

RELIGIOUS-POLITICAL WARS IN UGANDA (1888-1892)

These took the form of suspicion, rivalry and war between the Catholics, Protestants, Moslems and Traditionalists. All these were centered in Buganda Kingdom, although their effects spread to the rest of Uganda.

They were caused by a number of factors among which include the following.

The death of Kabaka Mutesa 1 in 1884 left a leadership vacuum in Buganda Kingdom and this created room for religious rivalry.

The rise to power of the Kabaka Mwanga at the age of 18 years and inexperienced in leadership made him fail to effectively handle the religious matters in the kingdom. Mwanga re-invited the missionaries back into Buganda but he failed to control their activities.

Mwanga's desire to assert authority over all sections of people in the kingdom provoked him into killing some of them, especially the disobedient Christian converts and this sparked off the conflict.

Buganda's autocracy in which the king had unquestionable powers partly explains the killing of the Christians and the eventual Christian rivalry against Mwanga.

Mwanga's unethical character such as homosexuality which was denounced by the young Christians following their new faith aroused conflict with the king.

The ill advice to Mwanga by Buganda's Prime Minister Mukasa against Christianity provoked Mwanga's mistreatment of Christians hence the conflict.

Buganda's traditional belief that a foreigner from the East would erode their independence led to the death of Bishop Hannington and this contributed to the conflict.

Buganda's desire to preserve their cultural heritage against Christian Missionary erosion threw the teachers into conflict with the traditionalists in Buganda.

Disobedience among the pages, rejecting calls to serve in the palace shrines and eat to meat offered to the gods threw them into conflict with the king, thus leading to the war.

Early differences between foreign religions of Catholics, Protestants and Moslems that naturally competed over converts resulted into the war.

Imperialistic desires of the foreign religions that represented political interests of their home countries aroused fear among Buganda's traditionalists, hence leading to the conflict.

The unhealthy teachings of the religions against one another as unreal, unholy and ungodly, caused suspicion and mistrust among them leading to the religious wars in Buganda.

There was also struggle for more converts by each religion against the other in one region which attracted unhealthy competition against each other, resulting into conflicts.

The struggle for political favors from Buganda kingdom by each religion explains the overthrow of certain kings and installation of others by different religious group hence leading to the 1888 wars in Buganda.

Christian disagreement over the distribution of political offices in Buganda in the period 1888 led to the Wafaransa - wangeleza war.

Buganda's desire to protect her independence against European imperialism led to the disagreement with the teachers, hence the wars.

The undefined religious position of Kabaka Mwanga presented himself as both a catholic and protestant, keeping the two religious faiths in conflict.

The influence of Arab Muslims who continuously denounced Christianity as imperialistic, threw it into conflict with the Buganda Kingdom.

The 1889- 1890 Islamisation strategy on Buganda caused Islam to be in conflict and fighting with the Christians.

The influence of captain Lugard who in 1890 allied with the Protestants and equipped them with guns to fight the Catholics intensified the religious wars in the region.

GENERAL EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICTS IN BUGANDA

Many people especially Africans died during the chaos of fighting, spying and mistrust. It is said that over 200 people lost their lives.

There was destruction of property which was characterized by the burning of churches, Bibles and other Christian literature as well as Christian homes.

The religious wars were featured by detention of people without trial as one religious group sought for artificial dominancy over the other.

They caused instability of people who as a result preferred to leave Buganda region for safety of their lives.

The conflict caused family and clan disintegration and disagreements based on religious affiliation of a person as people followed different religious groups.

Buganda was divided basing on religious lines. For example, 11 counties were given to the Protestants, 8 to the Catholics and 1 to the Moslems.

Arab Moslems used the conflict to exploit Buganda's resources. They fuelled the conflict to secure more market for their guns within the region.

The conflicts fuelled the spreading of foreign religions which led to the erosion of the African culture in Buganda.

The conflicts led the British declaration of the rest of Uganda as their protectorate in 1894 after being pushed by some missionaries. Thus Uganda lost her independence.

