lack of charity and deadly divisions also go hand in hand. The sooner we realize this, the sooner shall we build our nation.205

The bishops appealed to all Ugandans to work hard to unite Uganda according to the example of Jesus. Just like by his blood Jesus Christ united into one family both Jews and Gentiles, so Christians in Uganda should know that it is their mission to unite Uganda into a one loving family of God’s children.

In their Pastoral Letter, Let Your Light Shine, the bishops called on all Ugandans to make a clear and active option for justice for all people, and that they should all become effective peace-makers. They emphasized that the mission of establishing justice and peace is central to Christianity and in the life of every baptized person. Commitment to justice can never be in mere words or attitudes. It must appear through concrete actions. Christians should identify themselves with the victims of injustice in order to assist them in solidarity to establish justice. Fear that breeds silence amid gross injustices must be fought against. Before injustice, a Christian should never accept unworthy compromises. They also called for reconciliation knowing very well that establishing justice and peace goes hand in hand with sincere forgiveness and genuine reconciliation. They noted that for many years there have been accusations and counter-accusations against this or that group for atrocities or injustice inflicted on different tribes or regions of Ugandans.206 It is true that revenge is

always behind most armed conflicts in Uganda and it was that same attitude of revenge that triggered the ongoing political conflict in northern Uganda. The bishops taught that revenge has never and can never be a Christian response to an injury. I too believe that an eye for an eye will soon make all Ugandans blind. So the sooner we reconcile, the better—before many more get blinded.

The bishops have also called for integral development in order to eliminate poverty, ignorance and other problems that usually turn out to be causes of conflicts in Uganda. They said: “As a Church we must advocate an integral vision of development. This is the only development that can liberate men and women and prepare them for a worthy future. Integral development must be planned; it has to cater for the whole person, all persons in all conditions of life. It must aim at improving both the quality of life and of the goods and services used for the welfare of people. It should promote a balanced person, community and society.” The bishops believe that through our national and diocesan departments of development we should be able to fight and eliminate the endemic problems of poverty, disease, ignorance and exploitation. They challenge all Ugandans to fight laziness and value work. As leaders of the Catholic Church in Uganda, they believe it is the mission of Church to show through good examples of development programs and projects how development should be planned and implemented by the people and for the benefit of the people. As a matter of fact, the Catholic department of development (referred to as Caritas) has worked

207 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
so hard in most Catholic dioceses of Uganda from the 1990s to date that we can see many
visible fruits of their work in the country.

Through diocesan Catholic offices of development and the Centenary Rural Development
Bank (started by the Catholic Church in Uganda), many Ugandans are now able to get loans
to finance micro development projects that can liberate them economically. Many
Ugandans are now able to pay tuition for their children and to support their families’
estential needs like buying food and cloth for their children. Through the Catholic micro
financing projects, the rural parts of Uganda are witnessing steady improvement in their
living condition. They also offer trainings in many forms to the local people about
identifying their areas of economic strength and thus exploiting it in the best possible ways.
For example, they train farmers how to modernize their farming skills and how to increase
their capacity to produce more profitable crops and other farm produce. This is increasing
financial income to the ordinary Ugandans living in the rural areas as well as those running
small businesses in the urban areas.

In connection with the need for integral development of Ugandans, in 1995 the Catholic
bishops stated that they are willing to continue working with the government in looking for
ways of reinforcing and improving the quality of education in the country. They
recommended that primary education be made free to all children in the country; free in
the sense that all primary education should be paid for through public funding in order to
give opportunity to all Ugandans to have a chance to get the basic education needed to
liberate them from 'total’ ignorance. In the following words, they also recommended that ethics be taught in all schools at all levels. “Given the turbulent history of our country and the need for moral rehabilitation to redress the situation, we would like to suggest that ethics be taught in all schools at all levels. This does not mean that religious education should become optional, on the contrary. But the two subjects have to be considered as complimentary for the education of young ones. Our education institutions which are competent in this area would be willing to contribute towards designing relevant programs to assist in this area.” To be practical, the Catholic Church in Uganda started a Catholic University in which high quality education is given to students. Ethics is one of the major disciplines offered at that university. Almost all the graduates from that Catholic university get quickly employed by Uganda government as well as by other non-governmental organizations.

The government of Uganda responded positively but not fully about primary education. The government launched what is known in Uganda as “Universal Primary Education” (UPE). The NRM government of president Museveni made this project so political that it has basically lost its bi-partisan nature and as a result it is not working well because not all children are benefiting from the project. There are also so many hidden fees in the project that it is actually not yet free primary education as it should be. So a lot needs to be done in order to perfect this noble and very important project. And basically nothing has been done

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about introducing ethics into the curricula of all the schools as recommended by the Bishops.

The Bishop also recommended that the government should give equal opportunity to all Ugandans and there should be fair distribution of national wealth. This is in connection with a common reference in Uganda about the so-called “national cake” discussed in chapter one. The NRM government is known for making reckless statements about sharing the ‘national cake’ only with those who vote for them or support them politically. The rest of the country is not given equal opportunity during NRM regime to those who oppose them politically. This means the opposition are usually driven to take up arms against the ruling government because it is not taking care of their needs as citizens.

In another Pastoral Letter, the Bishops warned the Ugandan government against violation of human rights. They clearly indicated that violation of human rights is one of the main causes of armed conflicts in the country. They taught that the violation of political and civil rights often turns into armed conflicts and instability. Violation of citizens’ economic rights, especially through corruption, leaves society bewildered and un-peaceful in mind. In their own words the Bishops reminded the Uganda government that

Such is the lesson we should have learnt, through bitter struggles in our country during the past 36 years of independence. Peace demands respect for the self-determination, territorial integrity and sovereignty of each nation. Peace demands just laws which are equally applied to each and everyone. Peace demands full recognition of equality of every person and non-discrimination against any person. Peace requires a life of ethical principles and integrity
among leaders and members of society. Peace can only be built on proper attitudes and strategies for peaceful co-existence and peaceful resolution of any conflict.209

The bishops emphasized that as religious leaders of the Church in Uganda and as moral teachers in the nation, they discern with dismay and apprehension the suffering endured by so many Ugandans because of prolonged armed conflicts. They expressed worry about the war which threatens not only the country of Uganda, but the entire region. Therefore, they considered it their religious, moral and ethical duty to raise their voices and warn everybody concerned to beware lest we all be consumed in the flames of war. In their closing words the bishops said, “We want to state once again and as clearly as possible that war is one of the worst evils that can befall people. War is the greatest enemy to the sacred human life.”210

2.8 Ecumenical and Inter-Religious efforts of Religious Leaders of Northern Uganda towards ending the Conflict

The religious leaders in Acholi land which actually make up a greater part of northern Uganda formed an organization known as Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI). These religious leaders live and work in Acholi land which is the most affected part of the country because it is the epicenter of the current ongoing war in northern

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210 Ibid. p. 7.
Advocacy is one of the most important roles this organization is doing. They have become the voice of the voiceless who are now forced by both their own government and the rebels to live in camps under very inhuman conditions. The ARLPI have become a more formidable force for the government of Uganda to deal with. It is an organization that has credibility for truth-telling both locally and internationally; something which many politicians in Uganda do not like. Many of our political leaders in Uganda and Africa in general like to spin issues in their favor, even very serious issues like genocide and crimes.
against humanity. In the case of the war in northern Uganda, many political leaders as well as other public leaders particularly those from southern Uganda did not and still do not want the international community to know that a slow genocide or something terrible is happening to the people in northern Uganda. They are able to put up with such a criminal attitude towards their fellow citizens because of tribal, ethnic and regional hatreds between the north and the south.

The ARLPI main effort is to help create awareness about the war in northern Uganda locally and internationally and to lobby for a peaceful solution to the conflict through dialogue. They have been engaged in several advocacy processes and organized a number of activities. They have successfully lobbied for direct meetings with the president of Uganda and members of parliament, as well as meetings with international communities. They have organized peace marches, press releases highlighting the plight of the people in northern Uganda, radio programs encouraging rebels to abandon violent armed methods of solving political grievances. The religious leaders have also organized peace rallies and prayers that help the local people express their deep desire to end the war. Prayer services and encouraging speeches are organized annually to commemorate Peace Week and to call for more attention and practical actions to stop the war. For example, to draw the attention of the media, in June 2003, all the major religious leaders in Acholi including their leader the Catholic Archbishop of Gulu (Most Rev. John Baptist Odama) decided to spend four nights with the homeless Acholi people who have been displaced by the war and every night spend their nights along the cold streets and verandas of public buildings in the city.
of Gulu and other neighboring towns. This unexpected expression of anger and concern by
the religious leaders about the suffering of their flock drew immediate attention from both
local and international media. After his personal experience with the children in the cold
nights, the Archbishop soon wrote in his Pastoral Letter that:

I want to remind the indifferent world that the people of northern and north-
eastern districts of Uganda: Acholi, Langi, Teso, Karimojong, Lugbara, Madi,
Alur, and many others subjected to such atrocities are part of Uganda and of the
whole humanity who should enjoy equal rights, responsibility and dignity. I also
want to say that Uganda government has a constitutional duty and mandate to
protect the lives of all its citizens, without exception....The constitutional right
and duty to protection derives from the universal right to life, common good,
equal opportunity to work and earn a living....We cannot ignore or close our
eyes to the cruel conduct of warring parties and the heavy consequences
especially on the children.\textsuperscript{211}

Since the title of his Pastoral Letter is \textit{I have Seen the Humiliation of my People and Heard
their Cry}, the Archbishop also emphasized that he cannot keep quite because he
experienced with the children the daily dark, cold, long and indeed painful nights outside
their proper houses. And he said “I am sure I witnessed just a bit of the tribulations and the
nightmare, the individual, social, physical and moral depth of which only you can fathom. I
cannot afford to ignore you now when you suffer.”\textsuperscript{212}

The Acholi religious leaders are making progress in their organization (ARLPI). Their
ecumenical and inter-religious efforts for peace, have so far achieved the passing of the

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\textsuperscript{211} Catholic Archbishop of Gulu. \textit{I Have Seen the Humiliation of my People and Heard their Cry}. Pastoral
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., p. 4.
\end{flushright}
Amnesty Act, especially in the form in which it is now – as a blanket amnesty. The government of Uganda actually wanted to limit the amnesty only to some members of the rebels but the religious leaders insisted that the amnesty law should be made available without any restrictions for all the rebels who are willing to abandon the war and come back home. The religious leaders have also succeeded in creating awareness about the war and now the conflict in northern Uganda is on the national and international agenda. They have also regularly continued to publish key advocacy reports that give a lot of detailed information about the war and the actual situation of the people. And by their four nights on the streets with the children known as Night Commuters, they were not only able to attract attention of the media across the world, many international leaders were drawn to northern Uganda to see what is going on there. Among those who visited northern Uganda were the: United Nation Secretary for Humanitarian Assistance, the Netherlands Minister for Cooperation and Development, the Executive Director of UNICEF and others.

The national awareness created by the religious leaders of northern Uganda also put the Ugandan parliament in a shameful situation for not having taken their duties seriously about the suffering of people in northern Uganda. Shortly after the whistle was blown to the local and international community by the religious leaders of northern Uganda, the parliament of Uganda responded by declaring northern Uganda a disaster area. Many members of parliament visited northern Uganda to assess the situation and many more religious leaders from other parts of the country also visited northern Uganda to express solidarity with the suffering population of that part of the country.
For a long time the Uganda government insisted on the military option as the means to end the war but the religious leaders have all along emphasized dialogue as the way to end the conflict. This completely opposed positions strained relationship between the government and the religious leaders of northern Uganda. No clear consensus has been reached about which approach is the best to attain peace in northern Uganda. Due to pressure even from the international community and the greater Universal Church, the president of Uganda and the rebels were forced to start a peace talk in 2006 and the peace process is moving on with lots of ups and downs.

2.9 Weaknesses of the Church in Uganda:

2.9.1 Politicization of Religious Institutions

As Deusdedit described in his article, on the eve of independence in 1962, the social structure in Uganda like in most African countries was fluid. In Uganda, independence was granted before an indigenous, national political-social structure had properly taken roots. The political parties that were formed had borrowed ideas from the west, which were not necessarily applicable to the Ugandan situation. With conflicting ideological viewpoints, with no cultural foundation, the parties had to have recourse to religious institutions so as to gain support of the local population. Thus religious institutions became politicized. This politicization of religious institutions created a new domain of conflict and further
undermined the building of peaceful national consensus. Religion became not only a basis for identity but also a tool for political mobilization. The politicization of the Church in Uganda makes it very difficult for the Church to play its prophetic role as a teacher of the truth, unity, and as a pacifier. Thus instead of being a peace builder the Church becomes the cause of conflicts.\textsuperscript{213}

The atmosphere in Uganda, to a great extent, has always been influenced by religio-political rivalry. The Anglican Church of Uganda has never been able to overcome its close affinity with the political leadership of Uganda since the British colonial period. Church and State are almost synonymous because of the political and military support from the British against the Catholics during the religious wars in Uganda when missionaries were laying the foundation of the Church in the country. Since then they have considered themselves as the true Church of Uganda, unlike the Catholics, hence their name “Church of Uganda.” They have identified themselves with all the political regimes in Uganda since independence. The Anglican affinity with the political leadership of Uganda is another indicator of future danger/conflict should one day a Catholic become the president of Uganda. The probability is very high that they will not tolerate the leadership of a Catholic president who will certainly not give them the kind of favors they are ‘addicted’ to since British colonial rule in Uganda. In connection with this issue, there is a common rumor in Uganda that the British are still in control of the politics of Uganda. They are the ones who pull the political strings of Uganda into the direction they want and it is believed by many Ugandans that they will

not allow a Catholic to become president of Uganda (with the exception of Idi Amin who was a Muslim). All this goes back to the colonial time when the British favored the Anglicans over the Catholics.

In conclusion, the Anglican Church in Uganda must work hard to find ways of disengaging itself from the political leadership/government of Uganda so that it learns to stand on its own feet and not on the feet of Uganda government. The government of Uganda is not a property of the Anglican Church of Uganda. All possible ways must be found to help and liberate the Anglican Church in Uganda from its political held on the Uganda government. This liberation will not only help bring political peace in Uganda, but it will also ‘guarantee’ the survival of Anglicanism in Uganda because there is no guarantee that they will always be favored by the future regimes in Uganda.

2.9.2 Weak Ecumenical Effort in Uganda

As indicated, Catholics and Protestants have a long history of hatred for each other in Uganda right from day one of their arrival in Uganda. Their lack of cooperation has very serious negative consequences in solving the ‘chronic’ state of socio-political and religious violence in the country since the colonial time. Although some ecumenical efforts are taking place in Uganda such as the Joint Christian Council of Bishops, the joint medical bureau, the joint bible translation, and the ecumenical contacts between the Protestant theological
colleges and the Catholic Seminaries, not much is actually being done ecumenically to find ways to fix the political problems in Uganda. In Uganda, ecumenical efforts are mostly in reference to cooperation between the Catholic and Protestant Churches in order to reduce religious intolerance only and nothing much more. The divisions and fights among the Christians are bound to give contradicting signals to those who receive the message. It is difficult for one to understand why two groups of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, claiming to preach the same good news of unity and love, stand in disunity and suspicion of one another. It is like preaching a divided Christ. This kind of situation is a liability to the mission of the Church.

Unfortunately as Tusingire describes it, in Uganda ecumenism still remains elusive. The divisions and mistrust among the Christians still linger on in a major way. Ecumenism is still one of the most urgent and greatest challenges of the Church in Uganda. The relationships between Protestants and Catholics have been scandalous right from the beginning. A lot needs to be done because whatever efforts have so far been made, have remained at the top among Church leaders with very little impact on the life and attitudes of the ordinary members of the Church. The official statements of the Church leaders seem not to correspond to the actual situation on the ground. It has remained an academic issue involving mostly the elite and church officials with little effort at the grass-root level. The older people of Uganda including many clerics who had bitter experiences from the earlier religious conflicts have tended to remain skeptical of any ecumenical effort and they have
continued to stress the factors that sustain hatred and conflict between the two Christian Churches.\textsuperscript{214}

The harm done by the division between the two Churches is evident, for according to Vatican II Council, “Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but they differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ were divided. Certainly, such divisions openly contradict the will of Christ, scandalize the world, and damage the most holy cause, the preaching of the gospel to every creature.”\textsuperscript{215} Hence the effective evangelization of Uganda demands serious efforts towards rectifying the relationships between Catholics and Protestants. Without unity in mission and purpose, the Christian Church in Uganda will not be able to effectively play its prophetic role to transform the violent situation in Uganda. Without unity they will not be able to stand up and speak with one voice against corrupt, murderous, dictatorial, and sectarian governments that have kept Ugandans in ‘perpetual’ agony since independence. There is real need for genuine dialogue and cooperation. Unity is an obvious priority of the universal Church. Christ willed and prayed for it. The universal Church has been consistent in her teaching about it.

\textbf{2.9.3 Lack of Interreligious Dialogue}

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p.221-222.

Interreligious dialogue which concerns the relationships between Christians and non-Christian religions forms part of the Church’s evangelizing mission. By its nature it can only be authentic when it is able to advance mutual respect without compromise of the Church’s work of proclamation.\(^{216}\)

In regard to dialogue with Islam which is the only major non-Christian religion in Uganda, minimal efforts for dialogue have been made by the Catholic Church in Uganda. The relationship among the members of the two religions has been generally that of mutual ignorance and indifference. On the part of the Catholic Church there has been a tendency in the past to ignore the Muslims as a minority who pose no challenge for the mission of the Church in Uganda because they make only about 10% of the Ugandan population. However, as Cardinal Arinze puts it in his book, we have to be very careful and not to ignore the power and influence of the minority. "Leaders of various religious traditions have the necessary role of striving to encourage interreligious cooperation in works of human promotion. While a few people are enough to cause tension, confusion, and destruction, the cooperation of all is needed in order to promote lasting development, justice, and peace."\(^{217}\)

In the case of Uganda we should not forget the history of wars fought between Christians and Muslim right from the time missionaries set foot in Uganda, nor should we forget that

\(^{217}\) Ibid., Arinze. *Religions for Peace*, p. 38.
the war in northern Uganda developed from a less brutal into a very destructive war because of the political and military support of the Islamic government of Khartoum. All this should remind us to take seriously interreligious dialogue with Islam as one of the ways to solving the problem of wars in Uganda as well as building a stable and lasting peace in Uganda and other African countries.

Currently the only form of dialogue that exists between the Catholics and Muslims in Uganda is mostly what is known as “dialogue of action.”" Thus the current type of dialogue between the Church in Uganda and Muslims can be described as a dialogue with Islam on occasions of common interest like working together and cooperating for development, education, security, and of inviting one another to celebrate feasts and events of importance. However, of late the Bishops’ Conference has also appointed someone to act as a contact person between the Church and Muslims in Uganda. In the year 2000 some discussion groups comprising Muslims and Christians were established in some parts of Uganda. We are yet to see if these will thrive and have some serious positive impacts towards peace building in Uganda and on the religious life of the Ugandan Society. But in the meantime this seems to be about all as regards the official contact the Church in Uganda has with Muslims.

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\[218\] Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Dialogue and Proclamation, # 42b, in AAS 84 (1992), p. 428. This is the dialogue of deeds and collaboration with others for goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed towards the liberation and advancement of mankind.
2.9.4 Insufficient Empowerment of Lay Leadership

The theology of Vatican Council II emphasizes the role of the lay people in getting the Christian values to the grass-roots of our society. And so, the empowerment of lay leadership is a very important strategy to facilitate an effective evangelization and peace building effort in Uganda. Not enough has been done by the Church in Uganda in regard to empowering lay people. Lay leadership exists in Uganda but it needs more formation and facilitation so as to function more efficiently. Most of the lay people who are available for leadership at various levels of the Church and society in general are often not sufficiently prepared for their roles. For this reason I believe that empowering lay leadership implies first of all proper formation for their mission. In order that they may live according to their faith and be able to testify to it, it is fundamental for the lay people to receive what Pope John Paul II called “a total integrated formation.” It is this kind of formation that the laity lacks in Uganda, and this is what they need to empower them to efficiently respond to the current challenges of conflicts and problems facing the Ugandan society, and to give the desired leadership.

The kind of formation that has been offered to Ugandans by the Church since the arrival of missionaries in the country is generally less than sufficient. The only sure Christian formation most lay Ugandans received from the Church is what was offered to them as children in families and at the level of catechumens. This is by no means sufficient for any

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public leadership role in the current challenging situation of Uganda. It is aimed at children and is incapable of responding to all the requirements of the Christian faith of an adult, let alone enabling them to play leadership roles if they have not been prepared for them.\textsuperscript{220} As affirmed by the Pope, today there is a greater urgency to have lay people who are well prepared even in the field of doctrine: “not simply in a better understanding which is natural to faith’s dynamism but also in enabling them to give a reason for their hoping in view of the world and its grave and complex problems.”\textsuperscript{221} There is great need for the Church in Uganda to have well trained lay people in all important fields of life who are well versed with knowledge of the social teaching of the Church, moral theology, philosophy and other fields of human knowledge. Only then can they confidently and efficiently give the leadership required of them.

In Uganda there is urgent need for serious leaders with true Christian values in the fields of politics. For a long time in Uganda, this was an area in which the Catholic Church seemed unprepared. From the earliest days of the Church in Uganda, the missionaries did not train and encourage the lay people to join politics. In fact many of them described politics as dirty and discouraged their parishioners from active participation in it. Throughout its history in Uganda, the Catholic Church in particular has tended to ignore or marginalize the political area in her mission. For that reason Catholics are poorly playing their part in the politics of the country. How can we have the gospel values infiltrate and influence the political arena if we keep our people out of it? Moreover even other aspects of

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p. 206.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., John Paul II. Christfidelis Laici, # 60, in AAS, 81, 1989, p. 510.
evangelization need an atmosphere where there is peace, stability, development and good governance in order to flourish and be effective. If we need good leadership to have Christian values influence the broken politics of Uganda, we need to have our lay leaders actively participating in this field. But, we need first to have them well prepared both in their faith and with the relevant training for the challenging roles they have to play in the country.

Ibid., Tusingire. The Evangelization of Uganda, p. 207.
Chapter Three

Resolving the Wars in Uganda: What Needs to be Done

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses what needs to be done concerning the situation in Uganda. I am going to investigate ways and methods of resolving the wars and conflicts that have gripped Uganda since its independence in 1962. The suggestions for resolving Uganda’s conflicts will be both secular and religious (State and Church), and it will also involve other stakeholders including individual efforts. The chapter will also analyze the solutions in both proximate and long term categories just as the causes of conflicts in Uganda are also proximate and long term in nature.

3.2 Part One: Short Term Solution:

3.2.1 Dialogue and Reconciliation as an Immediate Strategy to end Violent Conflicts in Uganda
Dialogue as an intellectual inquiry or a conversation between the conflicting parties is one of the most important ways that can quickly be used to investigate and resolve the ongoing violent conflicts in Uganda. Dialogue is needed in the Ugandan situation in order to overcome misunderstandings that have built up over a long period and are now being displayed in ‘constant’ violent conflicts in the country. Without doubt, to maintain a basis of meaningful dialogue, improved demands between the different conflicting sides will have to be considered and these should largely take the form of issues to be overcome. In order for Ugandans to have a fruitful dialogue, the conflicting parties will have to listen with sincere desire to understand and articulate within their hearts what the other is saying, though with critical tolerance and moral compassion. Fruitful dialogue will be impeded if one side sees the other as a threat. The kind of dialogue we need in Uganda should be free from superiority complex, chauvinism, and inflammatory elements. All efforts should be made to engage in genuine and meaningful communication that will enable the conflicting parties to accept with courage and humility the possibility of taking risks which involve undergoing changes in order for us as a country to arrive at reconciliation.

The word reconciliation from its' Latin root *reconcilio, reconciliare*, means to bring together again, to reunite in sentiment, to win back, to re-establish, to make good again, to make acceptable, to bring about (by conciliation) peace between conflicting persons/parties. It is the restoration of friendly relations, a restoration of good feeling between quarreling
persons. Reconciliation can be achieved through a process of deliberation by an assembly or some kind of a ‘council’ of a group of advisors whose consent or advice one in authority must seek. It should be done through a legally convened assembly of conciliators/official representatives of the conflicting parties. The job of the conciliators is to discuss and determine the best possible ways of restoring good relationship between the conflicting people in order to reunite them, to make good again what went bad.

The above process of reconciliation sounds difficult to do but that is what the people of Uganda need to do in order to find ways of emerging from decades of long running violent conflicts since our independence in 1962. Since Ugandans are very polarized due to long term cycle of violence, there is a genuine high level of mistrust among the conflict parties in Uganda. Therefore, there will be need for a strong team of mediators during the reconciliation deliberations otherwise the whole process will fall apart and come to nothing. Even after a successful deliberation, there will be need for a serious monitoring team for a while to see that the resolutions are kept and followed as agreed upon.

The concept of reconciliation is a very important theme in Christian theology. The Christian theology of reconciliation and peacebuilding is rooted in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ who became one of us through the mystery of the incarnation in order to reconcile us to God. Jesus Christ entrusted this ministry to us his disciples and we are expected to

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continue with this work throughout our lives (2 Corinthians 5: 17-20). From a Christian perspective, there are four dimensions of reconciliation: Reconciliation with God, reconciliation with the self, reconciliation with neighbors and the human community, and reconciliation with nature.

The first dimension is reconciliation with God which is also known as the vertical reconciliation, this is the creating of harmony by mending the conflicts that separate individuals from God. This is done through: the individual’s recognition of his or her role in alienating God; confession and repentance of misdeeds and request for forgiveness; and a decision to turn away from the misdeeds and rectify them if possible. After these steps have been taken, it is God’s forgiveness and mercy towards the individual that establishes reconciliation in this first spiritual dimension.225

The second dimension, reconciliation with the self, internal conflict with the self is minimized through reconciliation with God. Renunciation of sinful selfishness and the feeling of being forgiven past wrongs in order to start afresh are expected to generate

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225 The Psalms have various illustrations of the relationship between spiritual reconciliation and reconciliation with the self. Psalm 32: 1-2 says: “Happy the sinner whose sin is forgiven....in whose spirit is no deceit.” Another illustration of peace that emanates from spiritual reconciliation with God is seen in John 14: 27 which says: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”
tranquility, peace and harmony with the individual. This reconciliation with the self could be seen as consequence of, or flowing from, the first kind of reconciliation.226

The third dimension, involves reconciliation with neighbors and the human community at large, so that the forgiveness and mercy that the individual has experienced in being reconciled with God must now be transferred to, or shared with, other human beings; the forgiven individual becomes the forgiver and becomes reconciled with his or her fellow human beings. Again, this dimension of reconciliation could be viewed as flowing from reconciliation with God. The privilege of being forgiven and reconciled with God creates the obligation to forgive and be reconciled with others. For example in the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18: 21-35), Jesus tells a parable that underlines this relationship between the first and third dimensions of reconciliation. He tells a story of a servant who owed his master money and was compassionately forgiven from payment because he was unable to pay. But the servant refused to grant a similar forgiveness to another unfortunate person who owed him money and was unable to pay. When the master heard what the servant did, he retracted his forgiveness and recovered every cent he was owed. At the end, Jesus says, “So will my heavenly do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart.” (Matthew 18: 35).

