

Christian and Muslim Missionary Methods: Contextual Africanisation of Religious Practices to Strengthen Interfaith Relationships in Uganda

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Abstract

In Uganda, it is a religious offence for a Christian to become a Muslim and for Muslims to convert to Christianity, or for either party to seek social support from opposition religious institutions. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the extent to which Europeanised Christianity and Arabised Islamic missionary methods can be contextualised and Africanised to strengthen interfaith relationships in Uganda. Literary interpretation, thus, a mechanical arrangement of word-for-word reproduction was relied on. The findings revealed that the pulpit missionary market environments, including congregation worship centres, social media platforms, community social functions, and educational institutions, are sites of religious discrimination. In Uganda, there are separate legislated aims and objectives for Christian and Islamic religious education curricula in primary schools. Young people who subscribe to the same Black culture are forced to study their parents' religions, which in one way has created serious roadblocks to Christian-Muslim interfaith coexistence. Yet Ugandan society is endowed with rich social traditions that have not been integrated with the Europeanised education curriculum, Christianity, and Islam to respond to indigenous intellectual needs. In Uganda: a) there are literary works that provide intellectual underpinnings aligned with African values, morals, beliefs, and practices; b) there are orality tales projected through songs, sermons, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings, myths, legends, customs, and conversations; and c) there is symbolism which is expressed in indigenous arts, dramas, sculptures, rituals, shrines, sacred places, religious objects, festivities, dance, music, and names of people and places. However, humanities and sciences taught in religious communities and educational institutions are a foreign culture crafted. The concepts passed on to the local people leave them detached from

their traditional language expressions. Africanisation of Christianity and Islamic practices, then, needs to be considered seriously by policymakers, without which, discrimination, religious provocations, destruction of property, and merciless killings are most likely to skyrocket in the country.

Keywords

Christian, Muslim, Mission, Relationships, Africanisation

1. Introduction

Studies indicate that Christian-Muslim conflicts are on the increase. Christians in 145 countries and Muslims in 139 countries worldwide are killed, imprisoned, displaced from their homes, and their sacred buildings attacked (Thames, 2021). Currently, the world is battling with religious terrorism and violent extremism that have led to massive loss of lives, property, and soiling of Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence (Mandaville & Nozell, 2017).

In Africa, the rivalry between Christianity and Islam has been in existence for generations. By the time of the birth of Islam, Christianity had taken root in North Africa. When political wars broke out in Mecca in 615 C.E., Muslim converts fled to the Christian community of the Negus of Axum, present-day Ethiopia. However, the Islamic political conquest of North Africa in the 7th century led to violent upheavals. The situation was worsened by the Portuguese gradual conquest and Christianisation of Africa, which began in the 14th century (Behera, 2011: pp. 51-56).

At the height of the 20th century, programmes aimed at cementing Christian-Muslim relations in Africa were envisioned by the leadership of mainline churches. To the effect, Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) came to prominence in 2001. The initiatives have resulted in African Muslim leaders signing declarations, indicating their unwavering commitment to promoting productive, harmonious coexistence between Christians and Muslims within their spheres of influence. Despite the influence of mainline churches, the indigenous Christian and Muslim diversities in Africa, supported by external funders, in the guise of protecting their identities and converting more people, are fuelling exclusivism and hate sentiments (Behera, 2011: pp. 57-58).

Accordingly, a screenshot at PROCMURA shows that the organization is a brainchild of Christian philosophers. During the organizational infancy and transitional stages, Muslim brains are not traceable in literary works to have been involved in babysitting, the nurturing process, programme leadership, or in Islamic-generated financial contributions to cover the monetary costs of programme activities. Muslims seem to be caged on the receiving end in the effort to minimize situational hostilities.

Additionally, Muslim initiated organizations aimed at extending hands from Islamic charities to build coexistence relationships with other religions are untraced in literary sources. Muslims in Africa are consumers of Christianised re-

sources for relational coexistence. Their responses to endorse dialogue treaties could be due to the fact that in Africa, Christians are the majority, and for that reason, “The Covenant of Prophet Muhammad” cannot be enforced (El-Wakil, 2016: pp. 273-279). However, if religious and political tides swing in their favour, the good intentions of PROCMURA could be shelved.

Taken together, although the visionary work of PROCMURA is winging to be structured from grassroots to national engagement levels in Africa, rays of hope are being radiated. The phobias held by the adherents of the two faiths evaporate every time individuals are facilitated to put on Africanised intellectual investigation lenses to understand the religious other.