The wars destabilized Buganda's political order of monarchism as different religions deposed and installed different kings of their choice.

The wars laid a basis for the signing of the 1900 Buganda agreement which was used to check on the Powers of the king who traditionally held absolute powers.

EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICTS ON THE CHURCH

They served to popularize the church in Buganda and Uganda as a whole, thereby diverting public attention towards the Christian cause.

The conflicts attracted financial support to the Christian cause in Buganda which boosted their efforts to spread Christianity.

They attracted the British interest to give protection to the missionaries in Uganda which enabled them to spread the gospel with ease.

The conflicts brought artificial unity between the Catholics and the Protestants which was very important in the spread of the church in Buganda.

The wars weakened Mwanga's aggression against the missionaries and this gave them room to spread the gospel even further.

The wars ended in the colonization of Buganda and Uganda as a whole which enabled easy spread of the church.

The wars scattered many believers into different parts of Buganda and Uganda who continued spreading the church wherever they went.

They aroused competition among the different religious groups, a factor that motivated them to spread the church at all costs and all times.

The war produced aggressive and committed Christian converts who were highly inspired to spread the gospel. Such people like Apollo Kivebulaya took on evangelization mission.

The wars produced the Christian martyrs, who out of their heroic actions attracted a big following into the Church.

They resulted into the division of Buganda counties along religious lines for harmony, thus proving a peaceful and favorable environment for the spread of the church.

They ended the king's persecution of the Christians, with Mwanga himself joining the church which was a very positive factor in the spread of the church.

The wars caused defeat of Islam into Buganda, a factor that left Christianity the only religious faith admirable in the region.

Religious wars inspired more missionaries into Buganda to support their colleagues thereby boosting the number of Christian teachers.

The wars led to increased missionary protection, thus providing them with security which facilitated evangelization.

Missionaries established numerous social institutions like schools and health centers which attracted more Africans into the church.

They effected British control over Buganda, recognizing the church as a state institution and this favored the spread of the church.

Negatively, the wars led to loss of lives of some Christians which reduced on the Christian congregation in the church.

The brutal times of 1885-1888 served to scare away some potential Christians for fear of losing their lives.

Some Christians were imprisoned by the Moslems in 1888-1889 which threatened potential church followers.

The conflicts were characterized by great insecurity which forced many people into exile and created a poor environment for the spread of the church.

The wars aroused the spread of Islam in Buganda to outcompete Christianity. During this period of Islamisation of Buganda, Church property was destroyed and Bibles burnt, all of which undermined the spread of the gospel.

The wars revealed the imperial mission of the teachers hence conflicting with the traditionalists in Buganda which interfered with the spread of the church.

The wars resulted into instability and confusion among Africans which made it difficult for the missionaries to approach them with the gospel.

Revision questions;

1. (a) Account for the W'fransa and Wa'ngeleza wars in Buganda.
(b) What were the effects of these wars on the people of Uganda up to 1962?
2. (a) Describe the Christian missionary activities in Buganda before 1900.
(b) What were the results of their activities during the same period?

CHRISTIANITY AND COLONIALISM

The spread of Christian missionary activities in East Africa was closely related to colonial influence. In areas where Christian missionaries rushed and easily established themselves, colonialism was accepted easily. That is why some scholars have concluded that Christian missionaries might have been agents of imperialism.

Missionaries softened the hearts of the Africans to accept European influence, thus making colonial work easy. They did this through the use of Christian teachings like; 'All authority comes from God.'

Missionaries produced the first sketch maps of East Africa which guided the colonialists as they shared East African territories. For example, the first sketch map was drawn by Jacob Erhardt who was a German missionary and explorer who worked in East Africa and India.

Christian missionaries invited their home countries to come and colonize Uganda and this was at the end of the W'fransa - Wangereza wars in Buganda. Thus, Uganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894.

Christian missionaries were instruments of divide and rule. They divided Africans along religious lines, making it difficult for them to unite and fight colonialism.