226 See Romans 7: 15-25, in which Paul laments the inner conflict and contradictory tendencies between people’s intentions and their actions and indicates how reconciliation with Christ reconciles these inner conflicts as well.
Here, the Bible takes an even more interesting perspective regarding the relationship between the first and third dimensions of reconciliation. It makes reconciliation with neighbors a prerequisite for reconciliation with God. The Gospel of Matthew contains a clear prescription, “So if you are offering your gift at the altar (as a gesture of seeking reconciliation with God), and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5: 23-25). The implication is that God will not accept gestures of reconciliation from an individual as long as he or she carries a grudge or knows that others have grievances against him or her. This same conditionality is repeated in the most important Christian prayer, The Lord’s Prayer, which says, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” (Matthew 6 : 12). It is interesting to note that the verse does not say, ‘Forgive us so that we can forgive others,’ but ‘Forgive us as we forgive others.’ The apostle John adds more credibility to the same Christian concept of forgiveness and reconciliation when he said, “If anyone says, I love God, but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” (I John 4:20). In the same line with these Biblical texts, Burkhardt is right to argue that most sins against God are not really offenses directly against God but against other human beings. By the same token, reconciliation with God presupposes mending offences against other human beings that were the causes of the conflict with God in the first place.227

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So it also can be argued that the third dimension of reconciliation flows from the second as well. The individual’s reconciliation with the self, which results from renouncing sin, selfishness and greed, can also generate an attitude of benevolence and compassion towards others. It can make the individual sensitive to the needs and interests of neighbors and cause a person to seek and foster relationships of justice, respect, mercy and love. Conversely peace with others could result in peace with the self (Psalm 34: 12-15).

The fourth dimension of reconciliation, reconciliation with nature, develops from a recognition that humans cannot be fully reconciled with God while living in a conflictual, disrespectful and abusive relationship with God’s creation. Abusing the non-human creation, including the earth and its environment, also profanes the individual’s relationship with the creator as it is said in the books of Psalm and Leviticus: “The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds” (Psalm 24: 1) and, “... the land is mine...you are ...my tenants” (Leviticus 25: 23-24). This kind of reconciliation, therefore, calls for a relationship of respect and care for nature and ecological systems. This relationship is further reaffirmed by examining the association between the earth and human beings envisaged in the book of Genesis where it is said “The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7). Soon after this the book of Genesis further said “Then the Lord God planted a garden... and settled him in the garden ... to cultivate and care for it.” (Genesis 2:8; 2:15).

According to Assefa’s interpretation, the above verses establish the fact that “spirit and matter comprise the human being and that the material component is the earth. Thus,
being reconciled with the self implies being reconciled not only with the spiritual self, but also with the material self – the earth. In other words, individuals cannot be in an abusive and conflictual relationship with the earth and its environment while claiming to be reconciled and at peace with themselves. According to this understanding, conflictual attitudes towards the earth or activities that harm the planet and its ecology are tantamount not only to harming the self, but also the other beings who share the earth’s materiality.\textsuperscript{228} Moreover, the kind of relationship envisaged in Genesis 2:15 between the earth (represented by the garden) and humankind is that of custodianship and mutual nurture instead of plunder or selfish and irresponsible exploitation. In fact, the concept of the Jubilee elucidated in the book of Leviticus reinforces this view by articulating the need for balance, harmony and mutual care between people and their environment (Leviticus 25).

What are the implications of this analysis of reconciliation? What does this analysis tell us about the scope of peacemaking processes? Do the concepts of peace and reconciliation have any relevance to domains of life and human interaction other than conflict?

An analysis of reconciliation demonstrates that peacemaking is a vast concept encompassing many aspects of life. The scope extends from the very intimate and deep

spiritual level to the personal-psychological, to the social, and all the way to the ecological level. From this perspective, peace and peacemaking integrates the individual, society and nature. It thus becomes a comprehensive paradigm from which to discern life and relationships in general, instead of being simply a technique for dealing with social disputes. Reconciliation underscores the notion of interdependence, an interdependence that is rooted in a notion of deep spiritual and material interconnectedness linking human beings and nature to a common foundation. Thus, the concept of reconciliation not only expands the scope of peacemaking, but it also provides a comprehensive framework for discussing it.\textsuperscript{229}

According to Assefa, a second implication of this analysis is its demonstration of the highly interrelated nature of the various dimensions of reconciliation. Spiritual reconciliation flows over to the personal, from the personal to the social, and from the spiritual and the social to the ecological. Inner peace and outer peace are interrelated i.e., a person’s ability to make peace with others is enhanced by that individual’s ability to be at peace with himself or herself. A person cannot be at peace with others while torn by inner conflict. In turn, a person’s ability to create peace within the self is a function of his or her peace at the spiritual and social levels.\textsuperscript{230} This therefore, the peace we seek in Uganda must be a comprehensive one addressing all its multiple dimensions.

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., p. 50.
And thirdly, the above analysis of reconciliation demonstrates the expansive spiritual dimension of peace and peacemaking. Indeed, according to Assefa, the spiritual dimension is at the centre of the whole process. This is not to meant to suggest that unless peace is established in the spiritual dimension there can be no peace at the social level. There is no doubt, however, that a peacemaking process that enables the parties to reflect on the spiritual implications of their behavior, especially their hatred, contempt, callousness or self-centeredness, and on their destructive actions in general, is likely to lead to a more conducive atmosphere for the quest of just and lasting solutions to their disputes. In typical peace negotiations, the parties in conflict come to the table armed with very self-centered cost-benefit calculations, ready to deny or defend their wrong doings, determined to attribute total blame for the conflict to their opponents, and intent on extracting maximum concessions from their adversaries. In contrast, bringing the spiritual dimension into the peacemaking process can create access to the more deep-seated, effective base of the parties behavior, enabling them to examine critically their own attitudes and actions. This in turn, may encourage them to accept responsibility, confess their wrongdoings, be flexible with their demands, grant and ask for forgiveness when the need arises, and seek mutually beneficial solutions.231

Peace negotiation and mediation approaches usually tend to be very rational processes. But people’s conflict behavior is often based on less rational emotional considerations and thus may not be changed simply by rational negotiation processes and agreements arising from

231 Ibid., pp. 50-51.
such negotiations. Cognitive decisions or commitments do not necessarily translate into feelings and acts. The gap between the cognitive and the affective, between intent and action, is very reminiscent of the contradiction and schizophrenia that Paul describes in the letter to Romans: “I do not understand my own behavior; I do not act as I mean to, but I do things that I hate. … that is – for though the will to do what is good is in me, the power to do it is not: the good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want – that is what I do…..In my inmost self I dearly love God’s law, but I see that acting on my body there is a different law which battles against the law in my mind….. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death? God – thanks be to him – through Jesus Christ our Lord. So it is that I myself with my mind obey the law of God, but in my disordered nature I obey the law of sin.” Romans 7: 15-25 (The New Jerusalem Bible).

Therefore, providing a spiritual environment in which such contradictions are indentified and the emotional and spiritual problems at the root of these anomalies are worked out would no doubt bring individuals caught in this contradiction the freedom and reconciliation that Paul refers to in Romans 7:25.

A very important implication for the Church that emerges from this analysis of reconciliation is that peacemaking and reconciliation are mandates and not merely options for the Church. Often Churches have been inclined to perceive their primary duty as the fostering of reconciliation between God and human beings or, at most, effecting reconciliation with the self as a by-product of reconciling the individual with God. Thus, much church energy has been preoccupied with sharpening concepts and tools to facilitate
such reconciliation with God by enabling people to renounce sin and seek God's forgiveness. As I have noted earlier, however, in situations of social conflict like the one we are now experiencing in Uganda, it is not possible for the people to be reconciled with God before people are reconciled with each other. God will not accept our offerings unless we are first reconciled with our brothers and sisters, i.e. with our fellow Ugandans (Matthew 5:23-25 and I John 4:20), and will not forgive our sins unless we have forgiven those who sinned against us (Matthew 18:23-35; 16:12-15).

Thus, in conflict situations in which people have grievances against each other or have inflicted harm upon each other like what is going on in Uganda, the Church’s attempt to bridge the gap between God and people is going to be futile unless it also becomes a bridge between people by acting as an agent of social reconciliation. “The Church is shirking its responsibility if it does not recognize the social aspect of spiritual reconciliation and its obligation to be a peacemaker between people.”232 The Church should and can fulfill this reconciliatory obligation in various ways, particularly in societies with ongoing conflicts like in Uganda where it can cultivate or prepare the ground for social reconciliation.

Likewise, as the Churches engages in the task of reconciling God and human beings, it needs also to challenge their own administrations as well as their congregations to examined the implications of such reconciliation for relationships with other human beings and with nature. The repentance that the individual must experience to be reconciled with

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232 Ibid., p. 51.
God must include self-criticism and examination of attitudes towards other people (neighbors, tribal groups, ethnic groups, regional groups, nations, etc). Instead of always pointing to what others have done to us, the spirit of repentance and self-examination should enable us to identify behavior in ourselves that incites others to behave the way they do towards us. The Church should teach the message of self-reflection and self-criticism at the individual, group, community and national levels through its pastoral and prophetic activities.²³³

In addition to preparing the groundwork for peace, the Church also needs to engage directly in building bridges between people separated by conflicts in Uganda, in reconciling adversaries, and in creating community between former enemies. In order to be a credible actor, however, the Churches in Uganda needs to begin with themselves and lead by examples. The Catholic and the Anglican Churches must recognize and confess the role they have played in contributing to conflict and injustice in Uganda during their earlier days when laying the foundation of Christianity in Uganda and even now in the way they play their public roles in the politics of Uganda. They need to find mechanisms with which to foster the spirit of confession within their own congregations and call them into a community of repentance and forgiveness. It must promote reconciliation among the various Christian denominations since an un-reconciled Church can hardly be a credible reconciler of the nation and of the people of God in general.

²³³ Ibid., p. 51.
I would like to sum up this important analysis on the concept of our Christian reconciliation with the following words of Schreiter:

The primary agent in this whole process is God, the author and the fulfillment of what has been created. God acts through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In all this, we are not passive bystanders or mere viewers of this drama. In Paul’s words, this ministry of reconciliation is entrusted to us. We act on behalf of God. In so doing, we attain our destiny as human beings, in that in working for reconciliation our creation in the image and likeness of God is most evident. Thus working for reconciliation is not one option among many. It lies at the very heart of what it means to be Christian and what it means to be human.234

3.2.2 Conflict Resolution Training

There is urgent need for both Church and Government of Uganda to train many more public leaders in the skills of conflict resolution because long running conflicts in Uganda especially since the 1960s have taken an immense toll on all levels of society – personal, family, tribal, ethnic, regional and national. So Church and Government needs to do much more in conducting training seminars in community-building and conflict resolution for representatives at local and national levels, across lines of religion, tribes, regions, culture, language, and class, to promote healing and reconciliation as well as social reconstruction. The purpose of such seminars is to encourage people at grassroots level to work together to overcome the stranglehold of tribal, ethnic, regional, religious and political divisions on the individual and the collective spirit; to develop constructive ways to handle grievances

and differences; to equip people with the tools for promoting healing and social reconstruction; and then to build a critical mass of support for peace-building in Uganda.\textsuperscript{235}

The seminars should be conducted in levels.

According to Stassen, first-level seminars should focus on building trust through intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup reconciliation. Building toward reconciliation during ongoing conflicts like the one in Uganda and even in the aftermath of war requires that special attention be given to the expression and acknowledgment of the others' grievance, and the encouragement of self-critical honesty. The trainers themselves need to listen carefully before judging or offering solutions and distinguish judgments about behavior and actions from those about persons or cultures. The trainees or the participants must also be encouraged to listen carefully and empathetically to one another's pain. Stassen believes that by starting with the common experience of suffering and designing an environment in which each group can begin to feel safe, one will begin to see the development of cross-cutting bonds.\textsuperscript{236} The primary modus operandi in this seminar should be designed like storytelling by participants, and for the Church trainers it will work better if such stories are interspersed with interpretive material on the grief process, drawn from the Bible. Biblical laments should be used as ritualized catharsis within a community framework. The expression of contemporary laments like those in the Psalms ensures that the victim is heard and thereby limits vindictive response.\textsuperscript{237} Weaving in


\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., p. 79.

theological reflection gives added legitimation for religious people. So lament writings should be used to build bonds of trust. In this way, people’s deep pain, rather than being a barrier, becomes a bridge upon which they could engage together in self-critical honesty.

Creative expression of grievance naturally leads to an examination of a cyclical relationship between victimhood and aggression. It will help both sides to see and recognize that today’s aggressors are often yesterday’s victims. This process will result in a reevaluation of the role one’s own people played in both the near and distant past. Stassen believes this walk through history will in turn lead to astounding open discussion about confession of the sins of one’s people. Such discussion needs to be approached carefully, being mindful of the sins of all sides while not assuming equal guilt, being conscious of people’s need to protect group identity by refusing to accept false guilt, and distinguishing between admission of collective guilt and feelings of personal responsibility.238

In the second-level seminars, Stassen wants us to focus on attitude change, especially the clarification of perception. This process of clarifying perception is very important because conflict usually or always involves some degree of misperception and, therefore, requires a concerted attempt to understand the perspectives and needs of the conflicting parties. In cases of intense long running tribal, ethnic or regional conflict like what is been going on in Uganda, the experience of victimization usually contributes to such a threatened sense of identity that bias and stereotyping begin to function as a group survival mechanism. These biases become deeply entrenched, distorting and contaminating one group’s perception of

238 Ibid., Stassen. Just Peacemaking, p. 80.
another. Even in such deep-rooted, identity-based conflicts, it is possible to acknowledge one’s own unhealthy prejudices and resulting manipulative behavior. In fact it is part of the necessary confession of sin, both individual and corporate, as illustrated in the prophetic laments of Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. The participants will have to be trained in good communication skills and they also need to be sensitive to cultural differences in order for them to be able to correct those deep-rooted perceptual distortions.

During this second level seminar, the participants should be asked to step into the shoes of another ethnic, tribal or religious group while examining the nature and dynamics of the conflict. For example when a person from northern Uganda is asked to describe the tensions as understood by a person from southern Uganda and then receives feedback from a southern, it usually increases awareness of the need for attitude change and sometimes helps make behavior more inclusive. By watching others, including members of one’s own ethnic group, successfully role-play another persona, the blocked persons will start to listen more carefully and will begin to replace distorted attitudes with accurate perceptions.

In addition, the second level of the seminar has to introduce participants to problem-solving skills that require acceptance of everyone’s basic concerns and creation of alternative approaches to resolving the conflict. The trainers must make it clear to the trainees that it is absolutely crucial to legitimize people’s most-basic concerns such as the

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239 Ibid., p. 81.
need for nonnegotiable rights such as recognition, well-being, security, belonging, and control over one’s life. Fear that such legitimate needs may be denied creates a desperation, an intransigence, and such fears are certainly behind the all too often violent conflicts in Uganda. It is also important to distinguish these basic needs from the positions, demands, or strategies by which a group insists that its needs be met. Making people look behind their positions to the underlying needs frequently leads to a recognition that basic interests are compatible, thus providing an element of trust that can become the basis for mutual problem solving. During the seminars, such needs should be identified by examining the reasons for positions taken, and also by identifying people’s fears – naming them, examining their basis in reality, and ensuring that all groups perceive the underlying needs at the root of the fear.

Once people have addressed many of the relational problems and identified compatible needs, they are better able to create alternative solutions for the resolution of conflict. The aim is to generate and support a partnership approach to problem solving that seeks both peace and justice. Trainers must make it clear that participants in such a process must be willing to take risks in the search for long-term solutions that will help prevent future conflict in Uganda. After assisting people to identify all the parties to the conflict and to map the needs, fears, goals, power relationships, messages to others, and others’ likely response, then we have to reframe the conflict by carefully examining ways to refigure each component of the conflict in Uganda.

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240 Ibid., p. 81.
According to Stassen’s model, the third and final level of the seminars should focus on the systemic challenge of identifying and promptly responding to sources of conflict that lie within the social structures, beyond the immediate dispute. This level should be designed to help both government and religious communities develop self-generating local programming that can address directly the power inequities underlying the conflict. In the seminars, participants should be trained and equipped with the ability to identify specific roles that government and religious communities can play in the process of social change, to learn to motivate the right individuals or institutions to act, and to build competence in community-organizing skills.\textsuperscript{241} In order to have a lasting effect on structures and interpersonal relationships and on resolving specific disputes, efforts such as this project must develop an indigenous base. Therefore, new indigenous institutions with the capacity to implement peace-making projects should be created in Uganda. A center for Peace, focusing on the method of nonviolence conflict resolution training, and protection of human rights must be urgently developed in Uganda and this project must be created and protected by an act of parliament so that it may be accorded the necessary respect and power to implement positive changes in Uganda.

3.2.3 Good Governance/Leadership

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., p. 84.
Good governance or good leadership reduces levels of violent conflicts in a country, a
community or an organization. Unfortunately Uganda just as many other African countries
have not yet seen good governance since its independence in 1962. On the contrary, all we
are experiencing in Uganda so far are poor or bad governance which provides a breeding
ground for confrontation and armed conflicts. Good governance requires legitimacy from
the governed members of society. There is intrinsic link between governance and
legitimacy in producing political-social-networks which are non-violent, stable and
durable. Legitimized political relationships are those which are accepted, valued and
retained without coercion. This is why a free and fair election through a secret ballot is
always the test of legitimacy and good governance. A government instituted by a free and
fair election and dedicated to reflect the values and satisfy the needs of its citizens is still a
dream for many African countries including Uganda. When legitimacy does not exist or is
thrown into doubt, it leads to serious demands for social change which in most cases
results into political turmoil and social unrest.

The challenge in Uganda today is to set up sustainable transparent institutions, laws,
procedures and norms, which allow people to freely and peacefully express their needs,
concerns and interests within a predictable and relatively equitable political atmosphere.
The political atmosphere in Uganda should experience freedom and strictly respect human
rights as a basis of good governance. To avoid more protracted conflicts in Uganda, the
President and his government must be sanctioned by the consent of the governed through
a free and fair election; a genuine free election and not a mocked or fixed election.
The facts on the ground indicate that genuine democracy has not yet been achieved in Uganda thereby raising the inevitable question: Is democracy in Uganda real or a mirage? In spite of some Ugandan politicians claiming good democracy in the country, they neither safeguard it nor uphold the principles upon which a democratic government is founded. The Church should therefore, play its role of ensuring that genuine democracy takes root in Uganda. According to Vatican II, it is the Church’s responsibility to read and interpret the signs of the times thereby sharing the joys sorrows, hope, anguish, oppression, liberation, aspirations as well as integral development of the people and society where it is established. Vatican II presents the Church as servant and not lord, liberator and not oppressor, development oriented and not conventionally static. To fulfill this role effectively, the Church in Uganda must be people-centered. It has to take a leading role in helping Ugandans define democratic principles which will ensure freedom, justice and good governance by challenging the government to create structures that will liberate people from poor leadership.

In Uganda, the Church must work harder to liberate Ugandans from autocratic regimes, by becoming a stronger voice of the voiceless and fight for the human rights of those being persecuted politically because of tribalism, ethnicity, regionalism, as well as for the marginalized. This should be done in an atmosphere of prayer, dialogue, peace and love. The aim should be to change the social structures which breed injustice, conflict and death. As stated in *Gaudium et Spes*, “The social order requires authentic improvement. It must be
founded in truth, built on justice, enlivened by love. It should grow in freedom towards a more humane equilibrium.”

The Church in Uganda needs to identify itself with the suffering masses in any part of the country without buying into the unchristian practice of tribalism or regionalism which has blinded so many Ugandans especially political leaders. The Church leaders must do more in situations of political conflicts like now and not stop at the mere level of charity (handouts). It has to conduct seminars/workshops in civic education at the grass-root level. These will make people aware of their basic human rights so that they can stand up and demand them where they are deprived of these God-given rights. People will thus be transformed into self-supporting and responsible citizens. By so doing the Church will also liberate and transform itself. It is this type of self-transformational ecclesiology that Uganda needs today. The problem of extreme social injustice throughout the country makes it imperative for the Church to embark on humanizing and Christianizing Uganda, freeing it people from injustice and bad governance thereby transforming the face of the country and of the Church. For it is not only individual poor persons in the Church, but the Church itself that should be liberated and transformed through altruistic service like prophetic criticism of social institutions that transforms and energizes human society by promoting God’s Kingdom here on earth.

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3.2.4 Need for an Ecumenical Approach to the Conflicts in Uganda

In chapter two I discussed how missionaries share a big portion of the blame for laying a poor foundation of Christian unity in Uganda. This disunity between Catholics and Protestants have persisted up to the present time and there is no doubt that the lack of tolerance for each other has directly and indirectly contributed to the current ongoing political conflict in northern Uganda as well as other political conflicts that occurred in other parts of the country. It is therefore, a pastoral problem that the two main Churches must solve if they want to carry out effective evangelization in Uganda. The Catholic and Protestant Churches in Uganda should be reminded that we are both pilgrims together to our common destiny. The late Pope John Paul II put the mission of the Church understood in this way (pilgrims together) at the heart of his ministry from the very beginning of his pontificate. He sought and found symbolic actions in order to make this clear before the whole world. One such symbolic gesture was his invitation issued not only to leaders of the other Christian Churches, but to all religious leaders from all over the world to spend a day in silence, prayer, fasting and pilgrimage with him at Assisi on October 27, 1986. This is briefly how Pope John Paul II explained the significance of the meeting to the participants at the end of the day:

For the first time in history, we have come together from everywhere, Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and World Religions, in this sacred place dedicated to St Francis, to witness before the world, each according to his own conviction, about the transcendent quality of peace. The form and content of our prayers are very different, as we have seen, and there can be no question of reducing them to a kind of common denominator. Yet, in this very difference we
have perhaps discovered anew that, regarding the problem of peace and its relation to religious commitment, there is something which binds us together. The challenge of peace, as it is presently posed to every human conscience, is the problem of a reasonable quality of life for all, problem of survival for humanity, the problem of life and death....

Yes, while we fasted we have kept in mind the sufferings which senseless wars have brought about and are still bringing about on humanity. Thereby we have tried to be spiritually close to the millions who are victims of hunger throughout the world.

While we have walked in silence, we have reflected on the path our human family treads....... The very fact that we have come to Assisi from various quarters of the world is itself a sign of this common path which humanity is called to tread. Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others.²⁴³

The above inspired words of John Paul II to the religious leaders at Assisi should be the guiding message for ecumenical efforts among the Christian Churches in Uganda especially between the Catholics and Anglicans who have been at each other's throat since the foundation of Christianity in Uganda. The two main Churches in Uganda are ruining and destroying each other and the whole people of Uganda because they have not learn to walk together in peace and harmony as the Pope said. Conflict between the two main Churches prevents them from giving a common witness to life, justice, peace, human dignity and solidarity in Uganda which urgently needs such a common testimony and approach. The disunity and fights among Christians are bound to give contradicting signals to those who receive the message. It is difficult for one to understand why two groups of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, claiming to preach the same good news of unity and love, stand in

²⁴³ John Paul II. "Seek to Be Peacemakers," in The Pope Speaks, Spring-Winter 1986, 46, 47. These words are from the concluding address of Pope John Paul II to representatives of various churches and religions at Assisi, October 27, 1986.
disunity and suspicion of one another. It is like preaching a divided Christ, as Mugabi puts it: “If we preach a Christ who is divided, how will the world respond?”

Ecumenism in Uganda still remains elusive probably more than admitted. The disunity and mistrust among the Christians still lingers on in a major way. Ecumenism is therefore, one of the most urgent and greatest challenges of the Church in Uganda; and we need it urgently as Mary C. Moorman emphasized in her article: “In times of crisis that call for reconciliation at the root causes of political separation, we see the need for a new kind of ecumenism in Uganda, one that doesn’t depend solely on slow official dialogue or haphazard doctrinal compromise, but which emerges immediately and practically from individual commitments to the practice of grace. Uganda is an urgent context where Christian disunity can kill.” It’s true that Christian disunity in Uganda has already killed several people and will continue to do so if urgent ecumenical approaches are not taken to bring cooperation, peace and political stability in the country.

It is unfortunate and absurd to note that the historical conflicts between France and England, or even Protestants and Catholics of Europe were imported to Uganda by the missionaries who laid the foundation of Christianity in the country. The historical conflict, still continue to hamper ecumenical efforts in the Ugandan situation. The harm done by the

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conflict between the two main Churches is evident, for as the Vatican II Council puts it:

“Such divisions openly contradict the will of Christ, scandalize the world, and damage the most holy cause, the preaching of the gospel to every creature.”246 Hence the effective evangelization of Uganda demands serious ecumenical efforts to rectify the relationships between the Catholics and the Protestants.

I know that efforts have been made towards unity and cooperation through talks, conferences and especially through the Uganda Joint Christian Council which I discussed in chapter two, but all these unfortunately seem to remain mostly at the top among Church leaders with very little impact on the daily life and attitudes of the ordinary members of the Church. The ecumenical efforts in Uganda have mainly remained an academic issue involving mostly the elite and Church officials with little efforts at the grass-root level. Much more needs to be done to bring the spirit of Christian unity down to the grass-root level because Christian unity is to be understood and practiced by all the Christians. If this unity is limited only to the elite at the academic level, then it will never bear fruits of peace in a country like Uganda. On this point Mary Moorman said: “It remains, however, that the quest for unity among confessing Christians is neither a liberal penchant, nor the prerogative of the church’s elite; rather, the quest for Christian unity and reconciliation is the normative duty for every Christian. Having been scripturally mandated by Christ, Christian unity is a non-negotiable; ‘let them be brought to complete unity, so that the

world may know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me John 17: 20-24.”