To the disappointment, current trends show that Christian-Muslim discrimination and armed conflicts are on the increase in Sub-Saharan Africa. Uprisings between Christians and Muslims in Sudan have led to massive deaths. Muslim rebel groups in Ethiopia are on the hunt, destroying Christian-dominated state organs. Christian-Muslim massive killings are taking place in the Central African Republic. Other notorious groups that are inflicting suicidal destruction include Tuareg Islamists in Mali, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia (Basedau & Schaefer-Kehnert, 2018: p. 32).

The African continent is battling with the aftereffects of Christian-Muslim religious rivalries. The heat is being felt across East Africa (Mwakimako, 2010). In Uganda, it is a religious offence for a Christian to become a Muslim and for Muslims to convert to Christianity or for either party to seek social support from opposition religious institutions (Voice of the Martyrs, 2012). In Uganda, although several reports display Christian-Muslim conflicts, no recorded information indicates that Christians kill Muslims. The report submitted by Jubilee Campaign (2023: pp. 6-15) to the United Nations Human Rights Committee regarding interreligious conflicts in Uganda recorded from 2020 to 2023, revealed nasty attacks inflicted on Christians by notorious Muslim groups.

In the year 2023, 40 Christian children were abducted, and more than 40 secondary school young Christians were killed by extremist and radical Muslim groups. In the same year, the rebel group planted bombs in churches in Kampala and killed a tourist couple on the accusation that they were Christians. In Uganda, Christian-Muslim conflicts are highly registered in the Eastern region. Muslims who convert to Christianity are ostracized, expelled, and killed. Many face torturous house arrest from their families and the Muslim community (World Watch Research, 2024: p. 6; World Watch Research, 2025: p. 8). It is in light of this backdrop that this study examined the extent to which Europeanised Christianity and Arabised Islamic missionary methods can be incarnated into African language concepts and social traditions (Africanised) to strengthen interfaith relationships in Uganda.

2. Research Methodology

Thus, a mechanical arrangement of word-for-word reproduction was relied on

in literary interpretation (Greenstein, 2020: pp. 86-87). The approach focused on the plain meanings of historical and contemporary literary works to reveal hidden insights that addressed the focal area of study (Grace Theological Seminary, 2022). Historical literary words were presented as the pre-existent meanings to which other meanings were added in layers (Greenstein, 2020: p. 213) to reproduce the author's voice as postulated in the religious environments (Cohen, 2017: p. 3).

Relaying on secondary data approaches, Archived literary sources that shade light on: Christian and Muslim clergy market environments, formal education in Uganda, cultural ceremonies in Uganda, cultural systems in Uganda, clubs in academic institutions, information technology, games and sports, religious land and estates, community social groups, business partnerships, human resource professionals, enforcement of legislative regulations, and interfaith peace-building models in Uganda were examined.

While the secondary data approach has limitations, including the inclusion of outdated ideas and the potential for important information to be left out (Walker, 2023), the data analysis approach was preferred because Christian-Muslim conflicts in Uganda are widespread. The primary data collection approach would have been costly in terms of assembling field data and time-consuming in interacting with hostile faith communities. However, to come to terms with the primary root causes of Christian-Muslim conflicts in Uganda, there is a need to carry out a field-based study. Finally, the AI Grammar checker was utilised to minimise linguistic errors.

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1. Christian and Muslim Clergy Market Environments

The earth and its fullness are the field of God's mission. Mankind was created in the image of God and assigned the responsibility of taking care of earthly resources (Wright, 2020: pp. 20-36). The clergy market environment, then, is an arena of God's mission field. To fulfil God's mission, throughout biblical and Qur'anic history, God communicates with His creation. He speaks to individuals, a family, a specific clan, a particular tribe, or an organized group of people, calling for societal change or a change in their behavioural patterns. God communicates to nations and people of different ideologies, using His own divine delivery methodologies that vary as human reasoning and human traditions change. Humanity is used as a primary tool to transmit God's message. Although the techniques used to receive direct information from God cannot be empirically verified, transmitters of God's message are convinced that they are in direct fellowship with the Supreme Being, and so are the followers who experience instant psychological fulfilments (Stuart, 1980).