They reported a lot about the economic opportunity that existed in East Africa thereby attracting colonialists. For example, they reported about the fertile soils and cool climate in the Kenya highlands and eventually this area was taken over by the British.

They also reported about the hostile and friendly communities in East Africa and this helped to guide the colonialists on the appropriate approach to use.

They also build roads that were used by the colonialists and this eased their movement during the process of colonization.

They befriended some African leaders who easily accepted the colonialists when they came. This also created collaborators like Semei Kakungulu who helped in extending colonialism in Eastern Uganda.

Missionaries civilized and westernized Africans to admire everything European including colonialism.

Missionaries provided Western health services to the colonialists who came into East Africa. This enabled them to establish colonialism with minimal threats of tropical diseases.

The Christian preachers engaged in wars of colonial conquest such as the region-political wars which interfered with the independence of some states. For example they engaged in the Wafransa - Wangeleza wars which destabilized Buganda's political atmosphere.

Missionaries themselves signed treaties with some African traditional leaders which were used to erode African Independence. For example at the end of religious wars in Buganda, the CMS signed a treaty with kabaka Mwanga which culminated into loss of self rule in Buganda and Uganda as a whole.

They also helped to negotiate the signing of some imperial treaties which overthrew the independence of some African states. For example, during the 1900 Buganda Agreement, missionaries served as interpreters.

They called their home governments such as Britain to come and abolish slave trade and slavery in East Africa. At the end of the anti-slave campaign, Britain chose to remain and protect Africans, hence colonialism.

They developed cash crop growing among Africans which made Africans comfortable with the Europeans, making them easily accept colonialism.

They developed legitimate trade which became a fertile ground for the colonization of East Africa. Legitimate trade replaced slave trade that had made Africans hate Europeans.

Revision Questions;

1. To what extent were Christian missionaries agents of colonialism?
2. Assess the role played by the missionaries in the colonization of East Africa.

COLONIALISM AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

Colonialists built communication lines such as roads and railways that enabled missionaries to penetrate the interior of East Africa. For example the Kenya-Uganda facilitated missionary movement into Uganda.

Colonialists offered protection to the missionaries thus facilitating missionary work and the spread of the gospel.

They fought hostile tribes like the Masai and the Kikuyu against resisting different European activities including the spread of the church.

Colonialism provided freedom of evangelization to different Christian denominations which caused competition and as a result, Christianity was spread further.

Colonial authorities facilitated improvements in mission education, through which Africans were convinced to convert to Christianity.

Colonial administrative centers like Entebbe, Nairobi and Kampala became important centers from where missionaries reached out to other places with the gospel.

Colonial authorities worked closely with the missionaries in the offer of health services to the people which attracted many Africans into the Church.

Colonialists helped missionaries to acquire land where mission stations and mission centers were established to serve as centers of evangelization.

Colonialists worked very hard to abolish slave trade in East Africa which provided a conducive atmosphere for the spread of the church.

Colonialists incorporated missionaries in government which gave them more opportunities to spread the church.

Colonial labor policies helped learned missionaries to acquire African labor which helped in the spread of the church.

Colonization of East Africa served to weaken the spread of Islam which favored the spread of the church.

Colonialists involved missionaries in the development of cash crop agriculture which brought Africans closer to the missionaries hence the spread of the Church.

On the other hand, colonialism interfered with the spread of the church in East Africa. For example, colonial wars of conquest caused insecurity thus disrupting missionary work.

In Buganda, colonialists used missionaries to fight imperial wars which negatively affected the image of the church.

Colonial exploitation of the Africans made some Africans hate the Christian missionaries as well. For example to the Kikuyu, there was no difference between a missionary and a colonialist.

Colonialism facilitated divisions among the missionaries which hindered unity and co-operation that would have been influential in the spread of the church.

In Uganda, the British colonial authorities only helped Protestant missionaries and neglected the Catholics, which interfered with the spread of Christianity.