The fact that Christian unity is normative confirms and indicates that a lot remains to be done at the grass-root level in Uganda because it is still evident that the spirit of negative competition, petty criticisms of one another based on prejudice, mutual suspicions, resistance to mixed marriages and general misunderstandings is very common among the Christians in the country. All these, in as far as they express disunity indicate that the situation is bad. Lack of unity among Christians in whatever degree remains a scandal to the Ugandan person who is a member of the Church or being invited to embrace and live according to the Gospel message. The disunity among Christians do not only keep away people from joining the Church, but they also lead some to leave the Church. So if the Church is to be more successful in Uganda, it has to take the issue of ecumenism more seriously. This is not just for the sake of solving conflicts, but especially because in that way, the Church can claim to be truly faithful to its very nature and mission.

To help speed up Christian unity in Uganda we need to adopt a new and a more graced Christian disposition toward each other as Mary Moorman said in her article. She explains that:

The duties of grace in situations where denominational reconciliation is urgently needed for humanitarian rescue cannot develop over lengthy processes; rather, individual Christians must begin to respond immediately to

247Ibid., Moorman. A Proposal of Grace, p. 3.
the demands of Christ's grace in very real crises. I suggest that the overarching mandate in the Ugandan context of long standing animosity and immediate needs is not for Christians merely to re-name the perceived adversary, but rather to behave toward the doctrinal enemy according to the love and service demanded for the enemy by Christ himself. The obedient response to Christ’s embrace of the enemy on the cross is to practice Christ’s grace by embracing the radical other; such an embrace may require that Christians choose to behave as though the historically perceived sin of the estranged other were no longer immanent. The practices of this embrace must take concrete shape in the behavior of individuals.248

Moorman emphasize that the grace disposition must be concretized for example in the renewal of language among the Christians. Christians should begin to use a graced language that does not demonize members of the other Churches.

The renewal of language in Uganda might proceed with a deliberate commitment to bless the other verbally, and to eschew all verbal demonization of or flippant terminology for the other. The demonization of another immediately violates the Christian mandate to speak the truth and inevitably introduces sheer emotionalism into the conversation. The statements on ecumenism by John Paul II specifically forbid the ‘words which do not respond to the condition of separated brethren with truth and fairness, thereby making mutual relationships with them more difficult.’...... Fundamentally, the strong link between language and the practices that proceed from it requires Christians to submit to a graced language since our very humanity is shaped by our language and the communities of discourse in which we participate. A graced language will submit to the biblical significance of language as properly creative and redemptive....Christians must refuse to abuse the gift of language by using it as an instrument of lies, falsehood, closure, alienation, suspicion, or enmity when speaking about their fellow Christians.249

How do we get the wonderful suggestions of Moorman to the Christians at the grass-root level so that they can begin to respect and bless one another in their words? I suggest that

248 Ibid., p. 5.
249 Ibid., p. 5.
we must cultivate these graced language and renewal right from the grass-root level upward from what we commonly call Small Christian Communities (SCC). Ecumenical efforts should embrace Small Christian Communities as a means of getting the message of unity to the grass-root where the Christians live side by side (Catholics and Protestants) in their neighborhoods. The model of operating in these communities favors the work of ecumenism. The fact that these SCC have as major elements the sharing of Holy Scripture and charitable actions in itself favors the work of ecumenism. Since members of Christian denominations live together in the same neighborhoods and work together, meaningful efforts of ecumenism need to be directed where they live. Actually it is common in Uganda that at gatherings and meetings of SCC, members from the other Churches are also present. It is easy to share bible services because it is common to them. And when it comes to planning and carrying out the works of human promotion they never segregate. They help whoever is in need, regardless of one’s religious affiliation. They support one another in situations of joy such as feasts and of pain such as funerals. As they live together mixed in the same neighborhoods they are able to make common efforts to improve their social conditions. This is a fertile ground for teaching a graced language, the spirit of ecumenism and also the right place to practice ecumenical efforts towards making the situation in Uganda better from the grass-root up to the top both in Church and Government leadership.

At that grass-root level, the priests and all Christian pastoral agents must teach their congregations the spirit of renewal in their language toward their fellow Christians
belonging to different denominations. Christians must be taught to commit themselves to blessing each other verbally, and avoid all verbal demonization of or disrespectful terminology for the other. This new Catechesis must be guided and built on the teaching of Vatican Council II which John Paul II repeated in his *Ut Unum Sint* quoted by Moorman in her end note 51 suggesting that exemplary model of generous language can be found in Vatican documents such as the following:

Though we believe they suffer from defects, they have by no means been deprived of significance and value in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them in the scheme of salvation, which they derived their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth enjoyed by the Catholic Church... Indeed, the elements of sanctification and truth present in other Christian communities constitutes the objective basis of communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church....To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian communities, the grace of Christ is effectively present in them ... for there are many who honor sacred Scripture, .. who show a true religious zeal, .. who lovingly believe in the Father Almighty and in Christ, Son of God and Savior. ... They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. ... In some real way they are joined to us in the Holy Spirit, for to them also are gifts and graces operative among them with Christ’s sanctifying power, and some indeed He has strengthened to shedding of their blood. In all of these disciples the Spirit arouses the desire to be peacefully united, in the manner determined by Christ, as one flock under one Shepherd.\(^{250}\)

If Church leaders as well as Government officials begin to teach and insist in churches, schools and other appropriate places, that Ugandans must respect one another and be gracious in their language to their fellow Christians, then this modest proposal for grace might work for reconciliation and the end result will be peace and national development for all the people of Uganda. Every small gesture of grace and solidarity exchanged between

a Catholic and a Protestant in Uganda will constitute a step forward toward peace. And that is our mission as Christians to bring peace to the whole world; step by step, one person at a time.

3.3 Part Two: Long Term Solutions:

3.3.1 Civic Education in order to avoid Ignorance of Democratic Principles

For any government to become pragmatic and relevant, the people must have a proper civic education. This is lacking in Uganda just as it is in most African countries, especially with regards to principles of democracy. The majority of the people at the grass-roots can't even differentiate between a democratic and dictatorial government. To most Ugandans democracy looks like a foreign commodity wrapped in a foreign package and presented as a foreign philosophy using foreign methodology. Consequently, so-called elected governments in Uganda are doomed to fail right from the beginning because they neither give a proper civic education to the electorate nor organize free and fair elections. People come to the polls in most cases completely ignorant of what is expected of them. They, therefore, vote into office wrong candidates whose interests are power and wealth, but not the service of the people who elected them. Such leaders have no intention to establish healthy channels of communication between them and the electorate so they quickly forget the promises they made to the people during political campaigns.
No one really disputes the fact that there is great need for civic education in Uganda. There is need for a program that takes up key themes such as nationalism, patriotism, democracy, governance, respect of human rights, poverty eradication, rule of law, non-violent culture, unity, tolerance etc.,. Because of low literacy levels in Uganda, and with little means to inform themselves about civic matters, majority of the rural population of Ugandans are in need of a broad-based civic education. Article 38(1) of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda states that, “Every Ugandan citizen has the right to participate in the affairs of government individually or through his or her representative in accordance with the law.” This right corresponds with the duty to acquaint oneself with the provisions of the constitution in order to uphold and defend it. The majority of the population is not aware of their civic rights and the civic education that goes on in the country is mainly about elections. Civic education focused on elections creates awareness but does not raise the consciousness of people about their civic rights duties and responsibilities. Implicit in the concept of free choice is an informed choice. Civic education has not been accorded the importance it deserves in building the civic competence of the population, to empower them to make a free choice. Focus has mainly been on voter turnout-even that hurriedly organized whenever there are elections.

The political conflicts in Uganda need Ugandans who take active and participatory interest in the growth of their nation and be able to hold both the public and the private leadership

accountable at national and local levels. Ugandans should be made aware of the power of their votes that they can change situations in their country by the power of their ballot. Often people in Uganda, including political leaders and government officials see civic education as voter education, yet civic education is much more than voter education. Civic education involves one’s rights as citizen and being aware of how to bring positive change in their communities. True civic education should help to narrow the gap between the leaders and the people they lead and it should empower more Ugandans to participate in improving the governance and development of their society at all times.

Empowering citizens is not an easy task because it requires commitment to hard work with limited resources in the case of Uganda, to reach communities with a variety of literacy levels and preconceived ideas. This is a long term project that will take some years to bear fruit. To speed up the process, I suggest that civic education be made a permanent part of our school curriculum. This important education should start from primary/elementary education through secondary/high school education, and it should be one of the required courses in our universities. This method will help speed up the process because younger generations of Ugandans will come out of school better equipped with the necessary civic education we need. Then civic educators will be left only with the challenge to the reach the older population of Ugandans who missed this opportunity during their school time or because they never got the chance to go to school.
3.3.2 Creating Structures that will Liberate the People of Uganda from Poverty and Injustice

Vatican II Documents and many Papal Encyclicals present the Church as servant and not Lord, liberator and not oppressor, development oriented and not conventionally static. To fulfill this role effectively, the Church must be people-centered. It has to take a leading role in defining democratic principles which will ensure freedom, justice and development for the people. Therefore, the Church in Uganda must work harder to liberate the poor, become the voice for the voiceless and fight for the human rights of the people of Uganda who are suffering from violent political conflicts.

The Church in Uganda and all around the globe needs to identify itself more with the poor ordinary citizens who are suffering a lot under successive failed governments. The Church has to give more than charity hand-outs and begin conducting seminars/workshops in civic education at the grass-root level. This will make the Ugandans and other people in similar situation more and more aware of their basic human rights so that they can stand up and demand them when they are being deprived of these God-given rights. The people will thus be transformed into self-supporting and responsible citizens. By so doing the Church will also liberate and transform it-self. It is this type of self-transformation ecclesiology that we need in Uganda today. The problems of extreme poverty and social injustice in Uganda and throughout Africa make it imperative for the Church to embark on humanizing and Christianizing Uganda and the whole continent, freeing the people from poverty and
exploitation and transforming the country and the Church itself. In liberating the people of Uganda from oppressive governments, the Church will also liberate itself. For, it is not only the individual persons in the Church, but even the Church itself that should be liberated and transformed through prophetic criticism of social institutions with the goal to transform and energize human society by promoting God’s Kingdom here on earth.

The poverty of the Ugandans no doubt ends up being reflected in structures, life, and daily missionary activities of the Church. Poverty makes it difficult for an individual Christian to fulfill his or her obligations to the Church and the resulting situation is worrying. In the case of Uganda, this fact is already affecting adversely the activities of the Church. There is serious need to confront the problem of poverty. Since we are now in a better position than before to understand that God wants to save humanity from its misery, ignorance, oppression and death, the Church cannot afford and should not watch poverty obscure the will of God and just do nothing or very little about it. Our evangelizing mission demands us to confront poverty and to make the option for the poor a priority of our mission.

The best way of combating poverty is that of educating the people to be development-minded and to make the right choices for development. Fortunately this also is the sure way to achieve integrated development, as Pope John Paul II said: “a people’s development does not derive primarily from money, material assistance or technical means, but from the formation of consciences and the gradual maturing of ways of thinking and patterns of

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behavior. Man is the principal agent of development, not money or technology.” Thus, the agents for development are not lacking in Uganda but the formation of the local people is. This should be the primary task of both the Church and the Government of Uganda. We can only expect the right kind of development and well being when the agents are well formed. In this regard, the fight against poverty comes under the general program for human promotion that takes a holistic approach favoring formation of conscience as a means to real development.

Efforts for the formation of consciences adapted to the Church’s resources can lead to a more genuine development. It is through evangelization that the Church can give her most important contribution in this area since “she offers her first contribution to the solution of urgent the problem of development when she proclaims the truth about Christ, about herself and about man applying this truth to a concrete situation.” The proclamation of the Gospel is the secure way to lead people to genuine human development and true liberation. The Gospel is capable of forming the conscience against injustices and to change the unjust structures that hinder human development. It resolves conflicts by realizing justice and goes beyond by leading to the charity that moves one not only to help the poor but also to love them. The message of the gospel is also capable of destroying the evil in man, giving the light and energy necessary for realizing genuine development. There should be no doubt that those enlightened by the gospel are and should be the most capable human promoters. The gospel disposes one to work for human development and

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enables the protagonists to experience more than human efforts could give. The Church’s service to the poor is not the exclusive gauge of the Church’s following of Christ. The best service we can offer to our brothers and sisters is evangelization, which helps them to live and act as children of God, sets them free from injustices and assists their overall development.

Apparently the success of the evangelization efforts of the Church is partly to be judged by the success in the elimination of conditions that make a human person less human. This is what seems to be implied in the words of Pope John Paul II which he addressed to the Church in Africa when he said: “Evangelization must promote initiatives which contribute to the development and ennoblement of individuals in their spiritual and material existence. This involves the development of every person and of the whole person, considering not only individually but also and especially in the context of the common and harmonious development of all the members of a nation and of all the peoples of the world……evangelization must denounce and combat all that degrades and destroys the person.”

We cannot doubt that the misery caused by poverty is one of these elements that degrade and destroy the individual person and community of the people of Uganda as whole. Politically, poverty leads to a scramble for scarce resources; and those who have access to the few available resources usually do all in their power to block others who also need

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them. Thus, there will be constant struggle for the limited available resources. Partly, Uganda is a victim of this reality. The never ending wars in Uganda can be solved or avoided if both Government and Church work hard to reduce the poverty of Ugandans. Thus, the Church has no choice but to work for the elimination of dire poverty. This is not an option but an obligation of the Church. It is demanded of the Church by the nature of its mission and by its recognition of the dignity of human being created in God’s image. Accordingly, “Endowed with this extraordinary dignity, people should not live in sub-human social, economic, cultural and political conditions.”

Development work is connected to justice and peace work. In order to achieve meaningful and more lasting development, the Church is obliged to work for justice and peace. It is next to impossible to fight poverty and establish development in the absence of peace and justice. Pope Paul VI rightly said that “the new name for peace is development.”

Accordingly, the Church in Uganda has been working hard on aspects of justice and peace as part of its evangelizing mission. But there is still a lot to be done in this regard. In 1986 the Catholic bishops of Uganda established a commission for justice and peace which now has its branches in all the dioceses in Uganda with the following aims: “1. To educate people in matters pertaining to Justice and Peace. 2. To infuse the knowledge of human rights among all people. 3. To identify situations of conflict and injustices and find worthy peaceful solutions to them. 4. To assist to uplift the oppressed, the prisoners, refugees and the displaced people. 5. To prepare lay leaders for their rightful political economic roles in

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256 Ibid., # 69.
society.” The Church in Uganda should work together as one to fulfill these wonderful aims that were laid down by the bishops. While an individual bishop is encouraged to work to implement these aims in his diocese, at the national level bishops should work harder as a conference to evangelize the nation around issues of justice and peace because it is very closely interconnected with authentic development and human promotion mission of the Church.

3.3.3 Peace Education in Schools as a Strategy for Long Term Peace and Stability in Uganda

Peaceful resolution of conflicts between individual and communities must be formed in each human being from childhood and be maintained throughout adulthood. Personal attitudes of justice, sensitivity to others, freedom from prejudice, tolerance, ability to negotiate, compromise and solidarity are important preconditions for peace. Justice, peace and reconciliation need to be stressed at all levels of education in Uganda. A program on peace education should be recommended and introduced at all school levels in Uganda. The objective of introducing peace education in all Ugandan schools is to lay an early foundation for a peace loving people at their young age. Education will help Ugandans learn how to examine the root causes of frequent violent conflicts in their country and learn to find ways to promote proactive approaches to conflict resolution. Peace education will make Ugandans develop methods of achieving harmonious relationships among

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themselves, with their neighbors as well as with their environment. Peace education will teach Ugandans to respect each other as persons and learn how to work together for the promotion of peace, thereby breaking the barriers that divide the people of Uganda, and instilling skills that promote peace, justice, reconciliation and coexistence. Above all, peace education in Uganda will have to stress to all students that respect of human rights is the key to opening the door to a peaceful and a stable community.

Uganda’s socio-political as well as its religio-political history constitutes the basis for introducing peace education in all our schools. Students need to value the lives of their fellow Ugandans as well as the lives of all peoples who live in their environment irrespective of their background. Peace education would also underline political tolerance and coexistence as a necessity in our society. Peace education is an indispensable strategy for promoting tolerance and mutual trust of people belonging to different backgrounds. We Ugandans are notorious for tribal, ethnic, and regional intolerance, as well as political party intolerance. This is why political as well as religious conflicts have been rocking the country since our independence. Many people have been forced to join rebel activities and others are forced to leave their homes because of tribal intolerance.

Since schools are by their nature designed to train people as better and productive citizens, peace education in Uganda is imperative. It should be integrated into school life and curriculum so that students who pass through school act responsibly in society with full knowledge of their relationship for fellow citizens. Virtues like peace, justice, love mutual
trust, patience, tolerance as well as actions, beliefs and attitudes necessary for the development of peace in society needs to be tackled in peace education programs. Therefore, peace education in Uganda should promote the following principles: The dignity of each individual human person, the dignity of the individual must not be subordinate to the state. Fundamental human rights must be respected. It must emphasize that the primary community is the human race taken as a whole which subsists in the respective human families and not just in individual tribes or nations. It must promote personal responsibility and involvement by people in decisions that affect their lives in the political, economic, social, religious and cultural spheres. It should promote a sense of community and solidarity with those who share one’s life and work. It should promote dialogue and negotiation as basic skills for peace building process; promote justice and peace based on love. It should also promote a consciousness of the injustices found in the students’ environment.

In conclusion, peace education in Uganda can provide a firm sense of justice and peace in most Ugandans. It will instill in them an understanding that violence is not necessary. It will train Ugandans in the skills needed to eliminate attitudes and actions that are oppressive, violent and disrespectful. It would prepare them to understand their own cultures and assist them to find ways of regulating political power instead of relying on violence. Peace education will empower Ugandans to be bold and assertive, they will have the capacity to defend themselves non-violently when their rights are threatened or violated. They will learn to apologize if they have offended others. They will resist people
who oppress and despise them. It will equip them with the power to identify the causes of their problems and harmoniously work together to find ways of solving them. Peace education will also equip Ugandans with non-violent ways of fighting for their rights such as moral pressure and peaceful demonstrations.

3.3.4 The Role of the Family in Shaping a Peaceful future for Uganda

The Christian family is popularly known as a ‘domestic church’ because of the key role it plays in the evangelization of the world. The key role that the family plays in the evangelization of the world also applies in the evangelization of Uganda which is a small portion of the universal Church. I would like to strongly recommend that the Church in Uganda focus more of its pastoral attention and resources to the Christian families as a long term solution to avoid future conflicts in Uganda.

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council first used the term domestic church in *Lumen Gentium # 11*. The family is, so to speak, the domestic church because in it parents should by their words and examples, be the first preachers of the faith to their children. The term ‘domestic church’ has been significant in shaping contemporary Church teaching on the nature of the Christian family and has significant implications for contemporary Church renewal which is reflected in Church teachings and expressions such as: “The family is the basic cell of society. It is the cradle of life and love, the place in which the individual is born.
and grows.” According to the Second Vatican Council, the family will fulfill this “Mission to be the first and vital cell of society if it shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer they offer to God.” Families celebrate joys; they heal one another’s hurts; families learn forgiveness first-hand; families are there together when someone dies. God is always at work among us, continuing our creation through the intimate relationship of family.

It is proper that married spouses participate in the mission of the Church by witnessing their shared life and by being first heralds of the gospel of the love of life to their children. In the family, spouses witness by passing on the faith to their children. This gift is linked to their words and their actions. The use of this gift to build up the Church and society is both an obligation and a responsibility. Vatican Council II understood that by building up the Christian family, the rest of the Church and the whole of society is built. And that is why the council says that “The Christian family proclaims aloud both the present power of the Kingdom of God and the hope of the blessed life. Hence, by example and by their testimony, they convict the world of sin and give light to those who seek truth.” I like the council’s use of the word ‘convict’ to emphasize the fact that parental firm belief or opinion about what their children should do and what to avoid will usual influence the way their children will live in this world and the way they will relate with other human beings they come in contact with in their lives. It is this quality of firmly teaching their children by words and

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261 Ibid., Vatican Council II. Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, # 35.
example that tribalism, ethnic hatred, corruption etc., and above all killing of any human being is evil and should never be committed by them (their children) that will shape a better Uganda in the near future if both the local Church in Uganda as well as the Government makes good use of this teaching from the council. It is a slow process but it could gradually transform Ugandan society into a loving and a peaceful country.

The Christian family is also prophetic in the sense that it is anointed by the Holy Spirit, first through Baptism and then through the sacrament of Holy Marriage. The family is also configured to Christ by the same Holy Spirit. The essential manner in which the family lives out its Christian faith as a prophetic domestic Church lies in its configuration to Christ. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the ordinary means accessible to all: participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church both in the church building itself and in the home during personal and family prayers. The fundamental prophetic dimension of the family is what the family is and what the family does. The family finds in the plan of God the creator and redeemer not only its identity, but also its mission, what it can and should do, the family become what you are. The focus here is the family as a subject or agent of evangelization and this indicates that the future of evangelization truly depends in great part on the church of the home (the family). Parents need to know that evangelization can flow in various directions within the family, for example, spouse to spouse, parent to child, child to parent; child to child and this evangelizing activity is also to go outward to other families, to the neighborhoods, etc.
I want to conclude this reflection on the family with the important words of the John Paul II: “The future of humanity passes by way of the family.”\textsuperscript{262} This short sentence sums up the irreplaceable relationship between the family and society (Church). These words of the Pope, applies to the situation of Uganda. The peaceful future we are looking for in Uganda passes by way of the Ugandan families. This is a two-way relationship. The achievements made by the family revert back to the good of society but when the family breaks down the social fabrics is broken and endangered. On the other hand, in most cases many things that go wrong in society have negative repercussions on the family, and everything that ensures the appropriately conceived good of society helps to fulfill the mission of the family.

Therefore, in Uganda it is very important to deepen everyone’s personal commitment to help enrich this primary and vital cell of our society. It should not be forgotten, in the general planning of ecclesial activities, that the family is the first and principal path of the Church and of our nation. Awareness of its central value for evangelization must imbue the whole structure of our pastoral care. For this reason, encouragement should be given to projects that endeavor to make legislative or governmental institutions respect the rights and welfare of this natural institution expressly desired by God. Respect and help for the family is a basic, necessary good for society as a whole. The future of humanity and of the Church certainly passes through the family. It has frequently been families that have preserved and maintained the faith, by passing on traditions to the new generations even during difficult times like what we are going through in Uganda now. This function of the

family as the first teacher of its new members expresses the true vocation and mission of Christian parents, whose primary responsibility involves their children’s human and religious formation. The Church in Uganda and the government of Uganda should commit themselves to promoting more vigorously the perennial values of the family, the little domestic church, the first school of love of other human beings, the sanctuary of life and the cradle of the civilization of love. The Pontiff makes it clear that “A truly sovereign and spiritually vigorous nation is always made up of strong families who are aware of their vocation and mission in history.”

3.3.5 Working against Corruption at all Levels

Uganda’s credibility and economic progress is greatly hampered by corruption which undermines’ the leaders’ moral fiber and destroys people’s power to fight it. Corruption has become so common in Uganda that many people tend to take for granted some of its aspects. To dilute or make acceptable some acts of corruption, people have invented nicknames and pet names for actions of corruption. Practices of corruption have become the usual reality that some people almost take them as the normal way of doing things. A few years ago Uganda was identified as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and I believe the situation in Uganda is not any better yet as I write now. According to the survey conducted by Transparency International in 2001, Uganda was ranked third most corrupt

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264 Ibid., # 17.
country in the world as reported by Ugandan local media.\textsuperscript{265} It’s a fact that Ugandan society has been infiltrated by the evil of corruption. Corruption in public life is common and it is reflected in the misuse of power by those in public offices and in their lack of work ethics. The situation is reaching alarming proportions. What is more frightening is the fact that this corruption seems to be growing at an alarming speed. The above mentioned report of Transparency International indicates that in one year Uganda had slipped nine places backwards. Whereas other countries had improved their record, that of Uganda was getting worse.

What is more baffling is the fact that the majority of Ugandans are supposed to be Christians or God fearing people. In fact Uganda is a ‘Christian country’ whose motto is “For God and my Country.”\textsuperscript{266} One might wonder, therefore, how it is possible that corrupt tendencies are prominent here. There is an evident contradiction. Yet the truth is that the majority of the perpetrators of corruption are the Christians. Worse still, corruption seems to increase with the ‘growth’ of Christianity in the country. Here I do not intend to imply that Christianity is the cause of corruption. On the contrary I am of the view that the two are contradictory to one another. But in this case, I cannot fail to observe the fact that Christianity has not made enough corresponding impact on the Ugandan society. This is a real challenge, an irregularity that needs to be addressed. For when the Gospel has infiltrated the life of a people, then the life of that people must reflect the Christian values.

The teaching of Christ is an invitation to love, to a society more just and peaceful. As long as


\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. p. 1.
these values are not yet embraced in our society, then there is cause to think that ours is not a Christian society. It is not enough to have big numbers of people who have been baptized in the Church, but more important is to have the people who live according to what they profess. In our society today the greatest need is to have people who witness to their faith. This, to me, seems to be one of the priorities that the Church in Uganda needs to focus on.

A corrupt system cannot fight itself. Therefore, I believe it is very difficult for the Ugandan government and other public sectors to win this war against corruption on their own. The Church must get involved actively to teach and preach against corruption in all possible ways. The Bible states that, “You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials; and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.” (Exodus 23:8). It is the Church’s responsibility, therefore, to work hard to eliminate corruption beginning from within itself and into the entire public system. As “the light of the world” (Mt 5:14), it has to show the way in situations where society has been blinded by corruption.

If each Christian joins the battle against corruption by being actively involved in eliminating it, the Church will have a great impact in this delicate area. Christians in influential positions can use their good offices to influence those around them by refusing to give or accept bribes in the course discharging their duties. This will, certainly, weaken corrupt systems which will eventually collapse. Therefore, the church needs to take a bold stand in its condemnation of corruption in society. It should also be ready to face
persecution in this struggle against corrupt social structures. Christians should be taught not only to refuse to give or receive bribes, but they should courageously speak out against this evil practice and expose corrupt dealings at all levels. This is no easy task given the fact that corruption has become a way of life not only in Uganda but in many African countries. Thus, the fight against corruption has to be taken as a response to Christ’s mandate: “So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of human beings, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of human beings, I will disown him in the presence of my Father in heaven.”(Mt 10: 32-33).