The freedom of movement that the colonialists granted to the missionaries created unhealthy competition and clashes between the Catholics and the Protestants which spoilt the image of the church,

Colonial wars of conquest like Maji-maji rebellion in Tanganyika, Nandi and Hehe rebellions in Kenya created insecurity which hindered missionary work of spreading Christianity.

Colonialists grabbed African land and exploited the minerals of East Africans which made them hate all Europeans including colonialists.

Colonialists also forced the Africans to work on their plantations for free which annoyed them and they vowed never to join Christianity, which to them was a religion of the Whites.

Colonialists overtaxed the Africans yet they were buying their products cheaply and this also limited the number of church converts hence hindering the spread of Christianity.

Colonialists took over the offer of social services like health and education from the missionaries which stopped people from joining Christianity since they could access these services from the colonialists unconditionally.

Colonialists refused to open up unproductive areas of East Africa to the missionaries which also limited the spread of the church. For example in their policies, they ignored Turkana and Karamoja areas, which hindered the spread of Christianity in those areas.

Revision Question

“Colonialism greatly contributed to the spread of Christianity.” Discuss.

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

CANON APOLLO KIVEBULAYA (1864 -1933)

He was a Muganda by tribe born in Singo around 1864. His traditional name was Wasswa Munubi since he was a twin, although his twin-brother had died in his childhood. His parents were Nalongo Tezira Singabadda and Salongo Samweri Kisawuzi.

He spent much of his early years at the court of Kabaka Mutesa 1 and Mwanga, where one of his brothers served as a page. He grew up under the Muslim influence that was at the Kabaka's court, up to the age of thirteen years.

From 1878, he developed interest in Alexander Mackay's reading classes at Mengo. He later joined Mackay's classes where he learnt to read the gospel and he was greatly influenced.

In 1887, he was in Kabaka Mwanga's army and in the 1888 to 1892 religious wars in Buganda, Apollo was forced to join the revolt against Mwanga when he turned against Christianity.

During the subsequent wars, he joined the exiled Christians in Ankole and when they returned to Kampala, he resumed Bible study with the Protestant church.

The Protestants incorporated him into the police and he worked as a soldier until he was baptized on 27th January 1895 at the age of thirty-one. He was given the names "Apollo Kivebulaya."

The name "Apollos" was picked from Acts 18:24-25, while "Kivebulaya" means coming from Europe and was given to him because of the suit he used to put on under his white habit.

In the same year after his baptism, he requested to be sent as an evangelist in Toro where was permitted to go and he served there as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society.

He is reported to have walked over 300 kilometers through seventy five papyrus swamps and in a lion infested region.

He is credited for having been the first person to take Christianity to Toro, although his service there was minimal as it took less than a year.

In September 1895, he was sent to Mboga-Zaire beyond River Semiliki where he spent most of his time. When the Belgians occupied Mboga-Zaire in 1899, he first returned to Toro where he worked as a rural dean for 15 years up to 1915.

In the same year 1915, he returned to Mboga-Zaire where he remained until his death on 30th May 1933. He served at Mboga and among the Batwa of Ituri rain forest.

Canon Apollo Kivebulaya emerged the most famous African evangelist among the Protestants, just like Dr. Adrian Atman of Tanganyika was among the Catholics.

IMPORTANCE OF APOLO KIVEBULAYA TO THE CHURCH

He offered his life and future to serve the Church, abandoning all other services for Missionary work in such rural areas like Toro and Mboga-Zaire. For example he abandoned his work as in the security forces and served the Church of Christ with one heart.

He was a devoted convert to the Church and he endeavored to live a true Christian life that attracted many followers to join Christianity.

He taught his converts how to build their churches firmly and encouraged them to plant trees for future repairs.

As an African, Kivebulaya was easily acceptable to fellow Africans together with the Christian gospel. Thus he played a big role in preaching in Uganda and Mboga-Zaire, where he converted many people to Christianity.

His simplicity became a testimony that attracted many people into the Church. For example, even after being made a priest at Namirembe in 1903, Apollo refused to wear the pastoral collar although he wore other liturgical garments of the Anglican Church.

Kivebulaya was a prayerful servant of God who prayed for his ministry to succeed. He would pray for one or two hours every morning asking God to enable him spend uninterrupted day with his flock.

He condemned the evils of drunkenness, lust and quarrelsome behaviors of the people among whom he preached the gospel. Thus he imparted a Christian culture on his followers.

He endured all forms of suffering in order to spread the gospel. For example, he was falsely accused, starved, whipped and flogged on the orders of the chief in Mboga, but all this did not discourage him from preaching the gospel.

He was a forgiving and reconciling church leader. For example, he forgave the chief who falsely accused him and flogged him at Mboga and later won the said chief to Christianity.

He was friendly, loving and welcoming to everyone irrespective of human differences like age, sex, tribe, status and background. As a result, his first convert in Toro was a woman.

He educated and produced fellow teachers who worked with him in preaching the gospel. For example he trained Sedulaka who assisted him in service to accomplish his ministry.

He learnt the Pygmy's language and this made him their comrade which made him and his gospel message acceptable to them.

He taught the Pygmies how to read and write, thus contributing to the easy and rapid spread of the gospel among them.

He translated St. Mark's gospel into Pygmy's language, making it easy for them to read, interpret and understand God's word.

He created a Christian community among the Pygmies. In appreciation of his great ministry, they composed and sang songs praising his service.

He did a lot of Charity work for the church. For example, after his death, he left a WILL in his diary that, his only two cows be given to the church at Mboga, his tables, chairs and kettle be sold and the money from them be used to pay teachers' salaries.

His ministry service inspired many African evangelists who carried on his legacy. For example, Rachael Sebulimba evangelized some in some of the Islands on Lake Victoria in 1903.

CHALLENGES TO APOLLO KIVEBULAYA'S MINISTRY

At the early years of His service, Kivebulaya lacked experience in preaching the gospel. This was because he started preaching when it was just eight months after his baptism.

He faced rejection from leaders where he evangelized. For example in Toro, he was arrested and told to go back to Buganda, while in Mboga, he was flogged and whipped.

He was overworked as he had very few evangelists to work with him, yet he was preaching over a large geographical area and a big population.

He faced a problem of insecurity caused by political and cultural leaders. For example, his early Christian interest in Buganda was disrupted by Mwanga's persecution between 1885 and 1886.

He also faced a challenge of long distances during his missionary work. For example, he had to travel 300 km on foot to start his missionary work in Toro which made him to start service while too tired to serve for long.

Apollo walked through poor roads and paths, crossed 75 papyrus swamps to reach Mboga-Zaire. This also delayed his service in the area and weakened him too.

He faced a challenge of thick equatorial forest in Mboga that was difficult to penetrate. This limited his number of converts in Ituri forest.

He initially lacked knowledge of the language in Toro and Mboga and had to spend some time learning the local languages, which delayed evangelism.

Apollo was short of resources. He set out to start his ministry with very few belongings wrapped in his sleeping mat and the bundle balanced on his head.

Wild animals were a threat to his service. He ministered in a region infested by lions, leopards and hyenas, which all disrupted his work.

His service in Mboga was at first disrupted by the 1899 Belgian occupation of the area and he only returned to the place later when calm had been restored.

He also faced a challenge of rigid attachment to African culture. Some people were not willing to abandon traditional beliefs and practices in favor of the Christian gospel.

Apollo also faced a challenge of ill health caused by tropical diseases such as malaria, long distances he walked and partly the flogging and whipping that he suffered at Mboga leading to terrible bleeding.

Apollo was challenged by old age. As he grew older, he could no longer walk long distances to preach the gospel and this limited his service.

He eventually died at Mboga in 1933, largely because of old age and fatigue caused by too much work in his early times.

Revision question;

Analyse the lessons that modern Christians can learn from the ministry of Apollo Kivebulaya.

MAJOR CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

This refers to the Christian initiation practice which makes one a true child of God. It is one of the seven major sacraments practiced by the Christian faith and in most cases the very first one in Christian life.