3.3.6 Distribution of Resources, Equal opportunity and Sustainable Development

Disputes over access to and ownership of territory, material, economic and natural resources are some of the common causes of conflicts not only in Uganda but all over Africa. Even in cases that might be described as ethnic or regional conflicts, there is always an underlying issue. The lack of access to resources is a root cause of such conflicts. In fact, the whole problem comes down to resource competition. Even after independence the unequal distribution of resources such as land, income, housing, employment, political rights and fair representation in government constitutes part of the major cause of conflict in Uganda and in most African countries.
Resource based conflicts are bound to increase in Uganda as a result of environmental degradation. There is potential for more conflicts and deeper crisis in Uganda concerning food security, loss of soil fertility and increased land segmentation due to higher populations especially in southwestern and central Uganda, and this land crisis is spreading fast to the northern and all parts of Uganda. Forests and fallow land were common features about twenty to thirty years ago. Today the situation is different due to increase in human population. As such there is a brewing tension among the populations due to limited land and other resources. So the problem of resources is critical in most parts of Uganda and it has to be addressed proactively if we are to solve the current conflict in northern Uganda and if we are to have sustainable peace and true development in all parts of the country.

Development should not be understood, however, primarily as material accumulation, or as acquisition of the equivalent in skills (human capital), though those goals may often be important. Rather, at base, this aim should be thought of literally as true development, the growth and flourishing, the cultivation, of the human person. Such human development is both the ultimate purpose, and the practical foundation, of other development objectives. Thus, concerns about modernization have an important point. Our age characteristically and easily presumes that ‘modern,’ more-affluent ways are the best, or the only good and acceptable ones, even though explicitly Christianity believes the very opposite; and it tends to assume implicitly, too, that increasing material wealth and pleasure is life’s chief’s purpose. Development needs to be concerned with building up and cultivating human
persons and communities as wholes. Preserving the past and local culture and stability, limiting desires, and respecting ancient ways are not just important ends to be balanced against the ends of development (though balancing may be needed) but vital sources and constituents of human virtue, growth, and satisfaction — that is, of development.

Uganda’s government must understand sustainable development as an integral factor to making peace and maintaining justice for several reasons. First, as Roger describes it, peace is not only an absence of war, violence, and hostility; it is also a state of reconciliation, human flourishing, and natural beauty. Severe privation and want require our response. A country where a whole region (like northern Uganda and many more across the country) are trapped in dire poverty or in which nature is destroyed, while others have an abundance, unnecessarily crushes the spirit and offends justice. Active concern for those in need and for the environment is, simply in itself, a part of living in peace. Further, developing human powers and capacities, allowing people to exercise their gifts and talents, and doing useful work and improving our surroundings are a part of any just order. Thus, sustaining, community-building, useful livelihoods are, by definition, part of a just order.  

Secondly, we in Uganda need to know that human need and the absence of a chance to earn a useful livelihood, if unaddressed, leads to despair, societal disorder, and frequent wars as

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we have been experiencing since we got our independence as a country. An unjust order violates the proper patterns of human life and usually erupts in open violence, especially as people find their lives futile or deteriorating. On the other hand it is important for us to understand that economic development that is not ecologically sustainable will cause unexpectedly worsening patterns of human life which may well lead to violence in the long run. Again, a process of sustainable development will enable people of all sectors in the country to participate in governing themselves more fully than many of them are now able to do. Sustaining a just order, besides its intrinsic value, is therefore a crucial foundation for peace and justice.\textsuperscript{268}

And thirdly according to Roger’s explanation, we Ugandans together with our government needs to understand that sustainable development, and impediments to it, are often bitter fruits of human greed, sin, violence, and injustice. That is, lack of sustainable development may be a result as well as a source of an absence of justice and peace. An inability to earn proper livelihoods in useful work often arises from ongoing abuses of power, perhaps even from open violence. Working for justice, including securing property rights for people who are unable to defend themselves can be a prerequisite of their gaining opportunities for productive work and sustainable development. War and violence, too, are major causes of environmental deterioration and of people’s losing control over their own lives and communities. Thus, sustainable development is also a result or fruit of justice and peace.\textsuperscript{269}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{268} Ibid., p. 122.} \footnote{\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., p. 122.}
Therefore, in conclusion, Ugandans and especially our government leaders must bear in mind that justice and peace are closely bound together with sustainable development goals. Basic development goals, providing all Ugandans with access to resources and opportunities necessary to full human flourishing, and protecting the rights of weaker Ugandans who may face opposition and tribal or regional hatred and persecution as they try to escape situations of dependence and poverty, are also central elements of a just and peaceful order. The absence of peace and justice undermines development and sustainability, and vice versa; justice and peace tend to foster development and sustainability.
Chapter Four

Theological Underpinnings and Pastoral Reasons for the Church’s Involvement in Peacemaking Missions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theology of the Church’s involvement in wars and conflict situations and investigates the underpinning theological and pastoral reasons as to why the Church should be actively involved in solving conflicts in war situations. The chapter involves answering the question: What is unique about the mission of the Church that calls for her involvement in the challenging situation of Uganda as described in the above chapters?

Just to introduce this chapter, I would like to say in brief that the mandate of the Church to get involved in public peacemaking efforts in conflict situations flows directly from God himself. We can look back in the Holy Bible and see that the God of the Jude-Christian religion is a God who shows deep concern for the welfare of his people in their sojourn here on earth. The holy bible reveals that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is one who created human beings in his own image, that they share in his beatific vision, that is, in his
eternal joy and peace. God created human beings with dignity. The Psalmist says that the human being is made a little less than a God, and is crowned with glory and honor (Psalm 8: 3-6). The book of Genesis says that the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, was made lord over all the other creatures (Genesis 1: 26-30). So great is the human being in the eyes of God such that he or she is the only creature endowed with an immortal spirit, with the faculties of freedom, intelligence, and many more. The God of Moses, Joshua and the Judges is a compassionate God who hears the cry of his oppressed people and is moved to action to free them from oppression, and to give them back their dignity (Exodus 3: 7-10). In their long road to freedom, Yahweh accompanied the people in the form of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When in hunger and thirst they cried to him in the desert, Yahweh intervened by providing manna and quail, and water from the rock.

The book of the Judges also shows how God always responded to the desperate cry of his people. When they cried out against their oppressors God was moved with pity, and reached out to rescue them as we see in the book of Judges (Judges 3: 9-10) Also the same is with the God of the Kings (Samuel, David and Solomon). Yahweh lived as King among his people, showing them the way. He is the conscience of the nation, who defends the weak and the lowly against the excesses of the powerful and the rich as seen in the story of King David and Uriah which made God to intervene through the prophet Nathan (II Samuel 11-12).
The God of the prophets such as Elijah, Isaiah and Amos, is the God of holiness and Justice. He is the defender of the weak and protector of the widows and the orphans. Through the prophets he exposes the injustice in the political and economic structures of the society, and denounces the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who not only fail in their duty as shepherds, but also often are tools in the hands of the Kings for the maintenance of unjust structures (Amos 2: 6-7; 8: 4-7). The God of the prophets is the same God who promised to send to the world a messiah who will bring light to a people who walked in darkness; a King who will remove the yoke of oppression from the shoulders of his people; a mighty one who will destroy the warrior’s boots and burn off every garment rolled in blood. He promised to send the Prince of Peace who will establish a kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace. He will strengthen the weak and make firm the feeble knees (Isaiah 35: 3-6).

So in Jesus Christ, God comes that his people might have life and have it to the full. To the sick he brings comfort by performing miracles of healing; to the possessed or demonized he brings freedom by casting away the demon; to the hungry he brings satisfaction by multiplying food for them; and to the marginalized in society he brings relief by challenging the power structures that perpetuate the injustices against them (Matthew 15: 30-32 and Mark 6: 34-43). Jesus does not rationalize the material or physical condition of his people nor does he encourage blind resignation to their suffering. He does not abandon them to their plight, nor does he simply prepare them for heaven. Rather, he does something concrete to alleviate the plight of those who suffer, while promising full and definitive victory in the Kingdom of God.
Therefore, the theological reasons for the Church’s involvement in conflict situations and peacemaking is rooted in the Christian Holy Scriptures. The role of the Church concerning the war situation in Uganda flows directly through God’s teaching which can be traced from Genesis to Jesus Christ. The Church has the mandate from Jesus Christ to continue with his mission in the world. Jesus Christ himself is the guide of his Church in peacemaking because no life on earth can speak more loudly or clearly about peace and peacemaking than the life of Jesus. A peacemaking theology, like any other particular emphasis in theological development, must be based on the experience of Jesus the peacemaker, as we can know it from the Holy Scriptures.270

The Church’s initiatives for peacemaking must be based on an embodied or incarnational Christology, i.e. Christ representing a specific and concrete alternative way of life meant to be followed by humans. We need to advocate a Christology that sees Christ as divine sovereign of all life, not only sovereign over a separate sphere of life (the spiritual). Our theology should define the meaning of Christ in terms that include faithfully following Christ now, and that interprets Jesus’ teaching as related to concrete practices that can guide us to live in the real world, not merely as high and abstract ideals. Therefore, our theology should be attentive to Jesus’ humanity as one who modeled a way to be followed

and saw himself as fulfilling the tradition of the law and the prophets. In their article John and Duane emphasize the fact that: “Peace, like war, must be waged. It must be waged courageously, persistently, creatively, with imagination, heart, and wisdom. Peacemaking is rooted in the heart of the biblical understanding of God’s grace, which does not merely refrain from punishing but takes dramatic initiatives in coming to us, speaking in the burning bush (Exodus 3), pouring love into us in Jesus Christ while we were God’s enemies (Romans 5: 1-21).”

In 1980s the major Church groups in the United States of America thoughtfully and extensively called for peacemaking and declared that thus far we have been following the theology and ethics of the restraint of war, and now we need a positive theology of peace, a just peacemaking theology. In the following words the Bishops call upon the whole Church to get involved in peacemaking and to develop a deeper theology of peacemaking:

Recognition of the Church’s responsibility to join with others in the work of peace is a major force behind the call today to develop a theology of peace. Much of the history of Catholic theology on war and peace has focused on limiting the resort to force in human affairs; this task is still necessary, but is not a sufficient response .... A fresh reappraisal which includes a developed theology of peace will require contributions from several sectors of the Church’s life: biblical studies, systematic and moral theology, ecclesiology, and the experience and insights of those embodying the Church who have struggled in various ways to make and keep the peace in this often violent age.  

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272 Ibid., p. 18.
4.2 Biblical Roots of the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

It is the duty of the Church to teach the Christians to read the Bible with a Christocentric hermeneutic. To us Christians, the words and teaching of Jesus are to be taken as the lens through which we interpret the whole Bible. To use the Old Testament conquest stories of the Holy Land as proof texts to support wars is simply reading the Bible without Jesus Christ in mind. As Ronald Musto puts it, “Yet even the political history of Israel, when seen in the overall context of the Hebrew Bible, is one of a movement away from war and toward new, peaceful definitions for the state of Israel.”

So when we read the Bible, we must keep in mind the design and intention of God. When God created man his desire was for humanity to live in perpetual union with him. Scripture does not indicate that violence was God’s ‘original’ design and intention for humanity. Not long after the earth became filled with the violence initiated by the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, God was aggrieved for how wicked man had become. Injustice, ungodly hatred, and other forms of unwarranted aggression are always condemned in the Bible. In fact, the whole of the Bible seems to consistently point more and more towards a vision of peace. God’s vision of peace for humanity in the Old and New Testaments are really the guiding rules for the Church’s peacemaking mission in the world.

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4.3 Old Testament Foundation for the Theology of the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

The Hebrew concept of shalom gives us a better understanding of the Old Testament’s foundations for peacemaking. As Musto puts it, “It is difficult to give one and precise meaning to shalom or to translate it consistently into English. The word has twenty-five meanings in the Hebrew Bible, beginning with the sense of security, absence of war, calm and prosperity for an agricultural society ....... shalom could also mean good health, wholeness, harmony, an alliance between parties or nations .... These were all the meanings also implied in the greeting shalom!” So all in all shalom is wholeness, it is a state of harmony among God, humanity and all of creation.

According to Birch, “a full understanding of shalom should begin with creation. Shalom is God’s ‘original’ intention for creation from the beginning. All elements of creation are interrelated. Each element should participate in the whole of creation, and if any element is denied wholeness and well-being (shalom), all are thereby diminished. This relational character of creation is rooted in all creatures’ common origin in a God who not only created all that is but who continues to be active in the world,” seeking fullness of peace for all of us.

275 Ibid., Musto p. 29.
Birch tells us that the Hebrew people saw the world as constantly poised between the possibilities of order and chaos. The point of Israel’s creation understanding was not that God had brought something out of nothing, but that in the face of chaos, with its power to destroy and render meaningless, God the creator had brought order. The character of that order was the harmony and wholeness of *shalom*. God has brought chaos under control, and in so doing has given us the gift of whole life.²⁷⁷ So the Old Testament understanding of peace (*shalom*) is not only the absence of wars, but also of chaos. Perhaps the best way to understand shalom is to recognize that it describes the realm where chaos is not allowed to enter, and where life can be fostered free from the fear of all that diminishes and destroys.

“Thus, the Church’s concern for peace must place our opposition to war alongside an equal concern for every enemy of well-being and wholeness: injustice, oppression, exploitation, disease, famine. But within this broad concern for the things that brings chaos and destroy peace, war certainly has a special place. War is that form of chaos which results from violent conflicts between groups of people.”²⁷⁸

Although according to be book of Genesis, plants, animals and other creatures were created in great variety, humanity is to be regarded as a unity because humans are created in the image of God and bear witness in the world to God’s creative sovereignty. The divisions of humanity and the hostile actions that express those divisions are clearly to be understood

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 1115.
²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 1116.
as the result of sinful and self-centered choices antagonistic to the *shalom* (the peace) of God’s creation.²⁷⁹

The turning of Adam and Eve away from obedience toward disobedience introduced sin into God’s creation and destroyed the primordial harmony (peace) that God had created. Among the most distressing and disastrous effects of the introduction of sin into the world is the resort to violence, beginning with Cain’s fratricidal murder of his brother Abel and moving to a global reality of violence, mayhem, and murder so characteristic of human condition today (Genesis 1 – 11).

Beginning with Cain and Abel these divisions grow greater and greater eventually driving God into meeting human violence with revulsion and divine judgment in the form of the Flood and the Tower of Babel. With the calling of Abraham, the biblical story begins to tell us of the intervention of God’s grace. If we take this prologue to the whole Old Testament seriously, then we must understand with the Hebrew writers that war is sinful, since it necessarily witnesses to and gives violent expression to humanity’s division. Therefore, participation in war is to be regarded as a compromise of what God intended and it actually serves chaos rather than *shalom* (peace). But since God involved the divine self in that

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 1116.
broken world, our most faithful response as a Church is to seek to discern that divine involvement and to pattern our participation in the world after its witness of grace to us.\textsuperscript{280}

Birch also tells us that \textit{Shalom} (peace) was seen by ancient Israel not as a far-off ideal but as the natural human state. So humanity was essentially peaceful. Peace comes naturally to human beings unless we are divided or corrupted by injustice and exploitation, which in our history have often erupted into the violence of war.\textsuperscript{281} Therefore, as Christians and believers in the Holy Bible, “we are to work out of the assumptions of peace as the basis for trust, not out of the assumptions of war as the foundation for never-ending mistrust.”\textsuperscript{282} And so Israel as a covenant people have a vocation to work for peace and that is why Birch said:

\begin{quote}
Israel’s call to be a covenant community is the call to be a community possessed of an alternative consciousness and pattern of life in the world. Shalom is the word used in covenantal contexts to describe the goal of Israel’s mission as God’s people. Shalom is what results when God’s justice, compassion and righteousness, seen clearly in God’s deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian oppressor, is echoed by Israel’s justice, compassion and righteousness lived out as its vocation in the world. The prophets Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel actually term this relationship with Yahweh a “covenant of peace” (Isaiah 54: 10, and Ezekiel 37: 26). In effect, the vocation of faithful community is as witness to the possibilities of shalom in the world and to the source of such shalom possibilities in God.\textsuperscript{283}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., p. 1116. \\
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., Birch. Old Testament Foundation for Peacemaking, p. 1116. \\
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid., p. 1116. \\
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., p. 1116.
\end{flushright}
Therefore, as a community of covenant faith, Israel is explicitly called by God to reflect these same qualities in its life. It is to be free from all claims to ultimate loyalty except the vocation of witness to God’s shalom (peace). It is not a freedom to manifest an aloof disregard for the world; it is a freedom to enable a consistent predisposition on the part of the faithful for indentifying with the world’s victims of injustice, war, oppression, poverty, etc. Faithfulness to the task of being vulnerable to the world’s suffering comes from the pursuit of justice and righteousness by the community, its treatment of the stranger and the sojourner, and its relationship to the nations.\textsuperscript{284}

The biblical story about the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt also teaches us that central to Israel’s story is its witness to God’s defeat of Pharaoh and the Egyptians to bring about the liberation of the Hebrew slaves. In the Exodus tradition God’s presence in history entails an implacable opposition to oppression and injustice, forces of chaos against God’s shalom (peace). Such evil brings suffering on the weak and the powerless, and God’s judgment is committed to eliminating that evil. Thus, against such forces of chaos “Yahweh is a man of war” (Exod. 15: 3). Israel, however, must recognize that although such judgment is within God’s power, it is not appropriate to Israel’s own human power. In the face of Pharaoh’s armies Israel is told, “The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still” (Exodus 14: 14). Although God’s liberation of the people of Israel from slavery was by no means free of death, it is however, distinctive in that the people of Israel themselves do not lift a finger or a sword on their own behalf. Israel always remembered

\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., p. 1116.
and celebrated that it was God alone who rescued them from the Egyptians: “Israel saw the
great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians.” (Exodus 14: 31).

According to Israel’s earliest traditions Yahweh is frequently portrayed as a warrior, image
that has been deeply troubling to many peace lovers including the Church itself. Many use
this image to justify wars in the name of struggling for freedom/liberty. But if understood
properly according to the Scriptures, the image of Yahweh as warrior teaches us that
Israel’s eventual entanglement in war and war’s devastation resulted from failure to trust
enough in this early tradition of Yahweh as warrior.285 In a world where other nations
constructed the machinery of war in an attempt to achieve their own security, it was
Israel’s trust in Yahweh as warrior that freed the community of faith from taking part in
arms races or wars.

Israel’s earliest traditions point to concern to de-emphasize human
participation in war. God as warrior could be trusted to oppose those forces that
destroy shalom (peace) and bring chaos, but human warriors could not. Hence,
early Israel had no professional military and no standing army. When war’s
violence was forced upon Israel, war became a sacral, not a sacred matter,
meaning that the decisive power and guidance was seen as divine. Even in
defensive emergencies the Hebrew people were assiduously to seek God’s
guidance as the key rather than to rely on human power and agency as central.
This stance sometimes led to strategies deemed unrealistic, even foolish, by
both ancient and modern world’s power standards.286

285 Ibid., p. 1117.
One of the most difficult verses in the Bible to swallow is when Yahweh declared that “Vengeance is mine” (Deuteronomy 32: 35). This verse is not a witness to divinity bent on doing violence. Rather, addressed to the people of God, it means that vengeance is not to be theirs. As God, while it is certain that God’s judgment will be felt by evil in the world, this same God declared in the establishment of covenant, “I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” (Exodus 33: 19), and promised through Abraham a blessing to “all the families of the earth” (Genesis 12: 3). Vengeance in human hands issues only in violence, but left to God, it judges evil and chaotic forces so that shalom (peace) may be restored to all.

In fact, biblically the unfortunate turning point in the story of Israel’s experience with war came when its elders asked the prophet Samuel to provide a king like that of other nations. “Give us a king to govern us.... that we might be like all the nations and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight all our battles” (I Samuel 8: 6, 20). Ideologically, I Samuel 8 suggests that Israel rejected Yahweh’s kingship for a political system like the nations. A king like other nations is characterized in their request in two ways. First, he exercises justice and he governs (I Samuel 8: 5 and 20). In I Samuel 8: 9-18 the judge Samuel warns the elders of the" justice" or "ways" of the king. The king monopolizes control of the nation’s economic resources effectively returning the people to the Canaanite hierarchical system they had rejected a couple of centuries earlier. "What followed in the history of royally ruled Israel might be said to be the secularization of war." 287 The narratives of kings David and Solomon describe the results of this military royal coup

against Yahweh. Resources and power are centralized in the hands of the king. Standing armies and professional militia were established and resources are dramatically shifted toward the military infrastructure. Kings built fortresses and chariot forces. The machinery of war was constructed in the name of state security, but before long the armies were being used to expand the frontiers and to enforce national policy on weaker neighbors.

As Birch puts it: “Ironically, most Christians feel more comfortable with this secularized concept of war. The move away from reliance on Yahweh as warrior toward state military institutions is often seen today by many Christians as a step toward a more civilized behavior,”288 but biblically and theologically it was clearly a move toward chaos and away from shalom (peace).

The dismal record of Israel’s kings and the violent role that war played in their nationalistic ideologies can only briefly be suggested here. The covenant model of community was replaced by a royal model based on oppressive power in support of an economics of privilege. War became an instrument of state policy designed to quell dissent on the part of the oppressed, to expand territory imperialistically, or to maintain sources of privileged wealth. Even by the account of Israel’s biblical history, it looks like only three kings in Israel or Judah measured up to covenantal standards. It is no wonder then that the prophets who

288 Ibid
preserved the traditions of a covenant God felt compelled to announce that the chaotic evil and violence which Yahweh opposes in the world were now to be found in Israel itself.\textsuperscript{289}

In conclusion, Birch indicates that in their indictment of war as waged in the time of the monarchy, the prophets charged that Israel had abandoned trust in Yahweh for the sake of trust in its own powers, and had abandoned Yahweh’s goal of peace for all in favor of the pursuit of prosperity and power for a few. Such misplaced trust and lost vocation were, in the prophets’ view, no security at all. Under the kings, Israel, in the belief that it could create its own security, was in reality sinking deeper and deeper in chaos. War to secure power and territory risked war as the instrument of Israel’s own destruction. “You have plowed iniquity, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your chariots and in the multitude of your warriors, therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people....” (Hosea 10: 13-14). “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord” (Isaiah 31: 1). Such an assessment of the prophets may at first glance seem idealistic, but actually it is exceedingly realistic because by trusting in kings instead of Yahweh, “Israel gradually brought chaos upon itself in the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and in the Babylonian exile.”\textsuperscript{290}

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., p. 1118.
\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., Birch. Old Testament Foundations for Peacemaking, p. 1119.
To warn of exile, to judge human illusions, and to call for hopeful return to trust in God’s shalom was the prophetic task in the Old Testament. The later Old Testament tells the sad story of first Israel’s and then Judah’s vicious destruction at the hands of foreign enemies, as well as the sometimes violent persecutions wreaked upon Jews in the Babylonian and Persian Diaspora, as in the books of Daniel and Esther. The prophetic writings mix sometimes violent warnings of coming divine judgment with dream of a restored Israel, a messianic future, an eschatological age in which peace at last prevails and swords are beaten into plowshares, joy and peace such that the trees clap their hands, new covenants written on the heart and even the animals living in peace again because the original harmony (shalom) of the creator will be restored. As we will see next, the New Testament depicts Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of all strands of the Old Testament and as the long-awaited messianic King. Despite echoes in the birth narratives of the theme of a militant kingly messiah (Luke 1: 46-55), Jesus explicitly rejects recourse to war, violence, despite opportunities and invitations to take that path.

4.4 New Testament Foundation for the Theology of the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

The Sermon on the Mount is basically considered by many scholars as the heart of Jesus’ teaching on peacemaking; it is the New Testament magna carta of peacemaking. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5: 9). This teaching of Jesus Christ is not so much about peaceful people, peace-keepers, or peace-loving people.
In fact, it is more about people who defuse hostility and build bridges; people who resolve conflict and seek to restore harmony from the chaos caused by conflicts; people who call warring parties to peace, work toward the end of alienation, and pull down walls of hostility. In contrast to the other beatitudes, the term “peacemakers” describes an assertive action rather than just a spiritual attitude. The word calls for a positive, active and transformative response from the Christian and from his or her entire Church. The word is a call to the Church to roll-up its’ sleeves and get ‘dirty’ in making and building peace in this world.

The context of Jesus’ ministry provides an important insight into the meaning of peacemaking. Jesus lived under Roman rule, ministering in an occupied territory. In the original context of the beatitudes, this emphasis on peacemaking was most likely directed against the Zealots, Jewish revolutionaries who hoped to throw off the yoke of Roman oppression and establish the kingdom of God through violence. In contrast to the Zealots, Jesus speaks of a peaceable Kingdom and a non-violent extension of that Kingdom. The immediate context of this beatitude focuses on the social dimensions of peacemaking among friends, family and community but it also certainly refers to the challenges of wars nationally and internationally. Jesus’ use of the terms opponent (Matthew 5: 42); gentiles (Matthew 5: 47; 6: 7; 6: 42), enemies (Matthew 5: 43-44); unrighteous (Matthew 5: 45) and persecution (Matthew 5: 10, 11, 12, 44) in the Sermon on the Mount indicate that peacemaking is not to be restricted to believers only. It should take place even between Christians and unbelievers, beyond the boundaries of the Church. Other passages in the
New Testament confirm this. Saint Paul urges the Church in Rome to live at peace with everyone (Romans 12: 18). The letter to the Hebrews exhorts Christ’s followers to make every effort to live in peace with all (Hebrews 12: 14). Children of God do peacemaking between believers and among unbelievers, both in the Church and in the public arena.

Jesus describes peacemakers as “blessed.” This pronouncement of blessing expresses God’s approval on those who work for peace. They are called children of God because they are acting like their Father: the God of peace (Philippians 4: 9; I Thessalonians 5: 23) who sent the Prince of Peace according to Isaiah 9: 6 to bring a world of peace (Luke 2: 14).

Glen Stassen is one of the theologians who strongly believe that the term “peacemakers” in the Sermon on the Mount is a positive, active and a transformative word. It is a call from Jesus Christ to the Church and to each individual Christian to get involved in peacemaking around the world. In his writings, Stassen believes that Jesus teaches in threefold pattern in his Sermon on the Mount. According to him, the transformative initiatives in Jesus’ teaching can be seen more clearly if we notice the threefold structure of each of Jesus’ teachings. Stassen believe that many people wrongly treat the pattern of Jesus’ teachings on the Mount as twofold. For example Jesus said:

1. You have heard of old, don’t kill.
2. But I say don’t even be angry.

This is not enough because there is the third element in Jesus’ teaching that needs to be brought in because it is the main point that Jesus wants to teach, and that is:
3. Go be reconciled while there is still time.

It is true that the new commandment from Jesus in the second part of the triad is more demanding than the first one because it even prohibits us from getting angry at one another. But according to Stassen, this is not the main point that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount. According to his interpretation, Stassen believes that Jesus is not saying that we must not be angry, or call someone a fool or we must not look at someone with lust. Jesus knows that being angry and looking with lust is a vicious cycle that leads to prison, judgment, adultery etc. In exactly his own words Stassen says that:

The third element is where the emphasis falls: If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember your brother (or sister) has something against you, go quickly and try to make peace. If you are on your way to court with your adversary, try to make peace quickly while there is still time. This is not a rigoristic, hard saying. It is the way of deliverance from the vicious cycle of anger, resentment, and enmity. It is the way of participating in God’s delivering reign, who comes to us when there is alienation between us, talks with us in Christ, and seeks to make peace, while there is still time. We can’t not be angry. But we can try to talk it out and make peace rather than nursing our anger and feeling powerless to do anything...Similarly, Jesus didn’t say, 'Don’t look at anyone with lust.’ He said doing so is adultery in your heart. Therefore, remove the source of the problem. He speaks with hyperbole, or exaggeration: ‘If your right eye leads you astray, tear it out.’ In practical terms, this means ‘Take away the practice that is firing up the lust’.

And in conclusion Stassen said that, “the third element is always and initiative, not merely a prohibition. It is always a practical participation in deliverance from a vicious cycle of bondage, hostility, idolatry, and judgment. Each implies living a whole, integrated life in

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relation to God and points to a way God is fulfilling redemptive expectations promised in the Old Testament. Each moves us away from the ‘hard saying’ or ‘high ideal’ kind of interpretation that has caused resistance, evasion, and a dualistic split between inner intentions in the heart and outer deeds in society. Each moves us instead into participation in God’s grace, God’s deliverance, God’s reign.”

Donald Senior is another great theologian who believes that Jesus’ teaching on the Mount laid a strong biblical foundation for the theology of the Church’s peacemaking mission in the world. Senior believes that: “Of all the provocative things Jesus had to say, perhaps none is more difficult than his teaching on love of enemies.” According to Senior the command to ‘love our enemies is a capital part of the New Testament which is found in both Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This similar exhortation about blessing and doing good to our enemies rather than reviling or doing evil to them are also relayed in three of Saints Paul’s letters (I Thessalonians, I Corinthians and Romans) as well as in I Peter. According to Senior this shows that “there was a steady stream of tradition on this point in the early Church and it must have been a tradition rooted in the teaching of Jesus himself.”

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292 Ibid., p. 46.
294 Ibid., p. 56-57.
This tradition of enemy love which Senior calls “scandalous,” is not only rooted in Jesus teachings or words, but was also put into practice by Jesus himself when he was humanly and physically present in this world. According to Senior:

This is clearly demonstrated in the passion narratives of both Matthew and Luke where Jesus himself is presented as refusing to take up arms in his own defense. In Matthew’s story of the arrest (26: 47-56), Jesus tell his disciples to put their sword back into their scabbards, ‘for all who take the sword will perish by the sword,’ a refusal of violence and retaliation that coincides with Jesus’ own teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 38-39, 43-48). In Luke’s account, when the disciples ask, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ (22: 49) and one of them cuts off the ear of the high priest’s slave, Jesus commands, ‘No more of this!’ and heals the slave’s ear (22: 51): words and action that clearly demonstrate Jesus’ own teaching in the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6: 27-29).  

According to Senior, Jesus’ teaching about ‘love of enemy’ is relayed by Saint Paul who was one of the greatest writers of the New Testament. The substance of Jesus’ teaching is clearly present in Paul’s letters even if he does not repeat the exact words of Jesus about love of enemies. For example, Paul uses similar words like Jesus when he reflects on his personal experience which is based on his knowledge of Jesus’ teaching about love of enemies “When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate…” (I Corinthians 4: 12-13). Senior says that words like “revile, “bless,” “persecute,” are “stock terms of the New Testament tradition based on Jesus teaching and examples about love of enemies.”

295 Ibid., p. 60.
296 Ibid., p. 61.
Towards the end of his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gives clear instructions to the Thessalonians on how they are to live in this world. He said to them: “See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all” (1 Thessalonians 5: 15). Senior holds that the phrase “and to all,” shows that Paul intends this instruction to apply not simply to relations within the Christian community but even to outsiders, even to enemies who might harass or slander the Christian community. Although the language seems different from that of Jesus, Senior is convinced that the motivation for enemy love that Paul is talking about here is in fact similar to the words of Jesus presented in Matthew and Luke. It is the experience of God’s gracious and transforming love that impels the Christian to live by a set of values that directly challenge the world’s logic.²⁹⁷

Paul’s more in-depth discussion of a Christian theology of peacemaking is found in his letter to the Romans. “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them….Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all……live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God…..if your enemy is hungry feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12: 14-21). These words of Paul, comes at a key point when he was giving a series of important instructions to the Roman Christians on how they should live in this world. It is worth noting that in (Romans 12: 20) Paul mentioned the “enemy” because his exhortation applies not only to relationships within the Christian community but to all including the

²⁹⁷ Ibid., Senior. Jesus’ Most Scandalous Teaching, p. 62.
outsiders and the enemies of Christians. Paul uses a language that is strikingly similar to the Gospel tradition, especially that of Luke: ‘bless those who persecute,’ ‘repay no evil for evil,’ ‘do good,’ etc. Here we again see strong continuity with the tradition rooted in Jesus’ own teaching.298

There are a number of special features in this text which indicates a flow of the Christian theology of peace from Jesus to the apostles. For example, Paul counsels believers to avoid worsening conflict situations by refusing to retaliate when persecuted and to respond with good when they are treated with evil, as Jesus had instructed in Matthew 5:44. The easier and ‘natural’ response in a conflict situation is to curse and retaliate, but we are called to show kindness toward our persecutors. A practice which requires divine grace to repay unkindness and injury with a courtesy is very challenging but transformative.

Repaying evil for evil is a common practice in the world and that is why we speak of ‘tit for tat’ or of ‘giving someone what he or she deserves.’ But according to Jesus and the apostolic tradition, this delight in vengeance should have no place in the lives of Christians. Instead, we should act honorably in the face of abuse and injury, as in all circumstances of life. Christians should love peace, make peace, be at peace and work tirelessly for a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

298 Ibid., p. 63.
The steady tradition of peace loving and peacemaking which flows from Jesus Christ to his Church indicates that Christianity goes beyond non-resistance to active benevolence. Christianity does not destroy its enemies by violence but converts them by love. It feeds the enemy when he or she is hungry and satisfies his or her thirst. We are not simply to abstain from evil; rather, we are expected to actively pursue opportunities to care for our enemy’s needs. Jesus invites us to keep an eye on our enemy and at the very point of weakness, where a counter attack of revenge might be most effective, we should kindly and mercifully meet that need. This is what Paul means by the idiomatic expression of “heaping live coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:20). Saint Paul’s expression may seem cruel but if understood properly, it is not because to heap live coals on a person’s head means to make him or her ashamed of his or her hostility by surprising the person with unconventional, disarming kindness that we believe will eventually transform enemies into friends. That is what Paul says in the conclusion to the passage: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). Therefore, like Jesus, Paul wants us to overcome evil with good and follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, it is characteristic of Christian teaching that it does not stop with the negative prohibition but goes on to positive exhortation. Evil can be overpowered with good. This is a weapon we should use more frequently. “This text vividly illustrates that the New Testament tradition of enemy love was never viewed as a passive stance but as an active and transforming expression of good towards the enemy.”

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299 Ibid., Senior. Jesus’ Most Scandalous Teaching, p. 63-64.
The Epistle of Peter is another key source of information for our Christian theology of peacemaking. In his first letter he writes “Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing. For he that would love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile; let him turn away from evil and do right; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those that do evil” (I Peter 3: 9-12). In this text, Saint Peter is addressing the Christian community in language typical of the enemy love tradition with striking similarity to Paul’s instructions and to the Gospel traditions of Matthew and Luke. Repeatedly, Christians are urged to avoid retaliation. They are not to repay evil for evil or revile for revile. Instead we are to pay back with blessings and kindness. Saint Peter insists in verse 9 that this is the meaning of our Christian vocation in these words “to this you have been called.” As Christians we are not called to harm others but to do them good, not to curse but to bless. And by quoting from the Psalm “He that would love life….let him seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34: 12-16), Peter reaffirms that the Christian call is not mere abstinence from evil but the active pursuit of peace.

At this point, we must ask an important question about this ‘scandalous’ Christian tradition of peace and peacemaking. Where did this strong and dominant tradition in Christian theology come from? Donald Senior gives us one of best answers to this question in the following words:
The taproot of this tradition is the Christian experience of God. Here is the radical intuition that gives force to the teaching: God's own relationship to humanity, as revealed by Jesus, is one of indiscriminate, gratuitous mercy and compassion. This experience is basic to Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the coming rule of God. The God who was coming is, in fact, a God not of vengeance but of mercy. All structures and human relationships, must ultimately be transformed in the light of this reality. This fundamental dimension of the enemy love tradition seems to suggest that a Christian theology of peace cannot be constructed only on the basis of common sense or natural law. It is the core religious experience of Christianity, which discloses both the nature of God and the value of the human person that fires the scandalous proposal to love an enemy. Non-retaliation and enemy love are not understood in the New Testament as passivity or non-action. The whole thrust of the tradition in its various expressions is that the enemy is to be addressed in a vigorous and transforming manner. Enemy love does not mean abandonment of the pursuit of justice or devaluing the defense of authentic values. At issue are the means appropriate for the Christian pursuit of justice. This New Testament tradition rules out 'reviling,' returning evil for evil, cursing the enemy. The Christian is not to adopt destructive violence as a way of transforming the world. Instead, the Christian is to confront the 'enemy' with goodness.....The New Testament is not naive about the aggressive power of evil; after all, it connected the enemy love tradition with the cross. To love an enemy is, in a very real sense, an eminently aggressive act; it seeks to totally transform the nature of the relationship; it does not allow the enemy to remain enemy.300

After rooting our Christian theology of peace in Christ, Senior goes on to teach the eschatological dimension of the Christian theology of peace and peacemaking by saying that:

The New Testament tradition of enemy love is based on a vision of the world's ultimate destiny. Almost all New Testament ethical teachings are 'eschatological,' that is, based on conviction about the ultimate destiny of humanity and creation. Violence, injustice, enmity, and death itself belong to the 'old world,' to 'the darkness.' But through Christ humanity is called to a life of peace, justice and love. This Christian vision is rooted firmly in the hopes of Israel, and deeper still, in the very longings of the human heart. The paradoxical stance of the Gospel is that the disciple of Jesus is called to live now by the

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300 Ibid., Donal Senior, p. 65-66.
values of a world that is yet to come. For the modern, existentially inclined human being this eschatological framework is undoubtedly difficult to comprehend. But little of the New Testament teachings can be understood without this perspective. The Christian is not commanded to love the enemy as if imposing a new and impossibly rigorous law. Nor is this merely pious rhetoric based on religious fantasy rather than raw facts. For the believer the human destiny of ultimate peace is just as real – even if only partially glimpsed and fleetingly experienced – as the palpable experience of evil that dogs our world. The destiny is based not so much on convictions about the evolutionary progress of humanity or verifiable trends toward enlightenment, but on faith in the God revealed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the call to ‘love your enemy’ is a vivid expression of the Christian vocation as a whole. The Christian is to actively pursue peace because peace is our God-given destiny; it is ‘our call’.  

The New Testament does not only emphasize the strong social dimension of peacemaking, it also emphasizes the evangelistic component of peacemaking. It is the vocation of the Church to get involved in peacemaking because the gospel is the gospel of peace (Ephesians 2: 13-17; 6: 15). The Church has been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 19-21) and it is the Church’s duty to call people to peace with God (Acts 10: 36; Romans 5; 1).

Matthew chapter 10 describes Jesus’ commission of his disciples to extend the Kingdom. During the commissioning both in Matthew and Luke, Jesus makes two references to peace in the context of evangelization. In Matthew 10: 13 he tells them how to discern receptivity of the people by saying that if the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. When Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, he describes the process of discerning receptivity in a slightly different way: “Whatever house

\[\text{Ibid., p. 67.}\]
you enter, first say, peace be to this house. If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you” (Luke 10: 5-6). This emphasis on the receptor’s response to peace seems to be related to Jesus’ promise a few verses later when he said: “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me (Matthew 10: 40). The concept of discerning and working with a man or woman of peace is a well recognized missiological principle. Why is that so? Because, people of peace become bridges to reach others, they respond to the gospel and they also support those sharing the gospel.

It is also important to note here that the words of Jesus during the commissioning of his disciples are more than a mere formality of greeting. They were guidelines for those sent because they describe something more dynamic and spiritual than a greeting. In this case, peace is to be considered as a benediction or blessing which cannot be separated from the deep sense of well-being associated with the gospel and its reception. The peace that the disciples can bestow is not available where the gospel and its messengers are rejected. So this passage implies that those on a Christian mission of evangelization are bearers of peace (John 14: 27), whose fruitfulness depends on the discernment of peace in the context of evangelization.

Jesus’ words about peace in Matthew 10 relates to persecution and suffering brought about because of fruitful work of evangelization. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth: I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against
his father, and a daughter against her mother.......... And whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10: 34-38). According to this passage, Jesus’ followers are peacemakers who speak the blessing of peace on families where they stay. Nevertheless, response to the message of the Kingdom will be mixed; some will accept the message, others will reject it. Because of this, families will be divided, some kind of conflict of interest will ensue. This doesn’t mean the purpose of Jesus’ coming is to bring conflict rather, conflict will be the effect of his coming and his announcement or proclamation of peace. And so in a few words I should say that the whole gospel and message of Jesus is actually the gospel of peace. The gospel expresses the integral relationship between peacemaking and evangelization. There are five texts in the New Testament that explicitly state or imply that the gospel is the gospel of peace (Acts 10:36; Romans 10:1-11; Ephesians 6: 15 and 2: 11-17; Colossians 1: 15-20).

In Acts 10: 36 Luke summarizes Peter’s ministry to the Romans Centurion Cornelius. In the Jewish Apostle’s first major outreach to Gentiles the content of the gospel is described as “peace:” You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. The context implies that the good news about Jesus results in peace with God and peace between Jews and Gentiles. The author of the book of Acts of the Apostles saw the word “peace” as a capsule for that which the good news about Christ contains. We should not restrict the meaning of this text to peace between God and humans, especially in this context of the gentile mission where the universality of God’s love and acceptance is being proclaimed. It is not irrelevant that one
of the greatest human divisions of ancient society, that between Jews and gentiles is described as overcome.

The second important text about the gospel of peace is found in Romans 5: 1-11 especially in verses 1 and 9-11 where the author says “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...... for if, when we were still God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (Romans 5: 1, 9-11). The good news of justification by faith results in peace with God, an objective peace with God established through faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The nature of this objective peace is clarified in verse 9. Justification means that we are no longer threatened by God’s wrath.

Paul then shifts from a legal metaphor (justification) to a relational metaphor (reconciliation) to give further understanding to the nature of this peace we enjoy. We are no longer God’s enemies because we have been reconciled to God through Christ. The estrangement of sin and the resulting hostility have been dealt with on the cross, so our relationship with God has been restored. The peace of the gospel, then, includes both objective status and subjective experience. Inherent in the gospel of reconciliation itself are very important theological foundations for peacemaking. We were reconciled to God while we were still helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies (Romans 5: 6-10). God’s love towards
us is infinite and indiscriminate. This same kind of love should enable us Christians to embrace and make peace with the ‘undeserving,’ including even our enemies.

The next powerful text that gives us the foundation for peacemaking is in Ephesians 2: 13-17. Peace with God and peace between Jews and Gentiles asserted by the apostle Peter in Acts 10: 36 is also emphasized here by the apostle Paul. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us……. That he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Ephesians 2: 13-17).

In this text Paul makes a number of strong affirmations about the peacemaking work of Jesus Christ on the cross. First, Christ’s death has broken down every barrier between Gentiles and Jews. The dividing wall of hostility is a metaphor that probably refers to the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles in the temple. The law of commandments seems to refer to the strict dietary and cultic laws which separated Jews and Gentiles from social interaction. Many of these laws dealt with food, which means that the table, which is the place people talk most personally and intimately over food was not shared by Jews and Gentiles. Because of the death of Christ these Old Testament laws were no longer relevant to one’s relationship to God. Table fellowship was established.
And also in this text Paul makes three positive affirmations about Jesus: ‘Jesus is our peace’; ‘Jesus makes peace’; and ‘Jesus proclaims peace’. I think here Paul is drawing on the prophet Isaiah in order to explain the peacemaking nature of the cross. He alludes to: “How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, your God reigns” (Isaiah 52: 7) and also he alludes to “Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him” (Isaiah 57: 19). These three affirmations dramatically underscore the reconciling purpose and unifying power of Jesus’ person and Jesus’ death.

The above texts imply that peacemaking should find embodiment in and through the Church. As the rest of the letter to the Ephesians indicates, what has been achieved in the Church in the overcoming of the major division within humanity in the first century is an anticipation of God’s purpose for the still divided world with many conflicts. If the Church in Ephesians chapter 2 stands for the overcoming of that fundamental division of humanity into either Jews or Gentiles, it also stands for the overcoming of all divisions and conflicts caused by traditions, tribalism, color, class, bad politics etc., like what we are dealing with in Uganda now. Anything less would be a denial of that important nature of the Church. The gospel of peace is a gift to be received and a message to be proclaimed. It must be appropriated personally and proclaimed publicly. Standing firm against the spiritual forces of darkness involves both experiencing the peace of the gospel and proclaiming the gospel (Ephesians 6: 15).
Finally, one of the most comprehensive texts on the mission of the Church in peacemaking is found in Colossians 1: 19-20 which says “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” This is probably one of the most profound and astounding claims in Scripture because it indicates that the gospel of Jesus which is the gospel of peace, has cosmic proportions which extends to both heavenly and earthly realities. God’s reconciling purpose at the cross is to restore the harmony of the original creation. The chaos, disharmonies and inhumanities to humankind and even to nature and the environment itself caused by the effects of original sin will be put right.

All the above texts from New Testament should significantly impact our approach to evangelization. Surely the message of peace should be communicated in a manner that helps reconcile us with one another and with the whole of creation in Christ Jesus.

4.5 Official Church Teachings about the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

It is not easy to identify or to pinpoint the precise starting point of the modern understanding of the Catholic peacemaking mission. Some official sources assign credit to Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) for his efforts to end the First World War. To Benedict, we owe the famous phrase, “Never again war, war never again,” made famous by Pope Paul
VI’s 1965 address before the United Nations, and repeated by Pope John Paul II on several occasions. Pope Benedict XV defined the role of the Church amidst the great tragedies of his time. Although they suspected him of favoring Catholic Austria, he remained neutral throughout the war because he knew that there were thousands of Catholic Christians in both camps fighting against each other. His fatherly counsel was that in any political conflict, the leaders of governments should end their misunderstanding through prayer and diplomatic means. If justice and peace are to be achieved in this world, then vigorous diplomatic efforts must be made without violence to the rights of persons or to the natural characteristics of each government. He saw the need for the Church to take up a leading role in diplomatic discussions of ending the war.

However, most commentators feel that the real starting-point of a comprehensive Catholic peacemaking mission in the world came from Pope John XXIII. Not only did he play an active and positive role in perhaps the most dangerous of post-war confrontations, Pope John also issued an encyclical letter on peace (Peace on Earth) which for the first time elaborated Catholic teaching on the matter in a sustained way. Pacem in Terris had significant influence on the Second Vatican Council’s approach to engagement in the world, it also provided the motivation for the most sustained Catholic contribution of the post-

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conciliatory peacemaking mission, namely, the Church’s defense of human rights as foundation of peace.\textsuperscript{304}

In \textit{Peace on Earth}, John XXIII taught that the Catholic vision of peace consists of four main elements: human rights, development, solidarity, and world order. According to the Pope, peace is the positive realization of the dignity of the whole human family. In this encyclical Pope John XXIII re-conceived the whole of Catholic political theology in terms of human rights. The common good was redefined as the objective recognition, respect, safeguarding and promotion of the rights of the human person.\textsuperscript{305} Basically, John XXIII declared in \textit{Pacem in Terris} that upholding the common good was the goal of all public authority. In so doing, it prepared the way for notions of humanitarian intervention in the world. Above and beyond the good of individual political communities and international relations, \textit{Peace on Earth} also identified ‘the universal common good’ and called for transnational institutions to address global problems.\textsuperscript{306} Two years after the release of \textit{Peace on Earth} the Vatican Council declared that the promotion of human rights was one of the three ways in which the Church served the world.\textsuperscript{307}

The second element of the Catholic understanding of peacemaking is the value of integral or authentic development. Set forth in the Council’s \textit{Gaudium et spes}, Pope Paul VI’s

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\item\textsuperscript{305} John XXIII. \textit{Pacem in Terris} (Peace on Earth). Encyclical Letter, 1963, # 139.
\item\textsuperscript{306} Ibid., # 130-142.
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*Populorum Progression* (Development of Peoples) elaborate more on the idea of authentic development which consists of three points: the right of all people to the means for their full development as human beings, the proposition that authentic human development consists of more than economic progress, and the affirmation that the affluent nations of the world have an obligation to share the benefits of development with the poor, not just through aid, but also through structural economic changes as equity in trade reform. The notion that development is the new name for peace appears as a summary tag line in Pope Paul VI’s *Development of Peoples.*

The third component of the Catholic idea of peace is solidarity. Basically, the idea of solidarity consists in active commitment to the belief that under God we belong to one human family. Solidarity may have many applications in various contexts and for various classes of agents: for the poor, for workers, between nations etc., but within the Church, solidarity has special reference to the ties which bind churches in one part of the world to churches and people in other regions and continents. Thus, the church in the United States exercises solidarity in the representations it makes to governments on behalf of the church in Uganda with respect to conflict resolution, re-development and other post-conflict policies. The Second Vatican Council also declared that a second way in which the Church served humanity was in fostering the unity of the human community, a task which is fundamental to the Church’s own identity.

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308 Paul VI. *Populorum Progressio (The Development of Peoples).* Encyclical Letter, 1967, # 56-61 & 76.
309 John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (The Social Concerns of the Church).* Encyclical Letter, 1988, # 38.
310 Ibid., *Gaudium et Spes.* # 42.
The fourth element in the Catholic vision of peace consists in its teaching on **world order**. The Second Vatican Council taught about the importance of a just political order in all countries in order for world peace to be attained. Every man and woman must work for peace. According to the Council, peace is more than the absence of war. It is the fruit of that right ordering of things and above all true peace is the effect of righteousness. All nations must avoid despotism and work together to create just political systems that will bring peace first to their own citizens and consequently to the whole world.\textsuperscript{311}

So, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) is actually one of the most important official Church documents that provides the theological reasons as to why the Church is called to get involved in some kind of ‘politics’ in the process of its peacemaking mission all around the world. *Gaudium et Spes* numbers 63 to 93 explain the relationship between the Church and the State. It gives the nature and goal of modern politics by specifying the Church’s special responsibility to guide governmental politics and to draw attention to the ethical and religious dimensions of democratic politics. The Constitution points out that the soul of ‘democratic politics’ is the human being in the totality of his ‘interior dimension.’\textsuperscript{312} According to Clement Majawas’ interpretation of the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{311} Ibid., # 73-90. \\
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., # 64.}
Constitution, the main points taught by the Constitution regarding the Church’s involvement in political issues include:\(^{313}\)

(i) The fact that cultural, economic and social evolution among people has led to changes which have had great impact on the life of the political community, especially on issues concerning universal rights and duties. This is a challenge the Church must address itself to very seriously if it is to help solve modern political problems.\(^{314}\)

(ii) That the Church has a duty to make people aware of their role in politics. They need to be empowered to voice their honest opinions regarding any kind of government, especially where civil, moral or religious liberty is denied to them thereby making them victims of ambition and political crimes. It is their right to denounce a regime which fails to pursue the common good, but serves the rulers’ selfish interests.\(^{315}\)

(iii) That people must be free to choose governmental leaders because political authority, whether in the community or in institutions representing the State, should be moral and work for the common good. Since nobody is above the law, it is lawful for citizens to defend their rights against any abuse of authority, provided their defense is within the limits of natural law and the Gospel.\(^{316}\)

(iv) That political leaders must avoid blocking the development of families, social or cultural groups as well as voluntary bodies and institutions. These groups should

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\(^{314}\) Ibid., # 73.

\(^{315}\) Ibid., *Gaudium et Spes* # 73.

\(^{316}\) Ibid., # 74.
exist and implement their lawful constitutional rights without any political hindrance. Citizens, too, should guard against granting the elected government too much power and authority so as to avoid abuse and suppression.\textsuperscript{317}

(v) That Christians must be patriotic, generous and loyal to their country, but be open-minded in their outlook. They ought to be aware of their special and personal vocation to assist the legitimate government to foster liberty, justice and peace and development.\textsuperscript{318}

(vi) That any democratic government should tolerate many political parties since conflicting socio-economic political views are necessary for building a healthy nation. Christians are, therefore, called upon to respect other people’s political parties provided these are rooted in Gospel values. To achieve this objective requires civic and political education for all citizens.\textsuperscript{319}

(vii) That both Church and State serve God’s people, where the former is the conscience of the government’s temporal affairs. Therefore, the role and competence of the Church must never be confused with the political community or bound to any political system. It should always be a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person. In this way, the political community and the Church remain mutually independent and self-governing.\textsuperscript{320}

(viii) That Christians must obey legitimate political leaders and participate actively in their government’s efforts towards integral development. But, they should not

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., # 75.  
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., # 75.  
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., # 75.  
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., # 76.  
\end{flushright}
limit themselves to the material welfare, but should strive to promote Gospel values by the way they live out their life’s vocation.\textsuperscript{321}

(ix) That the Church hierarchy should help political leaders to define genuine democracy and implement it. But that in doing so, the Church hierarchy should, however, guard against political bribery and flattery. They should also be cautious and not to accept privileges or donations from the civil authorities.\textsuperscript{322}

(x) That the Church should play its prophetic role effectively. It should boldly denounce all structures of injustice and oppression in the society as well as give constructive criticism and pass moral judgments on matters touching the socio-economic political order. This can be done through teaching, preaching and providing guidance to the society by means of Pastoral Letters. The Church’s mission in the world is to promote liberty, peace, justice and development among all people, for God’s glory.\textsuperscript{323}

4.6 Pope John Paul II’s Teachings about the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

Pope John Paul II’s teaching on the Church’s peacemaking mission in the world is contained in his reflections on political and economic issues in so far as these affect the

\textsuperscript{321} Ibid., # 76.
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid., # 76.
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid. \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, # 76.
common welfare of people in society (families, communities and nations).\textsuperscript{324} John Paul teaches about peacemaking under the umbrella of integral and authentic development.