Baptism a church affair that symbolizes that the initiate shall die in Jesus Christ and also resurrect in Him. It is presided over by religious leaders such as Priests, Reverends, Pastors and Bishops among others.

In most cases and churches, it is conducted at ones early age when the human consciousness has not yet developed. However, in the revival church and the seventh day Adventist church, it is practiced when one is old and mature enough to make informed decision.

Where it is done at an early age especially in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, parents or guardians of the initiates take part by representing them to the religious leaders for the ritual.

Young ones are baptized in the church of the biological father and thus become members of the said church.

Young ones who receive this sacrament do it through a mature Christians known as God-parents, who take up the duty of teaching Christianity to the baptized.

It involved the sprinkling of water on the fore-head of the initiate which symbolizes cleansing of sins. In this case, the water represents the blood of Christ that was shed at Calvary.

In some churches like the Pentecostals, initiates are physically immersed in flowing water to wash away their sins.

Verbal instructions are given to the baptized, accepting Christ as the Lord, God Messiah and Savior.

In the present society, it involves celebrations where a banquet is thrown to welcome the initiate into the church.

During Baptism, Christians acquire Christian names that identify them in the church. Such names include Lydia, Christopher Chrysostom, Leticia, Agnes among others.

The initiates are issued with Baptism certificates known as Baptism cards. These are issued to act as physical proof that one is baptized.

Baptism takes place with the invocation of the Holy Spirit who initiates the new members into the kingdom of God.

It takes place during a Christian worship and therefore it is an experiment of worship. It involves celebrations that welcome one into the church.

It is practiced to both boys and girls using the same practice unlike in Islam where circumcision on only boys.

It involves the use of a white cloth which is placed on the forehead of the initiate and this symbolizes purity of people of God.

It also involves the use of light and candles that symbolize new life in Jesus Christ which is received by the initiate.

In the Pentecostal Church, there is repentance of the candidate before baptism. They also take vows to adhere to the principles of the church.

Baptism of a Christian is voluntary. It is considered for those who want commitment with Christ.

It is closely associated with gifts of the Holy Spirit and those who receive the sacrament stand the chance of receiving the gift.

IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

It provides for individual belong to a given church where one is baptized. The person becomes a member of that particular community.

It brings about individual belonging to the kingdom of God for the reason that one accepts Jesus Christ as the Lord, God, Messiah and Savior.

The baptism ritual identifies one as a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ and breaks ones old life of paganism.

It fulfills God's command which Jesus gave to his disciples in Mathew.28:19-20 where He says that; "go therefore and make disciples of the whole nation, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit."

It provides guidance and protection from all forms of evils and satanic activities in Jesus Christ's name, which as a basis for an upright life.

It provides chance for the baptized person to get the gifts of the Holy Spirit that serve to guide one's life to success.

The sacrament of baptism commissions a Christian to receive other sacraments such as Holy Communion, Confirmation, and Holy Matrimony among others.

It is a call for exemplary life, living a Christ like life of moral uprightness, endurance, obedience, caring, faith and love.

It gives the initiate a Christian name which is important for Christian identification and attaches one to a patron saint, whose name is taken on.

It cleanses the original sin committed by our fore parents Adam and Eve, thus it is a source of purity and holiness.

It serves as a basis for the spread of the church and its expansion in society because as more people get baptized, the church grows further.

It strengthens ones faith in Jesus Christ and becomes a basis for church responsibility such as a priest, a reverend or even a catechist.

It serves to extend relationship with others such as God-parents, who guide the spiritual life of the initiate.

It provides a belief in life after death through the belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The initiates acquire gifts such as bibles and rosary, which congratulate them for being new church members.

It unites one with the rest of the church congregation, thus it provides interaction and socialization with other church members as it involves celebrations, jubilation, happiness and joy.

Revision Question

- (a) Examine the importance of the Christian Initiation ritual.
- (b) How is this practice different from that of the Muslims?