In his encyclical \textit{Laborem Exercens}, he explains the dignity and role of human work in modern society. His ideas, in this encyclical, if taken seriously, can enhance genuine democracy which can bring liberty, peace and development in the society. He urges the Church to teach the importance of work-ethics. Through work a person must earn his bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology in the society. It is on the eve of new developments in technological, economic and political conditions which will influence the world of work and production, and bring true and authentic development to democratic governments. Every work should be done for the glorification of God and perfection of creation. In brief, as Miller puts it, in this encyclical three teachings stand out “First, the Church’s unique contribution to the questions of social justice, the Pope believes, rests primarily on the treasures she can bring forth from the word of God. Her contribution derives from her specifically religious and ethical vision. Second, the encyclical forcefully asserts the transcendent dignity of the human person as the foundation of all social doctrine. Third, John Paul is convinced that the Church’s teaching on justice must be rooted in Christ the Redeemer, for he alone is the key who unlocks the mystery of human person.”\textsuperscript{325}

\footnote{Michael Miller., ed. \textit{The Encyclicals of John Paul II}. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Inc., 1996, p. 159.}
In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern), John Paul II analyzes the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of world development. In this encyclical, the Pope calls upon the Church to address itself seriously to the lack of effective international solidarity, political rivalry between East and West and the uncontrolled production and selling of deadly arms. He also asserts the positive role of unions in providing workers with a voice on the job.

In order to facilitate the Church’s global peacemaking mission, the Pope in this encyclical emphasizes that genuine development in democratic governments must be integral (taking into account human beings in the totality of their bodily and spiritual existence.) True liberty, justice and development needs to be based on human dignity which stems from the fact that a human being is created in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1: 26-27) and is to exercise dominion over creation (Genesis 1: 28). This mandate to responsible stewardship in developing the earth is, therefore, rooted in everyone’s response to the divine vocation. Governments have a duty to realize democratic principles which will enable people to respond to their divine vocation. This means that each government must reform the unjust aspects of its political institutions and replace corrupt and dictatorial forms of government with democratic and participatory ones.\(^{326}\)

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\(^{326}\) Ibid., John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, # 30.
In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II taught that the Church has strong theological underpinnings for why it should get involved in peacemaking mission and development as well as many other social issues in this world. The Pontiff’s defense of the Church’s right on this issue ultimately rests on the Church’s duty to safeguard and promote human dignity. Many times in this encyclical, the Pope repeats that the teaching and spreading of the Church’s social doctrine are part of the Church’s evangelizing mission. He holds that the doctrinal principles in the Church’s social teaching belong to the deposit of faith. They have a vital link with the Gospel of the Lord, applying the word of God to people’s lives and the life of society. An essential element of this corpus is the dignity of the human person both as an individual and a social being. John Paul II insists that when the Church gets involved and teaches in the area of peace and development she does so in fidelity to a divine mandate. Its proclamation of the fundamental principles of social doctrine is therefore an integral dimension of the Gospel message.\(^{327}\)

In *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II honors the centenary of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*. In this encyclical, the Pope teaches three major themes namely: truth and freedom, human dignity and human rights, participation and subsidiarity.\(^{328}\) In this work the Pope reiterates the Church’s traditional teaching on the natural right to private property as

\(^{327}\) Ibid., Miller, *The Encyclical of John Paul II*, pp. 418-419.

\(^{328}\) Ibid., p. 579.
an extension of human freedom, necessary for the autonomy and development of the person.\textsuperscript{329}

More specifically, in connection with the Church's peacemaking mission in the world, the encyclical highlights the Church's vision of the dignity of the human person as revealed in all its fullness in the mystery on the incarnate word.\textsuperscript{330} The tone of the encyclical clearly favors authentic democracy as the political system more suitable for peace-building and the fostering of human dignity around the world. This is an indication that the Church promotes the democratic system because it encourages subsidiarity and solidarity which are basic principles of the Catholic social doctrine. It is in democracy that the structures of participation and shared responsibility, which are essential for subsidiarity, can be nurtured. True democracy will also foster solidarity within organizations, societies and between countries as well as international organizations.

The Pontiff also teaches that, governments need to collaborate with the Church on some crucial national issues because there are some socio-economic and political problems which need a faith approach that can only be provided by the Church. The Church is the medium through which God's message of salvation to humanity is interpreted. It, therefore, contributes to the enrichment of human dignity, the anthropomorphic values


\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., # 47.
of liberty, justice, peace and integral development.\textsuperscript{331} To achieve this, we need the democratic system because it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices and guarantees that the people elected to office are accountable to the public and can be replaced through peaceful means when their terms expire. Authentic democracy has to be nurtured through the advancement of orthodox education and formation in true socio-economic, political and theological ideas.

The encyclical challenges the Governments to streamline all economic activities in line with democratic institutional, juridical and political principles. It should guarantee and protect all forms of freedom, human rights, individual and national property, stable currency and efficient public services. But more importantly, John Paul II teaches that, in case of tension, conflict and misunderstanding in the government (between political parties or organizations) the Church has the responsibility to bring the conflicting parties together and act as a democratic intermediary.\textsuperscript{332}

4.7 The Holy Eucharist and the Church’s Peacemaking Mission in the World

I would like to conclude this chapter with a reflection on one of the most important theological reasons why the Church should be involved in peacemaking around the

\textsuperscript{331} Ibid Centesimus Annus, # 47.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid., 48.
world, and that is the significance of the Eucharist in the peacemaking mission of the Church.

The Eucharist which is the center of Christian worship, presents perhaps the greatest challenge to human solidarity. The Eucharist is the sacrament of love, peace, unity, humility, self-denial, mutual self-giving and universal oneness. The celebration of the Eucharist has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. Vertically, the Eucharist is both a sacrament and a symbol of God’s union with the human being. And horizontally, the Eucharist is a sacrament and a symbol of the human being’s unity with his or her neighbors.

Pope John Paul II emphasizes the same point that the Eucharist brings about a new world, marked by filial relations with God and fraternal relations with people. In his own words the Pontiff puts it that the great consequences of the Eucharist for society is: “Bringing people together in fraternal unity, especially the poor. Serving them, sharing with them the bread of the earth and the bread of love. Building up with them a more just world, preparing a new world for the future.” Pope John Paul II saw in the Eucharist the active school of love for the neighbor. Therefore, Eucharistic worship can be authentic if it makes us grow in the awareness of the dignity of every person and particularly sensitive to human suffering and misery, to all injustices and wrongs caused by wars and other causes, and seek the way to redress them effectively.

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333 L’Osservatore Romano. February 26, 1979, p. 9.
In 1992, the bishops of Nigeria also said there has to be a close relationship between the celebration of the Eucharist and action for justice in the world. “There is an essential link between the liturgy and life, between the sacrifice of the Mass and social justice, between the celebration of the Eucharist by the Church and the mission of the Church in the world for the Kingdom of God. The authentic celebration of the Eucharist requires some form of social action for justice by the community directed towards the values of the Kingdom of God. The Eucharistic community should be a force in the world for the transformation of society”

The Eucharist is a sacrament that invites the Christian to live a life of sharing. This sacrament should motivate justice and humble services in each one of us. Just as Jesus Christ shared his body and blood with humanity, he now challenges all Christians to go and do the same. Those who partake in Eucharistic celebrations have a greater responsibility to share their talents and resources, to humanize the world and make it a better place by reconciling human beings in conflict with one another and with God, and to consecrate all of creation to God the father. The celebration of the Eucharist will mean a radical change not only in mind and heart, but also in action. That is why Bernard Haring, one of the great theologians believed that it was impossible to truly eat the Body of Christ and drink his Blood without being part of the commitment to saving solidarity, unity and peace around the world. In his own words Haring said, “those who

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celebrate the Eucharist ... will give that witness of cordial love and harmonious interaction that becomes a sign, grace and call to unity for all people”

So the challenge which Jesus Christ sets before Christians in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist is enormous. The enormity of the challenge can only be appreciated when we reflect on the fact that at the Last Supper, the same night on which Jesus offered his disciples his Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine, he performed the ‘strange’ ritual of putting on a servant’s apron, and washing his disciples feet, one after the other, and he said, “I have given you an example, so that you may copy what I have done to you” (John 13: 1-15). Therefore any Eucharistic celebration or devotion which loses sight of this horizontal dimension, will not only lose its efficacy and becomes a sterile ritual, but, as Saint Paul puts it, such a worship or devotion makes a mockery of the Eucharist and it is surely an abuse that is capable of bringing condemnation upon us as individuals and also communally as a Church because we will be eating and drinking our own condemnation/death (I Corinthians 11: 17-34). In line with Saint Paul’s Eucharistic theology, I would like to say that unless there is a two-fold dimension of personal love and social action in the Church, our celebration of the Holy Eucharist can be a sacrilege.

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Chapter Five

Practical Pastoral Plans of Action towards Ending Violent Political Conflicts in Uganda

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will explore and recommend practical pastoral approaches that the local Church needs to adopt in order to address the problem of political conflicts in Uganda. We need a new evangelization or re-evangelization in Uganda because we seem to have the numbers with Christians being the majority in the country but the concrete living out of faith needs to be improved on so that the positive impact of the Christian faith may reflect the large numbers of Christians in Uganda. The chapter also suggests that the offices of Justice and Peace Commission in Uganda be supported and empowered by the Vatican as well as by the local conference of Bishops so that it can advance peacemaking and peace-building in the country. I emphasize in this chapter that each Bishop as an individual and the Bishops together as a conference bear the most profound responsibility to draw and implement practical pastoral plans that will help solve the problem of political conflicts in Uganda. A renewed pastoral plan of action must develop means of empowering lay leaders in the country to take active roles in peace-building and to educate them to have a positive attitude towards politics. Finally the chapter will recommend some key areas where political reform needs to be accomplished in order to avoid the recurrence of violence in the country.
5.2 New Evangelization: “Reign Focus” Evangelization

The Church in Uganda emphatically needs to adapt a new strategy of evangelization/re-evangelization to properly address the issue of justice and peace, and to help the government of Uganda in shaping a more promising, peaceful future. Certainly the missionaries and the Bishops conference of Uganda have been successful in making Uganda into almost what we can call a ‘Christian country’ in terms of the number of Christians in Uganda. By baptism, the majority of Ugandans are Christians. We have great size in congregations but now we (as a local Church) have to labor harder on the quality of our Christian faith. Our Christian faith is not making an adequate impact on our human condition in Uganda. The future of the Church in Uganda rests in how firmly it holds to the Gospel values.

The vocation and mission of the Church is to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ, and this salvation concerns humanity in its entirety. Therefore, there is a need for the Church in Uganda to emphasize to the people the connection between evangelization and human promotion. For the Church, to evangelize is to develop the human person in all the dimensions of his or her vocation as a child of God. Faith is made concrete in committed actions on behalf of human promotion, such as: education health, aid to the needy, economic development, defense of human rights, respect for law, and the commitment to

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bring about democracy. Separating human promotion from the love that inspires it is to deny the intense unity of the human commitment where the profound Christian identity is made incarnate.

The promotion of justice and peace is the base of evangelization. This conviction and personal motivation is different from a simple intellectual acceptance of the objective importance of justice and peace. Many people would be ready to accept theoretically that the promotion of justice is very important without feeling committed to it in their daily lives. This is perhaps one of the main reasons why declarations on justice which are endorsed and accepted in meetings are not always implemented when the time comes to put them into practice. Pius declarations on justice are not enough to transform the situation in Uganda. In many cases we may accept the objective importance of the promotion of justice and peace in general, but we maintain some reluctance and suspicion about the need of doing it ourselves in our own context – within our family, neighborhood, region or tribe.

Unvoiced doubts and reluctance constitute a paralyzing factor for many ordained as well as non-ordained Christians from committing themselves to the ministry of promoting justice and peace. It is not uncommon in Uganda to hear from religious leaders as well as from non-ordained Christians, remarks such as: Promotion of justice is a political task, not a religious one. We should leave politics to politicians; our mission is of a spiritual nature. It is love not justice that is the core of Christ’s message. Promoting justice often promotes revenge against enemies and hatred against the oppressors. I prefer to promote love. In
fact injustice is everywhere, even within the Church itself. The Church has to become just first only then can it preach justice outside to other people. We are simply not credible. The promotion of justice and peace is a risky enterprise. The Church will be misinterpreted, misquoted, criticized, persecuted and priests and religious may be killed. The result is that the Church will lose some privileges granted by the government that are very useful in order to help poor people. What the Church has been doing so far is more than enough: we help the victims of wars and the poor. This is better than engaging in controversial discussions about justice while the poor are starving. There are a lot more of this kind of paralyzing feeling in the minds of many Christians and Church ministers in Uganda.

We know how to refute all these objections with arguments but the fact is that being a true Christian requires a *metanoia*, radical conversion of the heart (Matthew 4:17). There is no substitute for the lack of this personal conversion because it is our own witness that constitutes the fundamental condition of our credibility in the mission of evangelization. Pope Paul VI insists in his Apostolic Exhortation that: “The modern person listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if one does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.”\(^{337}\)

Personal conviction and witness should be rooted in a proper knowledge of the justice of the gospel and the Social Teaching of the Church. We may not be professionals in economics, sociology or political sciences, but as many Christians as possible, especially ordained ministers in Uganda, should know the gospel’s values and the Social Teaching of

the Church. We should be expert enough to be aware when the dignity of human beings is violated. Our pastoral contact with people, especially the vulnerable, should make us experts, if not on the solutions, at least on the problems that affect our society. This is why the education to justice and peace should start in our catechesis, in our homilies, and in a special way in the formation program of priests and religious.

We cannot conceive of this new evangelization without a renewal of our ways of promoting justice and peace. The experience of the past years around the world is sufficient confirmation that without the promotion of justice there is no complete evangelization. The challenge for the Church in Uganda is to examine whether it is creating the necessary conditions in order to implement the promotion of justice and peace.

The new evangelization I am suggesting in Uganda must be better integrated than it was in the past. That means we should not reduce evangelization to certain elements such as preaching the word of God, Baptism and building Churches in our villages. Such a method is what Paul the VI calls impoverishing the notion of evangelization: “Thus it has been possible to define evangelization in terms of proclaiming Christ to those who do not know him, of preaching, of catechesis, of conferring Baptism and other Sacraments. Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even distorting it. It is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization unless one tries to keep in view all its essential elements.”

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338 Ibid. Evangelii Nuntiandi, # 17.
According to Paul VI, a true evangelization means bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. This certainly does not mean making all humans members of the Catholic Church. It is rather a question of causing an impact in the structures and values of the society in which the Church is present. The Church, in other words, acts as the conscience of society. The Pope develops his teaching further by saying that: “The purpose of evangelization is precisely this interior change, and if it has to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of Message she proclaims, both the personal and the collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.”

The Pope explains further that when he “speaks of Strata of humanity that are to be transformed: for the Church it is not only question of preaching the gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, humankind’s criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.”

Therefore, the final purpose of evangelization is not simply the conversion of individuals and baptizing them but “what matters is to evangelize people’s culture and cultures in a deep way, always taking the human person as a starting point and always coming back to

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339 Ibid., # 18.
340 Ibid., # 19.
the relationships of people among themselves and with God.”\textsuperscript{341} This is a challenging purpose. It indicates that Evangelization does not end when a Church is locally established because the target is not just to establish the Church. It is an ongoing process because it is a continuous effort to reach all people and to give them an internal transformation through the power of the Gospel. The fact that eschatological salvation is really offered to all people, both inside and outside the Church, does not render void nor less relevant in any way the purpose of evangelization. This purpose cannot be achieved without the personal witness of the life of Christians. The proclamation of the Gospel (\textit{kerygma}, preaching or catechesis), is not the totality of evangelization; it is only one aspect of evangelization. That is why Paul VI insists in his exhortation that “This proclamation, - \textit{kerygma}, preaching or catechesis – occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become, synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization.\textsuperscript{342}

Evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the gospel and of our concrete life, both personal and social. This is why the content of our new evangelization in Uganda should include an explicit message about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development – an energetic message about concrete social situations.\textsuperscript{343} This is why the Church must be always aware of the existing links between evangelization, human development and social justice. The Pontiff describes these links as belonging to three different orders: In the anthropological order because the one who is to be

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid., # 20.
\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., # 22.
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid. \textit{Evangelii Nuntiandi}, # 29.
evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions; in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of redemption; and in the evangelical order which is the order of charity. How in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting, justice and peace, the true authentic advancement of all? 

This complex and all embracing purpose and content of evangelization is well summarized and integrated when centered on the reign of God/the kingdom of God. The reign was the central preaching of Jesus Christ, summarized in the so-called Magna Charta (Matthew 5-7). This kingdom is so important that, by comparison, everything becomes “the rest” which will be given in addition (Matthew 6:33). It is also in the light of the kingdom that the king will judge us in the last day (Matthew 25). That is why in his exhortation Paul VI makes a statement that has a special value in understanding the meaning of new evangelization. Only the Kingdom therefore is absolute, and it makes everything else relative. Therefore, we in Uganda need to understand that the Church cannot, according to the vision of the Kingdom preached by Jesus Christ, restrict its mission only to the religious field and dissociate itself from people’s temporal problems. 

A new evangelization requires new pastoral strategies that will promote and sustain justice and peace for a country like Uganda that is being menaced by constant outbreaks of war, hatred and violence. Like Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga, I suggest that the new evangelization of

344 Ibid., # 31.
345 Ibid., # 8 and also #34.
Uganda should be a “Reign-Focus” type of evangelization. According to Bishop Casaldaliga, Jesus Christ came into this world to inaugurate the Reign of God/Kingdom of God, and Jesus spent all his time during his earthly ministry preaching the reign of God. Therefore, we in Uganda must understand and begin to teach seriously in words and actions that being a Christian means being follower of Jesus Christ. Being Christian means nothing other than living and struggling for Jesus’ cause. If the reign of God was the core, the absolute, the cause, for Jesus, it has to be so for his followers as well. The reign of God is the Christians’ mission, the basic mission of every Christian; all other specific missions and particular charisms are then simply embodiments of this one great Christian mission. The criterion for measuring the quality of our Christian faith as a Church in Uganda is our relationship to the reign of God, our relationship to Jesus’ cause.347

According to Bishop Casaldaliga,

The Reign of God was a real obsession for Jesus, his only cause, since it was an all-enveloping cause... The reign is the effective kingship (reign) of the Father over everyone and everything. When God reigns, all is changed. Justice, freedom, brotherhood and sisterhood, mercy, reconciliation, peace, forgiveness, closeness to God; all these make up the cause for which Jesus fought, for which he was persecuted, arrested, tortured and condemned to death. All this is the Reign. The Reign of God is the total overturning and transfiguring of the present condition of ourselves and the cosmos, purified from all evils and filled with the condition of God. The Reign of God does not claim to be another world, but this old world changed into a new one, for human beings and for God: the new heavens and new earth. The Kingdom is the destiny of the human race. It is the utopia that all peoples have lived dreaming of and that the very God-in the serving, crucified and glorious flesh of Jesus-sets out for the human race so that we can go on building it and hoping for it.348

347 Ibid., p. 81.
348 Ibid., pp. 80-81.
In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI used similar words when addressing the bishops of Bosnia-Herzegovina about building the Kingdom of God in their Dioceses. The Pontiff said,

> It is important that every effort be made to increase the unity of the flock of Christ ... overcoming, if necessary, misunderstandings and difficulties associated with events of the past ... The Church everywhere, pursues a single objective, that of building the Kingdom of God in all lands and in the hearts of all people... the mission of preserving intact the heritage of the Lord is, at least in part, the responsibility of the successors of the Apostles and to their collaborators in the pastoral ministry... all of this constitutes a particularly important aspect of episcopal ministry at this moment in history, as Bosnia and Herzegovina resume the path of collaboration to build a future of social development and peace.\(^{349}\)

The teachings of Bishop Casaldaliga and the exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of Bosnia-Herzegovina should make us ask the following questions to the local Church in Uganda: Is God really reigning in Uganda or not? Are we building the reign of God in Uganda and in our hearts according to the heritage and the foundation that Jesus Christ started or not?

To facilitate the mission of the Church both locally and universally in building the reign of God in this world, the Second Vatican Council brought about two structural changes in Church organization which are meant to strengthen the Church’s ability to respond to questions of justice and peace for about four decades now. The first was the establishment of Bishops’ Conferences as forums for Bishops to consult and coordinate on matters of

\(^{349}\) http://www.catholicnewsagency.com
pastoral and social strategy.\textsuperscript{350} The second tool or ‘weapon’ that Vatican II gave to the Church as a means to fight for justice and peace all around the world was the creation of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace\textsuperscript{351} which is to coordinate with the national and diocesan offices of Justice and Peace all around the world. In the next two segments I will discuss the role of these two important creations by Vatican II in connection with the work for peace-building in Uganda.

5.3 Catholic Bishops Conferences

When Bishops work in harmony their conferences can be a formidable and steady force for peace even in very violent societies. Their pastoral letters and public statements can act like catalysts in opening public debate or in galvanizing public opinion, even outside the Church. Their coordinated social initiatives for peace and justice, especially where there is a Catholic majority like in Uganda, can spread wide and deep within society. The Bishops’ initiatives for peace and justice will be even more effective if they work ecumenically with Bishops and leaders of the other Christian Churches in their country.

The Church, being a visible community in the midst of the world, is expected to promote the justice of the Kingdom in a visible way. Personal witness is essential but it is insufficient


\textsuperscript{351} Pope Paul VI, by his \textit{Motu Propri Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam} of January 6\textsuperscript{th} 1967 established the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace and invited all the Bishops’ Conferences to follow his example by establishing in their countries their own National Commissions for Justice and Peace which should coordinate with the offices of Justice and Peace in all the dioceses in each country.
for the Church as a body. It is here that structures and pastoral strategies are necessary and useful.

At the national level, the Bishops Conference seems the most appropriate and conducive forum in order to promote justice and peace. Pastoral Letters, official statements, and messages are a continuous guidance to Catholics and a source of reflection and inspiration for all citizens of good will. They may not offer magic solutions to the problems of a country like Uganda, but they provide criteria and attitudes that may help to find a common purpose/solution. It is in this sense that they have a prophetic value. A silent Church cannot be the conscience of society.

The responsibility of promoting justice and peace falls primarily on the Bishops since they are the chief pastors of the local Church in Uganda. They are to be watchful in seeking appropriate methods and adapting certain attitudes in teaching and implementing their doctrinal and pastoral message. This requires them to show great solidarity towards others and to exercise high levels of sensitivity to problems affecting the life of the people of God entrusted to them. The Bishops, individually and as a conference, should manifest a genuine determination in finding solutions to problems affecting Uganda by detecting the real causes. They are to be ready to take a stand when fundamental human rights are violated. Inspired by the Church’s social doctrine, they are to seek respect for the principles of good governance on the part of those in political life.

352 Benedict XVI. Deus Caritas Est (God is Love). Encyclical Letter. 2006, # 32.
The people of Uganda expect their Bishops to be genuine and impartial reconcilers without preconceptions in matters of justice and peace. Concerning the conflicts which are tearing Uganda apart, the Church must be an arbitrator of unquestionable impartiality. The positions taken by the Bishops’ conference should be impartial with regard to the powers and ideologies of the various associations of a political, tribal, ethnic or regional character. In Uganda, many key politicians try to win support of some Bishops and to get them on board to support their evil political ideologies by manipulating and drumming up ethnic and regional sentiments. In such cases, the Bishop’s impartiality is very much counted on by the Church, and he (they) better get it right. It is their impartiality as individuals and as a conference that enables them to be in a favorable position to denounce abuses of power as well as the manipulation of people by some politicians, and to vigorously defend the little voiceless people who watch helplessly as their rights are being trampled underfoot.

A Bishop’s actions will be more effective in collegiality and solidarity with his fellow Bishops as a conference. Greater unity within the Ugandan Bishops’ Conference is of great importance if they are to achieve a better future for Uganda especially on matters of justice and peace. Unity will give the Church’s action more credibility and respect from political leaders who actually know the degree of public power that the Bishops have as leaders of the local Ugandan Church. Some politicians may want to foment division among the Bishops according to tribal, ethnic or regional lines so that they can take advantage of it to win a particular political goal. Uganda as a country is notorious for such polarization, one of the reasons behind the frequent wars in the country, so our Bishops should transcend this
kind of polarization as Church leaders in order for them to be able to lead Ugandans to a better and peaceful future as a people of God.

Unity among the Bishops should not be limited to one country only since political instability in most African countries is interconnected and in many cases overlaps political boundaries. For example the two decade war between Uganda Government and the LRA rebels in northern Uganda has now spread not only to southern Sudan but also into northeastern Congo and the Central African Republic. The cooperation among the Conferences of Bishops should extend to regional and continental levels. This requires that each Bishop have a deep, authentic ecclesial sense and an unswerving fidelity to the Gospel in his search for solutions to common problems facing the Church in Africa as a whole.

5.4 National and Diocesan Offices of Justice and Peace Commissions

The second innovation of Vatican Council II was the institution of justice and peace commissions beginning with the creation of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace as part of the Vatican curia. The National Commissions for Justice and Peace were born from the initiative of Pope Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council. The Pope, by his Motu Proprio Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam of January 6th 1967 established the Pontifical Commission Iustitia et Pax and invited all the Bishops’ Conferences to follow his example. For Africa, it was the SECAM Plenary of 1978 held in Nairobi as well as the meeting of 1981 in Yaounde in Cameroon that exhorted the Bishops’ Conferences of Africa to establish such commissions at national level. Since then, the National Commission of Justice and Peace has
become the classic instrument of the Church for the promotion of justice and peace at national levels. Its activities may vary according to the context and needs of each country.

The Council’s duty is to carry out research and organize programs in areas like the control of trade in small arms, the abolition of anti-personnel land mines, trade reform, and debt relief for poor nations. Officials of the Council also are to represent the Holy See in major international conferences. At the regional, national, diocesan and parish levels, justice and peace commissions, play their roles as the Church organs that deal up close with local, national and regional problems. The networking of these commissions, moreover, provides international support for those working on the front lines for justice, peace and human rights.

The role of the National Commission for Justice and Peace is ensure that the social teaching of the Church is disseminated to the grassroots level in a simple way understandable to people. These actions include: organizing Lenten campaigns every year on a theme related to social justice and Gospel values; organizing workshops, sessions and prayer celebrations on justice, peace and reconciliation; communicating the achievements, concerns and activities of the different dioceses in the country; preparing documents for the Bishops’ Conference; relating to similar bodies in other Churches or NGOs; providing legal advice and assistance, when possible, in cases of injustice; and coordinating the activities of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions. In a similar way the Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace should focus its action on the concerns and pastoral challenges at the
diocesan level while contributing as a network with other diocesan commissions, the promotion of justice and peace in the whole country.

It should be of prime concern for the Conference of Bishops in Uganda to see that the various branches and offices of Justice and Peace Commissions are fully and truly operational. They should support them and endow them with everything necessary to exercise their role effectively. These commissions should be places of study for problems such as the frequent wars destroying Ugandan society and contribute to finding suitable solutions to them. It is necessary for the Bishops’ conference to raise awareness and teach people to discuss society’s problems with the assistance of the Word of God, the Church’s social doctrine and Papal messages (for example, the Messages for World Day of Peace). This requires that pastoral agents receive a suitable formation for this task.

Therefore, the Bishops’ conference in Uganda will have to exercise particular pastoral care in responding to the needs of the various segments of Ugandan society such as: the armed forces, the armed movements and the militia, politicians, intellectuals and public officials, refugees abroad and displaced persons within Uganda. Given the role which each of these segments of society is to exercise, at present or in the future, in bringing about justice and peace in Uganda, it is absolutely essential that the Bishops and all pastoral agents give them greater attention. The Bishops’ conference ought to consider forming groups of experts to draw up sound pastoral programs which respond to the needs of each of these segments of society. These groups must be given sufficient ways and means to work well.
Each diocesan Justice and Peace Commission should be the watchful eye of the local Church within society for all the burning issues which affect it related to social justice, equality, human rights, promotion of the common good, democratic coexistence, reconciliation and development. This body must be in contact with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. As such, this commission should be viewed as an ecclesial body for the promotion of justice and peace according to the spirit of Jesus Christ and the Church’s teaching on his Gospel values. It is an essential instrument in a pastoral program for reconciliation, justice and peace in Uganda.

5.5 Bishop Conciliators and Mediators

It is certainly very important to appreciate the efforts and personal sacrifices of many Bishops around the world in peacemaking. I do not mean to suggest that the role of peacemaker is restricted to Bishops. It properly ought to be the office of lay people, as exemplified by the Community of San Egidio. However, in fact, Bishops in our days especially in Africa and other developing countries around the world have on numerous occasions been forced by circumstances into the role of peacemakers. This is due not only to the Church’s commitment to the Catholic vision of peace, but also to the undeveloped nature of civil society in many developing countries or to the discrediting of other institutions and leaders as the result of protracted civil conflict. On many occasions, individual Bishops find themselves thrust into a distinct leadership role as was the case with the former Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, Janai Loum, who was murdered in 1976.
by Amin’s dictatorship in Uganda, El Salvado’s martyred Archbishop Romero, the Congo’s Archbishop Monswengo, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michael Sabbah, and the Nobel Laurente Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo from East Timor. Currently in Uganda, the Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama is leading an interreligious peace team made up of leaders from other Churches and religions in a tireless effort to bring peace in Uganda.

These are just a few examples of the kind of real social situations that the Bishops find themselves in as leaders of their local Churches. It illustrates the way in which the Church’s teaching on human rights and human dignity has changed the role of Bishops, thrusting them into conflict and conflict resolution, without an adequate change in training and Church organization, especially in sharply divided underdeveloped societies like in Uganda. The Bishop speaks out on human rights issues and as a result is thrust into a role as spokesman for his people without a trained cadre of people or institutions to assist him in this difficult and often risky job.

5.6 Formation of Lay People as Agents of Peace-builders in Uganda

Bishops find themselves thrust onto the frontline as peacemakers in their countries. The situation of the Bishops reveals an urgent need to train professional lay Christian leaders to work with them as a team on the important issue of justice and peace. This approach will help facilitate peace-building in Uganda. I suggest that the larger Church (the Vatican, the major conferences of Catholic Bishops around the world, the major Catholic donor agencies
like the Catholic Relief Services) implement more aggressively programs to provide the training, staffing, and infrastructure for bishops and lay leaders on the front lines to contribute more substantially to their peacemaking efforts.

The Catholic vision of peace as a way of life worthy of human dignity has put bishops and many priests on the front lines. They have shown great persistence and sometimes inventiveness in meeting their challenges with very few resources. The time has come for the Vatican and the larger Episcopal Conferences to commit more resources for peacemaking with the poorer Churches in developing countries. The work of justice and peace is essential to the life of the Catholic Church today. Bishops and priests bear a special responsibility for teaching the gospel as it relates to justice, peace and human rights. The work of transforming the world, however, belongs appropriately to lay people. Bishops and priests are forced into leadership roles in divided societies like Uganda for many reasons: the weakness of civil institutions, the autonomy and moral authority of the Church, the credibility gained by the Church's service to the oppressed, etc. While necessary, such leadership should be the exception. Lay people should rightly take the lead. I pray and hope that as Catholic social teaching becomes more widely known and appropriated, there will be many more Catholic lay leaders involved in peacemaking. The kind of leadership we are longing for in Uganda and in other parts of the world cannot be realized unless the Vatican and the Conferences of Catholic Bishops take up more seriously the mission of educating lay Catholics in the art of Catholic social teaching and peacemaking especially in developing countries and where there are political conflicts.
Proper preparation is extremely important not only for those who will have future involvement in the Church’s pastoral programs, but also those who are formed in the Church’s Institutions (Catholic Universities and Institutes of Higher Education). Consequently, courses and teaching seminars on peace and justice need to be introduced into formation programs for pastoral workers and religious persons, as well as into Church educational institutions. This means providing them with useful tools in analyzing the socio-political realities of the places where they will be working. All Catholic educational institutions are called to make a valuable contribution to formation by promoting a fruitful encounter between the Gospel and various branches of knowledge.353

Consequently, the formation of lay Christians must primarily seek to make them capable of facing their daily tasks in cultural, social, economic and political settings, in effect, developing their sense of duty in service to the common good. A second aspect is the formation of their political conscience to prepare lay Christians to exercise political power.354 They should acquire a keen knowledge of the Church’s teaching and its pastoral activity in society, as well as an acute interest in the social questions of our times. This is the time for lay Christians in Uganda to make a large-scale, resolute commitment to both Church and State. The mission of the laity pertains to the very nature of the Church. Their secular character determines the specificity of their mission.355 Each is a Christian in the world. Certainly, clerics and religious persons are also in the world, but their Christian

353 Ibid., Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church. # 532.
354 Ibid., # 531
355 Ibid. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), # 31. See also: Gaudium et Spes # 43, Decree on Lay Apostolate (Apostolicam Actuositatem) # 2,4,7 and Paul VI’s Evangelii Nuntiandi, # 70-72.
public roles do not very directly affect the actual day to day building up of earthly realities. The laity, on the other hand, have earthly life as their specific mission. The role of the laity, therefore, is to bring about the reign of God in the administration and organization of earthly realities according to the divine plan. Guided by the spirit of the Gospel, they must be in the world like leaven in the dough.\textsuperscript{356}

Consequently, the laity’s service in the world is not purely and simply an earthly service; it is a saving service which is also an ecclesial service. Since the Church is in and for the world, the laity’s earthly service is, at one and the same time, an ecclesial service. Through them, the Gospel and the saving reality of Christianity becomes present in the world. Through them the integration of Christianity and culture is achieved and the incarnation of Christianity in the world of our times also takes place. Thus, the secular service of the laity shares in the sacramental character of the Church as the Sacrament of salvation.

On the basis of this concept of the laity in the Church, we in Uganda should be able to conceive of the Church-world relation on two levels: the place of the laity in the Church, and the laity as messengers of the Good News in the world. They are called to be witnesses in married life and the family, at work and in various professions, in science and the economy, in culture and politics. Ugandan laity are called, precisely on the basis of their lay character, to sanctify Uganda and imbue it with the spirit of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{357} This is the place where they as laity are to make their commitment, in the name of the Gospel, in service to reconciliation, justice and peace.

\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., \textit{Lumen Gentium} \# 31, 36 and \textit{Apostolicam Actuositatem} \# 2,5,7.
\textsuperscript{357} John Paul II. \textit{Christifideles Lacici}, Apostolic Exhortation, 1988, \# 44. See also \textit{Apostolicam Actuositatem} \# 4.
Because the laity have a major role in the evangelization of Uganda, their contribution towards peace in Uganda is essential. In order for them to be successful peacemakers in Uganda, they have to commit themselves wholeheartedly to fight all forms of discrimination in the country. To build a new Uganda on the principle of equality they must transform ethnic sentiments into national patriotism. The Church in Uganda has to ask itself what efforts can be made to ensure that the laity are more aware of their responsibility in economic and political life. It is the duty of the Church leaders to set up those instruments of formation which the laity need so that their temporal commitments will be inspired by the Gospel and the Church’s social doctrine. While it is true that today, in many countries, after the initial impulse given by the Second Vatican Council, we find the Church giving greater attention to the formation of laity, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that very little attention is given to the formation of competent Catholics, that is, people faithful to Christ and highly committed to society.

To contribute effectively to an authentic, dynamic rebirth of Uganda, the Bishops’ Conference needs to evaluate the national pastoral programs to see how to improve them, manage them and maintain them and thus strengthen the Church’s effectiveness and capability in forming an elite group of Catholics capable of exerting a strong influence in the transformation of Uganda for the better. This must be done with the conviction that it will contribute something new in the formation of laity. Just as Pope Benedict XVI puts it, the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as encourage greater readiness to act
accordingly.\textsuperscript{358} This formation of the laity should not neglect fundamental elements such as: mutual respect and acceptance, among individuals, the link between poverty and violence, the need for a good administration of Ugandan national resources, and the recognition of minorities.

\textbf{5.7 Political Holiness (Politics as a Holy Ministry of Service but not as a Dirty Game)}

The Church in Uganda should embark on a prophetic mission of preaching/teaching and helping the government of Uganda and the Ugandan people to understand that politics is a holy mission, not a ‘dirty game’ which can and should be practiced well for the benefit of all the citizens. The common saying that ‘politics is a dirty game’ has a very negative influence in the minds of many Ugandans. They attain political responsibility with a mindset that they are doing a dirty job and they must play it in a dictatorial, violent, cunning, corrupt and irresponsible way. So-far all the Presidents of Uganda from the time of our national Independence to date have used and trusted in the gun more than the votes of the people of Uganda. They have all used the gun to intimidate Ugandans into accepting their leadership and maintaining themselves in power. It is partly because they believe they are in for a dirty game and they must play it dirty to the best of their ability. This wrong understanding of politics must change. We must begin to lead by the power of votes, not by the power of the gun. It is not going to be easy to bring about this transformation and so every capable individual and groups must get involved in bringing about this mental revolution.

\textsuperscript{358} Ibid. Benedict XVII. \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, # 28.
The local Church in Uganda should play its prophetic role to educate Ugandans in developing a correct understanding and attitude toward political responsibilities. The Bishops have to assert and encourage no tolerance of abuse of political power. The local Church must also have the right understanding and attitude toward the world. We must understand the world as a home given to us by God to live in and to care for, so our holiness must be a holiness that does not run away from the struggles of this world. It must be a holiness in the midst of the world that God loved so much (John 3:16), the world to which God sent his Son to save it (John 3:17), the world to which God sends us (Matthew 28:19) to transform into a place where God reigns. The Church must preach political holiness as a holiness that is expressed and channeled through ethical-political virtues such as equality, truthfulness, the struggle for justice and peace, for humans’ civil, political and cultural rights. It should be understood as an outgoing holiness that makes us look out for one another as brothers and sisters with the goal of creating life in abundance for all Ugandans, thus achieving a civilization of love in the full sense of Christ’s mission.

The local Church must teach political responsibility as a vocation to help hasten the coming of God’s reign. Therefore, politics must be conducted with a true sense of holiness bearing in mind that one can attain sainthood politically (political saint). This idea of political holiness is taught and advocated for by Bishop Casaldaliga in the following words:

In essence, it is a holiness-for-the reign, formed by active hope for it, the struggle to make it come, waiting for it as an eschatological event, but one made credible by historical achievements; by the search for instruments to hasten its coming. Here as in other things, the Reign is the reference, the Christian absolute, which gives a new shape to all Christian categories. Where until quite recently spirituality talked about the life of grace, supernatural life, the quest of
perfection, the cultivation of the inner and private virtues.....It is a holiness that confronts the sin of the world, look it in the face, condemns it prophetically and commits itself to correcting it. It does not flee from the world....It goes into the world, gets its hands dirty, gets splashed with mud (and tears and blood). With this holiness believers bear the sin of the world, like the Servant of Yahweh (Isa. 52: 13-53:12). They try to ‘take away the sin of the world’ like the Lamb of God (John 1:29).359

According to Bishop Casaldaliga, for centuries holiness was thought of as something detached from any social or political context. The model of holiness cultivated was the monastic model, a model allegedly a-political and a-historical. However, he argues that according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, political holiness places oneself, consciously and critically, in the social setting of the needy, the poor, the oppressed. Political holiness is explicitly political. It does not claim to be a-political. It does not fall into the trap of believing that you can be non-political or neutral. It is a holiness that has rediscovered the connection between faith and politics.360 We have to encourage in Uganda a kind of spirituality that makes it clear to our people that today holiness is not possible without a commitment to justice, without solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters. Therefore, true holiness which the universal Church teaches for all Christians has to include a social dimension in the transformation of our world according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. As quoted in the work of Casaldaliga, Mahatma Gandhi said, “Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics don’t know anything about religion.”361

359 Ibid. Political Holiness, pp. 176-177.
360 Ibid., pp. 178-179.
361 Ibid., p. 178.
Desmond Tutu said, “There is nothing more political than saying that religion has nothing to do with politics.”\(^{362}\)

The kind of political holiness that the Church must teach in Uganda should be rooted in the priesthood of all the Christians,\(^ {363}\) and it must also emphasize the realistic nature of holiness stressed by the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium*, a holiness that must be worked out in everyday life, in our own situation and with our own responsibilities without making it a secret or a private affair. Traditionally holiness was understood in a very spiritualistic and spiritualized way. But there is no genuine sanctification without real transformation. A sanctification that leaves the world as it is, giving it religious legitimacy, would be kind of blasphemous. The true sanctification of the world should imply its real, tangible transformation to make it more like the reign of God on earth so that the People of God may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). That is why in *Lumen Gentium*, the Council teaches:

> The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one – that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God’s Spirit and, obeying the Father’s voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory. Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love....And those who engage in human work, often of a heavy kind, should perfect themselves through it, help their fellow-citizens, and promote the betterment of the whole of human society and the whole of creation; indeed, with their active charity, rejoicing in hope and bearing one another’s burdens,.....Accordingly all Christians, in the conditions, duties and circumstances of their life and through all these, will sanctify themselves more and more if they receive all things with faith from the hand of the heavenly Father and cooperate with the divine will,

\(^{362}\) Ibid., p. 178.
\(^{363}\) Ibid. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), # 10.
thus showing forth in that temporal service the love with which God has loved the world.\textsuperscript{364}

The Council emphasizes that the faithful must profess the faith they received from God through the Church and they “as true witnesses of Christ, are more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed.”\textsuperscript{365}

### 5.8 Major Areas that need Political Reform

Holiness in general calls upon all capable citizens of Uganda and all people of good will to join hands in making Uganda a better country where human dignity and human rights are protected, honored and respected. This calls for the Government of Uganda to work closely with the local Church to mitigate causes of violent political conflicts in the country. The Church must consider as its pastoral duty some political issues to make sure that they are properly addressed by the Government in order to end wars and avoid the reoccurrence of violent political conflicts in Uganda:

#### 5.8.1 Respect of the Rule of Law

The degree to which the rule of law is respected in Uganda is very important because respect for individual human rights constitutes a major rule of law indicator. People should

\textsuperscript{364} Ibid. # 41.
\textsuperscript{365} Ibid., # 11.
feel secure, in their persons, freedoms of expression, religion, association, and assembly. The Uganda security forces must abide by the rules of the country, rather than operating in an extra-legal manner. The judiciary must be autonomous, impartial, well-versed in the laws of the country, and reasonably just in applying those rules to cases before them. Judges – not prosecutors, state officials, or vigilante groups – must ultimately decide how to apply rules of law in specific cases including, in criminal cases, sentencing. Uganda’s government must establish an independent judiciary in which citizens, irrespective of social status, can expect a fair dispensation of justice without any political interference from those in public positions.

Uganda is still a long way from true constitutionalism; that is, the elimination of intervention by the executive and legislative branches in the administration of justice. Recent trends are not very positive. Increasingly higher courts have intervened in competitive political contests and they have also been subjected to more pressure from the executive branch. Certain high profile political cases are usually referred to military courts. Recently in 2005 and in 2006, a group of armed military personnel known in Uganda as “Black Mambas,” invaded the Uganda High Court when the court was in session, and they intimidated everybody in the building including the judges and even disrespected the court process and rearrested some people (clients) that were granted bail by the court and threw them back into jail. This was an opened broad day light interference with the rule of law/judicial powers by the military in Uganda. This was not a good sign of respect of the rule of law by the military in Uganda. Their berserk action turned the centre of serenity
(the High Court of Uganda), a place where Ugandans go to seek justice, into a theater of war.

Although some progress has been made in establishing the basis for coherent administration at both national and sub-national levels, these efforts are overshadowed by the progressive expansion and deepening of corruption in the government and all other private sectors as the government in Uganda routinely becomes increasingly based on a neo-patrimonial system of legitimization. This brings with it increasing threat to autonomy and undermines the capacity of institutions with sources of legitimacy independent of the executive.

Institutions under such threat include local government, which derives its legitimacy from its direct electoral mandate and responsiveness to local agendas and constitutional bodies such as Parliament and the judiciary whose autonomy and capacity are essential to an effective separation of powers, and ultimately to accountable democratic governance.

5.8.2 Need for Consensus Regarding the Rules of Political Game in Uganda

The Uganda Joint Christian Council must work hard with the Ugandan Government to ensure that there is consensus regarding the rules of the political game in the country. Political rules should be clear to and accepted by all parties. Elections offer an obvious test case of legitimacy: Parties and individuals should be able to compete, confident that results of free and fair contests will be tallied correctly and transparently.
Currently, the degree of social consensus is very poor because of changes in the rules of the political game. Initially the elimination of presidential term limits and the return to multi-party system were complicated considerably by the clear intervention of the Movement first against multi-party politics in the 2000 referendum, and then in favor of it in the 2005 referendum. The use of state resources to support the Movement position in a context where opposing voices were actively de-legitimized and denied active organizational support, coupled with uncertainties related to the extent of voter turnout makes the interpretation of electoral results difficult.

The Uganda Joint Christian Council should note well that “where it has been convenient, the regime of Museveni has been willing and able to alter the rules of the game at will.”366 This tendency is also reflected in the fact that, despite broad legal restrictions on the operation of political parties, Museveni’s Movement-as-party has consistently taken aggressive partisan stances on key policy issues, including both the return to multi-party competition and term limits.

Whether or not there is a broad consensus relating to a preference for electoral democracy, there is clearly growing concern in the country regarding the rules under which partisan electoral contestation will take place in 2011. Although parliament has passed some legal reforms necessary to the implementation of a competitive multi-party system, the ruling NRM government of Museveni remains the sole party with the effective capacity to function overtly on a national scale without fear of sanction. In marked contrast to the exhaustive

public debate and consultation that accompanied the constitutional process, there has been
limited debate or public discussion of the legal framework that will regulate the operation
of political parties, campaign finance, or electoral administration. This lack of rules for
political game must be remedied, because, the growing concern in the country about this
issue is an indication that a storm is gathering that may lead to additional violent political
confrontations in Uganda.

5.8.3 Need for a Fair Political Competition

The Local Church in Uganda needs to do everything it can to help Uganda to level the
political field. Lack of fair play remains one of the major problems that triggers frequent
violent conflict in Uganda. The extent of competition in a political system and, more
broadly, in society as a whole reveals much about the degree of democracy in a society.
Citizens must have both the right and the effective capacity to choose leaders as well as
influence policies and laws. A stable balance of power should prevail within government,
implying competition among the three branches as well as competition between central
and local government actors. Vigorous, fair competition should characterize elections, the
flow and exchange of ideas in the media, and interactions among diverse groups in civil
society. Market competition exists and consumers benefit if economic power is distributed
broadly rather than concentrated in a small group that can restrict people’s choices and
extract monopoly prices.
The political environment in Uganda is increasingly constrained, and this constitutes the preeminent barrier to addressing serious deficiencies across the general administration of government. Competition between institutions, although provided for in the formal division of powers between executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government, has been progressively eroded in practice by the expansion and entrenchment of formal and informal executive powers. Electoral competition has been distorted by the legal and practical dominance of the current government, which has increasingly operated as a dominant single party, while the legal basis for effective political organization and mobilization has been denied parties of the opposition.

Access (direct and indirect) to state resources for mobilization purposes, as well as the support of key presidential appointees at the district level, combine to give Movement candidates an overwhelming advantage in many areas of the country. Finally, the democratic impact of Uganda’s transition from Movement politics to a multiparty electoral regime has been seriously undercut by the linkage of the return to multi-party politics to the removal of presidential term limits. Enabling legislation allowing effective organization by opposition parties has been slow to emerge following the referendum, creating and ambiguous legal context during the lead up to the 2006 elections.

If the country continues in this direction unchecked by the reintroduction of a viable competitive process, the operation of the present system will undermine any progress made to date across a wide spectrum of sectors as resources are redirected for political ends.
5.8.4 Lack of Political Inclusiveness in Uganda

Lack of political inclusion is a problem that continues to brew future conflict in Uganda and this problem needs to be resolved. Political inclusion is critical. Unless all citizens of Uganda enjoy both formal and effective rights to participate in political processes, democracy will be a façade not a reality. Uganda’s record with regard to political inclusion is still poor. This fact is made worse by the government’s persistent inability to find lasting solutions responsive to the needs of key regional and ethnic constituencies. Failure to deal with this problem largely accounts for the persistence of the conflict in northern Uganda and underlies a growing concern about state fragility.

By far the greatest failure of inclusion in Uganda governance relates to the effective political, economic, and social integration of northern Uganda into the body politic. The north (particularly the Acholi districts, but actually the whole of greater northern Uganda, including the Lango districts, West Nile and Karamoja districts) has experienced either de facto martial law or a relative absence of effective state presence for much of the last two decades of NRM leadership in Uganda. The exclusion of the north is, in essence, a two-edged sword, since the failure to address northern grievances of political marginalization in national politics has been among the most salient factors driving persistent conflict in the northern districts of Uganda for the last 22 years. Further, the presence of conflict in the north has provided the current NRM government with a rationale or pretext for the maintenance of a state of emergency that further marginalize the northern region of the
country. The persistence of armed conflict in northern Uganda and its marginalization in national politics impacts northern acceptance of the formal rules of the political game along with economic engagement and service delivery. Under these conditions, the population feels alienated from the rules governing civic participation; hence, perceptions of the current NRM government's illegitimacy are strengthened.

Fragility of governance in Ugandan context is the result of the progressive marginalization of institutions with the capacity to promote credible, consensual, and non-violent solutions to the deep social divisions account for the persistent social conflict that characterizes the country's post-independence history. Seen from this perspective, my concern is that fragility of government will likely increase in Uganda as a whole if the marginalization of northern Uganda, combined with the progressive centralization and personalization of power in the presidency is not reversed. Thus, whether or not the present conflict centering on the LRA rebels is resolved militarily, unresolved grievances among the people of northern Uganda will very likely persist, and it appears unlikely that the present regime will be motivated to devote significant resources to resolving them, short of significant local and international pressure to do so. Unresolved, northern feelings of marginalization will have the potential to be expressed either in the form of new violent movements or, in the context of a return to true and fair multi-party politics, in the form of increasingly explicit ethnic political organization.

In the north, the state's failure to deliver either effective security or basic services has tended to deepen an already severe legitimacy deficit rooted in the deep north-south
divisions that characterized Uganda’s post independence history. As a consequence, in the north, both state capacity and legitimacy are in question. To solve the problem of marginalization, an aggressive democratization of Uganda through constitutional arrangements that gives every constituent group a say in governance at the local and national levels would give every group a sense of national belonging and ensure a fair delivery of public services.

In the southern part of Uganda, the nature of governmental fragility, to the extent that it may be said to exist, is quite different and stems from the progressive erosion of democratic institutions and processes and the consolidation of military, economic, and political power in the presidency. Together, these tendencies have sharpened political divisions and undermined the legitimacy of state institutions which, rather than being perceived as neutral structures of national governance, are increasingly viewed as the personal tools of an increasingly isolated and corrupt ruling clique.

For about twenty three years now Uganda has seen the progressive consolidation of what Joel Barkan and others have termed a “neo-patrimonial regime – one dominated by an individual leader whose personal authority is indistinguishable from that of the state, in which political power is maintained through a combination of patronage and selective use of intimidation and force.”367 This trend was also identified as a risk by the Democracy Governance assessment team, which noted in 2000 “with apprehension that ....the current

regime has been in place for several years now, and that there appears to have been a loss of momentum on solving the remaining issues of democratic consolidation."\textsuperscript{368}

The 2000 assessment also drew attention to a tendency to manipulate democratic reforms (e.g., the 2000 constitutional referendum) for purposes of regime legitimization and suggested that the regime’s behavior during the referendum campaign “exhibited many of the telltale signs of a drift towards the logic of a one-party state, with the active mobilization of the Movement and the intimidation of the opposition.”\textsuperscript{369} Therefore, unless an element of meaningful competition is introduced in Uganda, we should expect such negative trends to continue and deepen as dissatisfaction deepens and the system becomes progressively less able to resolve inherent tensions.

Such a dangerous political atmosphere in Uganda calls upon our local Church to put pressure on the Ugandan government to avoid exclusivism, the consolidation of power in the presidency or patrimonialism, because this is yet another way of brewing more conflicts and instability. It is a pastoral problem that must be tirelessly addressed by the Catholic Bishops’ conference and Uganda Joint Christian Council until some fair regional balance and sharing of power is achieved in the Government of Uganda.

5.8.5 The Danger of Military Involvement in Uganda’s Politics

\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., p. 5.
From 1962 when Uganda got its independence to the current NRM Government, the military has remained a key institution in Uganda. The disproportionate role of the military in Ugandan politics has always thwarted the development of independent civilian institutions. Because President Museveni came to power by military means as a rebel leader, the military has remained the essential deciding factor, the judge of political conflicts, diminishing the growth of civilian institutions of representation and participation. Facing the dilemma of the military's centrality in politics, the Uganda Constitution of 1995 prohibited the military from engaging in partisan political activity, but at the same time, the NRM government carved out special seats for the military in parliament, most of which went to the founders of the NRM.

The open voting method introduced in parliament to guarantee passage of the constitutional amendments placed the military representatives in an awkward position, forcing them to choose between their constitutional obligation to remain non-partisan and their obligations to obey orders through the military chain of command. During the controversial parliamentary vote that allowed Museveni to run for president for the third time, the military representatives in parliament who strayed from the Museveni ruling government line were hounded out of parliament for indiscipline and insubordination. Brigadier General Tumukunde, the former Director General of Internal Security Organization, landed in a military court after he threatened not to vote with government on abolishing presidential term limits. Colonel Fred Bogere, another military representative, who abstained from the vote, charging that, as a member of the armed forces, he wanted to avoid partisanship. He was subsequently stripped of his seat in parliament and indicted in a military court for disobedience. The Army Commander, General
Aronda Nyakairima reiterated that the army would not tolerate its representatives who vote against its decisions in parliament, claiming that the army Members of Parliament do not have individual views but must present those of their electorate, the Army Council.\textsuperscript{370}

Possibly as a hedge against growing concern and uncertainty over military support, Museveni’s Government has boosted the capacity of the formerly Presidential Protection Unit into a full brigade now known as `Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB). It is made up of elite forces headed by President Museveni’s son, Major Muhwezi Kainerugaba. This military brigade is made up of over 7,000 soldiers, mainly loyal men and women from the Presidents’ tribe or ethnic group. There have been complaints that this brigade is getting better weapons, training, and resources than the regular army. Some critics allege that President Museveni seeks to strengthen the brigade to guarantee that the disaffected elements of the military will not mount a successful coup against him. Recently, opposition parties have put the issue of disbanding the brigade at the top of their reform agenda, charging that its creation heightens instability and signals pending future conflict in Uganda. As it overshadows the regular army, the PGM represents the militarization of politics in Uganda as usual.\textsuperscript{371} Given its links to Museveni and NRM, there is considerable uncertainty in Uganda regarding the future role of the military in politics. A genuine democracy in Uganda should assert clear civilian control of the military as well as its effective de-politicization and transformation into a non-partisan institution.

Another important area of concern that the Bishops’ conference and the Uganda Joint Christian Council should direct their pastoral attention is, the potential role of the military

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\textsuperscript{370} Ibid. USAID, Democracy and Governance in Uganda, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., p. 25.
\end{flushright}
in responding to election-related violence, before or during hotly contested elections or in the event of a contested electoral outcome. Since Ugandan civilian police structures are consistently under-trained and under-funded in favor of expenditures on the military, it is usually the military that is called on in the event of any significant civil unrest or sometimes by mixing the military with the police when there is such unrest. Military commanders are usually faced with largely the same choice that faces military representatives in the parliament—whether to exercise their mandate to maintain security in a non-partisan manner or to enforce the directives of a command structure dominated by the NRM ruling government. Since military and civilian policing functions are considerably different and require different tactics, a reliance on the military to respond to election-related civil unrest greatly increases the escalation of violence. Therefore, the Uganda Joint Christian Council must advocate for a serious rehabilitation, restructuring and empowering of Uganda’s police department so that they (not the military) can take control of enforcing the law in the Uganda.

5.8.6 Need to Empower the Civil Society

The parliament of Uganda must work harder to empower the civil society of Uganda because it has been so badly trampled underfoot by the military for the almost fifty years since the countries’ Independence in 1961. If we want a more stable country, the Church must encourage and help the government to focus most of its attention and resources to building and empowering the civil society and not to spend too much money on the military. This is the direction that can be counted on to bear the fruits of peace and provide
real political stability and development in the long-run. The civil society is very important because it is the system that works as a body to promote and build peace. For a system to survive, the different elements have to act as a whole toward achieving some common goal and objectives. Civil society is a broad concept that includes all the organizations that occupy that intermediate realm between the family and the State.

If civil society is to effectively and efficiently develop a culture of sustainable peace in Uganda, it has to be empowered legally by the government. It has to be educated about human rights and guided by Uganda’s legal system to identify peace as one of its priority objectives and act as a system, properly organized, and coordinated to provide the desired output of sustainable peace. To be effective in peace building, each organization within civil society should be conscious of itself as one element in the whole system of peace building and realizing that their activity, their actions or words will affect either positively or negatively the efforts of others.

To build a culture of sustainable peace in Uganda, we have to adopt a systematic way of thinking. This requires that all our civil systems should look at the whole of Uganda, analyze its history, peoples, and problems. And with an integral picture of Uganda, begin to work for peace in their respective area of operation; rather than tackling the problems of each district or region in isolation. Because civil society contains an intrinsic potential for conflict prevention and peace building, and consequently for contributing to better governance, the government should see to it that all branches of civil organization in
Uganda, directly or at least indirectly aim at constructively impacting Uganda’s political life by working to foster honest, transparent, and accountable democratic procedures.

Civil organizations in Uganda should be encouraged and supported to impact political life and governance by taking interest in and being informed of the state’s performance and the behavior and actions of public officials. Since peace is an essential prerequisite for political stability, economic development, social harmony and national unity, civil organizations in Uganda should make conflict prevention and peace building a high priority that underlies and infiltrates all their objectives and activities. In fact to attain sustainable peace in Uganda, all civil organizations should incorporate an effective conflict prevention and peace building strategy into all their programs and development projects. And finally, Uganda as a country should develop a national strategy and policy on conflict resolution. National policy must promote and protect the participation of the civil society in consensual conflict management and take into consideration the interest of all social groups based on a realistic analysis of the causes of conflicts. National policy on conflict resolution should encourage civil society to focus on socio-political reconciliation and equitable development. The policy should also encourage and hold the media accountable (especially the local media) for ensuring the dissemination of objective information and encouraging conciliatory gestures in society.

In conclusion, I believe that the manner and means for achieving true peace and human development in Uganda is solidarity. This concerns the active and responsible participation of all in public life, from individual citizens to various groups, from labor unions to political
parties. All of us, and each of us are the goal of public life as well as its leading participants. As John Paul II puts it, this solidarity should be “a firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all.”372 So the Christians in Uganda working together with all those that truly seek peace, those serving in specific organization as well as national and international institutions, ought to promote an extensive work of education intended to defeat the ruling culture of egoism, hate, vendetta and hostility, and thereby to develop the culture of solidarity at every level of government and society. Such solidarity is in fact, “the way to peace and at the same time to development.”373

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373 Ibid., # 39.
5.9 General Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was to identify the causes of frequent violent political conflicts in Uganda and also to study the role of the Church in the wars in Uganda, and find out if the Church is playing its prophetic role as it should in building the people of Uganda into a united and peaceful people. I did this by identifying the major causes of conflict in the country and by studying the achievement and failure of the Church in Uganda in peacemaking beginning from the founding of Christianity in the country to the present time. Violent conflicts have ravaged much of Uganda since its independence in 1962. The protracted nature of the wars has created new conflict dynamics, with many of the war’s horrific consequences such as mass displacement, perceived war economy, and a military response that often fails to protect the people – having turned into reasons for its continuation. With the population blaming the conflicting parties for such suffering, the ensuing lack of trust has led to intense three-way tension between the rebels, the civilian population, and the Government of Ugandan.

I devoted chapter one to the agonizing story of the wars/violent political conflicts in Uganda in order to give to the reader a more vivid picture of what this dissertation is dealing with. I also located Uganda and briefly described the people of Uganda for a reader who is not familiar with Uganda and its people. Then I described in some details the origin and the nature of the wars in Uganda, especially the ongoing LRA war in the northern part of Uganda which has turned out to be the longest running and the most destructive conflict...
in the history of Uganda as a country. I described how the war started, how they conduct the war, how they keep building their fighting force by abducting people especially children, because they are easy to deal with and can be indoctrinated to do whatever they are told to do.

My study also came up with the following causes of wars in Uganda:

The impact of colonialism and the partition of Africa by Europeans which did not pay much attention to the “natural” or then existing political structures, cultural and anthropological needs of Africans themselves and also Neo – Patrimonialism, in which the system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions. In this system, support is ensured by clientelism, a relationship of exchange in which a superior provides security for an inferior who as a client then provides political support for his patron. According to this system the government is under no obligation to allocate benefits according to recognized criteria such as justice or efficiency or need, it may do so at its own discretion to encourage political support.

Bad/Poor colonial economic policy of the British. They encouraged and also discouraged economic growth in some parts of Uganda. For example, they turned the central and south central part of Uganda into a cash crop growing area, but they made the northern and the western parts of Uganda into labor reserves, from where they recruited soldiers, policemen and workers for factories and plantations in the south.
I pointed out that the army has proved to be a menace and the most powerful force in Uganda. The army in Uganda like in most African countries is not a national army in the real sense of the word and they are not disciplined enough to respect and protect the people of Uganda. They are not an independent institution, they are kind of owned by the ruling leader and they are manipulated by those in power to do their will such as to help the ruling party rig national elections and to intimidate or even actually “eliminate” some political opponents.

I also identified “tribalism” and nepotism as one of the remote causes of violent conflict in Uganda. The deep-seated division between the people of northern and southern Uganda has engendered a fear of being dominated by either region’s group, and that fear serves as a barrier to national unity. The north – south divide is symptomatic of other regional divisions that exist throughout the country.

Another very important long term cause of violent political conflicts in Uganda that I identified in chapter one is a history of violence and impunity in the country. Uganda’s post colonial history of violent coups, numerous armed rebellions and a lack of accountability for such violence provides the critical background to the common political conflicts in the country. Basically all the regimes in Uganda past and present have violated human rights. Many of the perpetrators of those crimes got away with impunity, and thus, created a trend for successive governments to hunt down and exact extra-judicial revenge on soldiers and civilian populations associated with the ousted regimes. This practice culminated in a cycle
of fear, hate, anger, mistrust, and violent vengeance which serves to entrench prejudices that had since the colonial period, labeled and split Ugandans along regional and “tribal” lines. I laid out that such a culture of impunity also made recourse to violence the easy and “normal” method of retaining or gaining access to and control of state power in Uganda. Thus, such political repression carried out by each regime and the undisciplined army has become a symptom of a culture of revenge and exclusion entrenched by historical incidents under various regimes.

I noted that poor and inadequate formal education in Uganda is one of the causes of conflict in the country. I pointed out that the right to knowledge and awareness is basic for the realization of human rights because an ignorant person is not aware of the existence of human rights he or she is entitled to. The Government of Uganda must therefore do a lot more to provide quality education to its people because education is primordial in the development of a country, it is a prerequisite for civilization. This lack of quality education in the country prompted me to strongly feel that even our elected members of Parliament (the law making body of Uganda), that should represent the cream of our intelligentsia are also suffering from the same lack of quality education. I reached this conclusion because to the best of my knowledge, the Parliament of Uganda has not stood up against disunity in Uganda. They as a body have never categorical condemned “tribalism” or “regionalism.” They have not seriously taken upon the duty of building Uganda into a nation by passing laws that promote unity and punish the “disease” of “tribalism” or “nepotism.” I strongly
suggest that the President of Uganda and the Parliament must discuss and find ways of
promoting unity and the spirit of nationalism in the country.

I also considered inconsistency between faith and life style as another cause of conflict in
Uganda. I should say this responsibility fall squarely on the Church in Uganda. The life style
of many Ugandans do not correspond to their Christian faith. The spirit of love, forgiveness
and reconciliation is lacking among the people of Uganda. On the contrary the spirit of
revenge is very strong among the people. I discussed this is issue in chapter one as a
serious pastoral problem that must be addressed by the Churches in Uganda because it is a
contradiction to the nature of our Christian faith.

I have also identified the evil of corruption as one of the long term causes of violence in
Uganda. In the same line with inconsistency between Christian faith and our life style, I
discussed the evil of corruption as another thing that contradicts who we are as Christians.
This is a real problem and it is an irregularity that needs to be addressed pastorally and
legislatively because the very high level of corruption in Uganda prevents the poor, the
weak and the voiceless in the country from getting what they need from such a system. The
whole government is infected by corruption and cannot render needed services to the
citizens hence causing tension and violent political conflicts as people struggle to find
means of survival. This is a sign that ours is not yet a Christian society as it should be.
Disunity between Catholics and Protestants is one of the major pastoral problems that I discussed at length in both chapter one and two. This conflict which the Catholic and the Anglican Churches in Uganda inherited from the founding missionaries during the colonial time is still one of the corner stone of political instability in Uganda. In this concluding section, I would like to emphasize that the Catholics and the Protestants need to learn to work together to build peace in Uganda. The two main Churches must give a common witness to the teachings of Jesus Christ in Uganda. We all need a peaceful atmosphere in Uganda in order for us to do our work well as Churches. Without peace in the country none of us can make any meaningful progress as a Church. When it comes to the issue of working for peace, both the Catholic and the Anglican Churches in Uganda must put aside their differences and fears of each other and work together in unison as Christians to face the challenges of building a peaceful Uganda which we all desperately need.

If the two main Churches in Uganda learn to work together for peace, then it will also be a lot easier for them to make a second step forward in working together with other none Christian faiths like the Muslims for the purpose of building a peaceful Uganda. In chapter two I gave an example of how powerful ecumenical and interreligious efforts can be if the Catholics work together with the Anglicans and other religious leaders including the Muslims. The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) which is based in northern Uganda and is made up of leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, Greek Orthodox Churches, and leaders of Islamic religion. This is a very powerful group that managed to put pressure on the Government of Uganda and the rebels as well as on non-governmental organizations,
and also internationally. These religious leaders were very instrumental in lobbying for the peace talks that made the rebels (LRA) and the Government of Uganda to sign an agreement for the cessation of hostilities which is currently being observed by both parties. The fruit of their ecumenical and inter-religious efforts has brought a lot of joy and peace to the people of northern Uganda who are now beginning to resettled and rebuild their lives.

With the above example of cooperation for peace in mind, I would like to strongly recommend in this conclusion that the religious leaders in Uganda especially leaders of the two main Churches (Catholics and the Anglicans), should better begin to study and plan how to work together at a national level for peace building in Uganda. The Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) must be strengthened and taken more seriously in all possible ways so that it can become more effective in working for peace in Uganda. The member Bishops of this council must reorganize and strength this council to become a very powerful voice and an instrument for peace building in Uganda. The member Churches of this council must find ways of funding, training personnel, and staffing their offices with qualified people who know how to do a better job for a peaceful future in Uganda.

Above all I would like to suggest that the Bishops of the Catholic, the Anglican, and the Greek Orthodox Churches should study and seek the possibility of them beginning to do a general joint conference at list once a year or as regularly as needed to discuss and find ways of bring peace to Uganda. This should not really be a council or a forum for doctrinal battle or for the usual selfish motives that prevent the Catholics and the Anglicans from
working together in Uganda. It also should not be a council for finger pointing. It should be a forum in which the Catholic and the Anglican Churches acknowledge the negative things they did historically and currently that has made and is still making peace very elusive in Uganda. Then from there, they should move on to plan how to witness together to the teachings of Jesus Christ in Uganda. They should regularly issue joint statements to educate the people of Uganda and also to confront the political and social situation of the country. The conference must regularly meet to evaluate their work to see the progress and the failures of their joint efforts and to address new issues as needed.

Through this joint conference, the Bishops can iron out a lot of political and social issues and other reforms that need to be done in Uganda. I believe that their joint statements will be more powerful and acceptable to most Ugandans and it will make it more difficult for Ugandan political leaders to play their usual game of putting the two main Churches against each other in order for them to gain some political capital that always end up causing more conflicts in Uganda.

By advocating for a joint conference of the main Christian Churches in Uganda, I am in no way undermining or suggesting that the usual individual conferences of the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Bishops be abolished. Those conferences should continue as usual because they are very necessary for the individual life and ministry of those Churches as well as for the general needs of the whole country and the universal Church. However, it will be important that both the individual and joint conferences continue to systematically
teach and echo peacemaking throughout Uganda. At this moment I consider the joint effort of the main Christian Churches as a special pastoral mission for building a peaceful Uganda. We may not need this joint conference in future if we succeed to build a strong, mature and stable democracy in Uganda. As of now, we really need the joint effort of all the Christians and even the non Christians in order to build a peaceful Uganda.

Politicization of religious institutions is another point of weakness in Uganda that I said must be addressed by both the Ugandan Parliament and the Churches. The atmosphere in Uganda has always been influenced by religio-political rivalry. I discussed in chapter two that the politicization of religious institutions creates a new domain of conflict and further undermines the building of a peaceful national consensus. Worst of all, politicization of the Church makes it very difficult for the Church to play its prophetic role as a teacher of the truth, unity, and as a pacifier.

Lack of good lay leadership is another point that I discussed in chapter two. Not enough has been done by the Church in Uganda to prepare competent leaders. Since most of the best schools and universities in the country are still Church founded, I urge the Church and the government to cooperate in the training of competent, discipline, and God fearing future leaders who will help build a more peaceful Uganda. From the earliest days of the Church in Uganda, the missionaries (especially Catholic missionaries) did very little to train and encourage the lay people to join politics. In fact many of them described politics as a dirty game and therefore, they discouraged their parishioners from active participation in it.
How can the Gospel values infiltrate and influence the political arena and the Ugandan society at the grass-root level if we discourage the lay people from actively participating in politics. All the Church need to do is to give a total integrated formation to the lay people and they will be able to do a better job politically.

Another point that I raised in chapter three is the need for reconciliation in Uganda. Over forty years of conflict and political instability has wounded and left most of the people of Uganda very traumatized. This calls for a nationwide effort toward reconciliation to bring healing and put the country on the right road to full recovery and peace. I suggest that the Church in Uganda should take the lead in calling upon the Government of Uganda and working together with our public leaders to make this national reconciliation a reality. It is the vocation and ministry of the Church on earth to reconcile us with one another when things have gone wrong. The Christian theology of reconciliation and peacebuilding is rooted in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ who became one of us through the mystery of the incarnation in order to reconcile us to God. Jesus Christ entrusted this ministry to us his disciples (the Church) and we are expected to continue with this work throughout our lives (2 Corinthians 5: 17-20).

In chapter three I also discussed the Church’s need to help create structures that will liberate Ugandans from poverty because poverty is another cause of conflicts. The fight against poverty comes under the general program for human promotion that takes a holistic approach favoring formation of conscience as means to real development. It is
through the evangelizing mission that the Church in Uganda can give its most important contribution in this area. The gospel is capable of forming the conscience against injustices and to change structures that hinder human development. I also emphasized that the message of the gospel is capable of destroying the evil in us and giving the light and energy necessary for realizing genuine development.

Another important point that I suggested in chapter three is the introduction of peace education in schools. Peaceful resolution of conflicts between individuals and communities must be taught in Ugandan schools so that Ugandans can begin to learn how to resolve conflict and be peace loving people from childhood to their adulthood. Personal attitudes of justice, sensitivity to others, freedom from prejudice, tolerance, ability to negotiate, compromise and solidarity are important preconditions for peace that needs to be cultivated in the citizens of Uganda right from their childhood all the way through their college education. This is a long process, but it bears the most fruit when the system matures.

In connection with early formation in schools, I also suggested that the family has a big role in shaping a peaceful future for Uganda. The Christian family is known by Vatican Council II as a ‘domestic church’ because of the role it plays in the evangelization of the world. I suggested that the Church in Uganda should focus more of its pastoral attention and resources to the Christian families as a long term solution to preparing a peaceful future for Uganda. The family is the first place where we learn to love and forgive other human
beings. It is the first place where Christian values are taught to the children before they can get out into the world to interact with other human beings. So the function of the family as the first teacher of the new members of our nations/human society expresses the true vocation and mission of Christian parents. Therefore, the Church and the Government of Uganda must invest in the family by protecting and promoting the perennial values of the family as the first school of love and civilization.

In chapter four I discussed the theological and pastoral reasons for the Church’s involvement in peacemaking. I stipulated that the mandate of the Church to publicly get involved in peacemaking flows directly from God himself. I traced this mandate by going back to the Old Testament teachings, through the New Testament and into the official current teachings of the Church. I found that God has always been concern for the welfare of his people. God always intervened into the social and political situation of his people to provide for them and defend them when needed. Throughout the Old Testament God was moved with pity and responded to cry of his people against their oppressors. From Genesis to Revelation we find that the God of the Judeo-Christian religion has deep concern for his people. I pointed out that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob created human beings with dignity in his own image to share in his beatific vision, that is, in his eternal joy and peace (Genesis 1: 26-30).

Throughout the time of Moses, Joshua and the Judges, God was moved to action to free his people from oppression, and gave them back their dignity (Exodus 3: 7-10). During the
time of the Kings, Yahweh lived as King among his people, showing them the way and defended his people against the excesses of the powerful (II Samuel 11-12).

I also traced out that during the time of the prophets God defended his people through the prophets by exposing and denouncing injustice in the political and economic structures of the society (Amos 2: 6-7; 8: 4-7). And through his prophets God promised to send to the world a Prince of Peace who will establish a kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace (Isaiah 35: 3-6).

Thus, the prophets introduced to the people of God Jesus Christ the peacemaker, the one who challenges the power structures that perpetuate injustices against the people of God. The Church received its vocation and mission for peacemaking from its founder Jesus Christ. This truth is in the Holy Bible and has always been taught by the Church.

I concluded chapter four by discussing the sacramental peacemaking mission of the Church as rooted in the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is the sacrament of love, peace, unity, mutual self-giving and universal oneness. The Eucharist invites Christians to live a life of sharing. It motivates justice and humble services in each one of us. Just as Jesus Christ shared his body and blood with humanity, he now challenges all Christians to go and do the same. Those who partake in the Eucharistic celebrations have a greater responsibility to humanize the
world and make it a better place by reconciling human beings in conflict with one another and with God.

Finally, I concluded my dissertation in chapter five by discussing practical pastoral plans of action that will reduce violence and help build a more peaceful country if adopted by the Church in Uganda and also if it is implemented by the Government of Uganda. I pointed out that the situation in Uganda needs some kind of re-evangelization because what I may call the first “wave” of evangelization initiated by the missionaries made most of the people of Uganda into Christians but it did not go far enough to emphasize that Christians must practice/witness to their faith daily in words and actions and in all aspects of their lives. The first “wave” of evangelization did not do much to imprint into the minds and hearts of Ugandans the fundamental teaching of the Church that promotion of justice and peace is the base of evangelization. The re-evangelization of Ugandans must bring the Good News to all strata of humanity. It must cause a positive impact in the structures and values of Uganda and in its people. It is the positive impacts on the culture and way of life of the people that proves the effectiveness of evangelization and it indicates that God is reigning in the hearts and minds of the people of Uganda.

I also emphasized that the responsibility of promoting justice and peace falls primarily on the Bishops of Uganda individually and as a conference. They should manifest genuine determination in finding solutions to problems affecting Uganda and they should be ready to take a stand when fundamental human rights are violated. I stated that they must be genuine and impartial reconcilers without preconceptions in matters of justice and peace.
I also discussed the importance of the National and Diocesan offices of Justice and Peace. I emphasized that Vatican Council II instituted the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace with its branches in the dioceses all around the world including in Uganda to be instruments of the Church for the promotion of justice and peace. I suggested that the Catholic conference of Bishops in Uganda must see to it that the various branches and offices of Justice and Peace are fully and truly operating as intended by the Vatican.

I concluded chapter five by recommending major areas that need political reform. I called upon the Government and the Church and all people of good will in Uganda to join hands in making reforms where needed so that we can find ways to build peace in Uganda. Respect for the rule of law is one of the major areas that need reform because the degree to which the rule of law is respected in a country, indicate the level of respect for the dignity of human life and the protection of human rights. I also called upon the Uganda Joint Christian Council to work with the government to make sure that there are fair and transparent rules of political game in the country. And, I called for the building of a stronger civil society in order to avoid military involvement in Uganda’s politics. We certainly need a strong and discipline army that is ready to defend the people and the country of Uganda but their involvement into the daily politics of Uganda must be avoided. The government must spend more of its resources in building a stronger civil society if we want true peace and a stable Uganda.
To cap it all, I should say that throughout this dissertation I attempted to present to the reader a vivid picture of the situation in Uganda and in truth I can conclude that we need a lot of prayer and hard work to turn the situation around. In the process of writing this dissertation, it became more and more clear to me that I am dealing with a very vast topic that has a lot to be written and needs a lot more space that cannot all fit in the limited scope of a dissertation. More research needs to be done and more details will have to be brought out later in the form of books because it is true that this dissertation is dealing with a moving target. The wars and the political conflicts in Uganda is still ongoing and so things keep changing, the political conflict keep changing its form like an amoeba. The fact that the conflict is still ongoing should not discourage academic efforts to study the conflict itself and come up with suggestions and ways to bring peace in Uganda.


Benedict XVI. *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love).* Encyclical Letter, 2006.


_________. *Be Converted and Live.* Pastoral Letter, 1981.


______. *Ut Unum Sint (That they may all be One).* Encyclical Letter, 1995.


Pius XI. *Quadragesimo Anno (On Reconstructing the Social Order)*. Encyclical Letter, 1931.


APPENDIX: A Glossary of Acholi/Ugandan Words Used in the Dissertation

**Bafaransa** (This is a Luganda word for) = The French

**Bangereza** (This is a Luganda word for) = The English

**Kabaka** (This is a Luganda word for) = King

**Kabaka Yekka** (These are Luganda words for) = The King alone

**Kacoke Madit** (These are Acholi words for) = A big meeting or a conference

**Lakwena** (This is an Acholi word for) = Messenger

**Lapii** (This is an Acholi word for) = Justification

**Malaiika** (This is a Kiswahili/Acholi word for) = Angel

**Muyekera** (This is a Luganda word for) = Rebel

**Nalubaale** (This is a Luganda name for) = Lake Victoria

**Tipu Maleng** (These are Acholi words for) = Holy Spirit

**Wod** (This is an Acholi word for) = Son

**Won** (This is an Acholic word for) = Father