The duties of God's spokespersons from the Christian perspective are to: a) expound and interpret divine narratives; b) admonish good behaviours, reprove wrong lifestyles, denounce sin, and empower people with constructive life suste-

nance skills; c) predict catastrophic challenges that may befall the wider community and individuals who do not adhere to life saving instructions; d) offer curative and preventive therapeutic support to the epidemic stricken individuals; and e) fight oppressive and exploitative social systems that oppress weaklings in society (Laursen et al., 1983).

On the other hand, duties of Muslim clerics are to: a) encourage their audience to put into practice Qur'anic traditions; b) set up lifestyle models for others to emulate, c) empower Muslims with intellect, wisdom, and challenge them to grow in purity so that they interact with their cultural environments to minimise diseases, cement relationships, and combat economic poverty; and d) teach recipients to put into practice the truth wrapped in human reason, prophetic revelations, and divine success (Alalwani, 2017: pp. 10-20).

Muslim Clerics implore every believer to embrace and enforce jihad missions until the Day of Judgement. Two major types of jihad are encouraged, that is, external and internal jihad, which are sacred paths for every Muslim to influence societal change (Ramlan et al., 2016: p. 37). External jihad involves engagement in combat expeditions to defend the way of Allah, forbid evil, and enjoin good. Contrastingly, internal jihad is concerned with the intellectual empowerment of believers with life-sustaining skills to overcome social and spiritual ignorance, disease, and economic poverty (Bonner, 2006: pp. 8-13). Failing to enforce jihad missions carries punitive consequences in the present and after-life (Q.2: 159-162, 174).

As such, the pulpit market environments that clergy utilize to indoctrinate their followers with biblical and jihad ethics are diverse. These include congregation worship centres, social media platforms, community social functions, and educational institutions. Sadly, such avenues are not iconized with African heritages that would be utilised by clergy to speak positively about the religious other. However, healthy relationships can be possible if Christian-Muslim clerics refrain from displaying their religious differences, understand what it feels like to attack the other's beliefs and customs, and recognize the African communal responsive benefits that can be attained when they collectively promote their Abrahamic religious ancestry similarities.

In the African setting, biblical-Qur'anic prophets and apostles are equivalent to elders who play specialized roles as priests, diviners, herbalists, village chiefs, village elders, witch-doctors, and family heads. Their impact is felt by everyone who wears an African skin. They are the founders and custodians of African traditions. They fulfil their leadership obligations in communion with the living dead; thus, they are in fellowship with specialists who reside in the spiritual domain, equivalent to the mental-knowledge mine domain of Europeans (Olupona, 2014).

The very way the human brain innovates machines to detect viruses, diseases, and predict events, African elders are gifted to guide the community on impending doom, innovative lifestyles, disease diagnosis, and illness remedies. The Afri-

can religious universe is a material world bonded by spirits, a belief that European scholars use derogatory terminologies to code animism. To the Europeans, their material universe, molecules, gases, liquids, and solids are bonded by atoms (Mbiti, 2011: pp. 7-10). Thus, spirits are to the Africans and atoms are to the Europeans. Apparently, Africanisation of biblical-Qur'anic texts to define prophetic and apostolic duties within African contextual perspectives is a yardstick that can minimize interreligious hostilities and usher Africans to walk out of superstitions towards peaceful coexistence and collaboration.

In reality, religious leaders are sources of inspiration. They lead exemplary lives that their followers emulate. Adherents take instructions, be it constructive or destructive, of their leaders seriously. The divine guidelines religious leaders offer to society are embraced as hints of divine inspiration. Religious clerics are powerful forces; however, if their pulpit marketplaces are not well contextualized and Africanised to speak well of each other, then interreligious conflicts can be continuous outcomes with lethal effects on society.

3.2. Formal Education in Uganda

During the infancy years of intellectual education in Uganda, Muslims refused to integrate the European education offered by the missionaries with Qur'anic teachings that were ongoing at madrasa religious learning centres. Madrasa teachers distanced themselves from working in partnership with missionaries, fearing conversion to Christianity. Only Muslim children with strong ties to their Christian relatives could attend Christian missionary schools. Such children grew up to become intellectual elites and subsequently introduced European education to Muslim communities (Musisi & Kiggundu, 2019: p. 87).

In 1944, a time span of 100 years after the arrival of Islam in Uganda, Prince Badru Kakungulu influenced the introduction of European education in Madrasa institutions, and in 1947, he established the Uganda Muslim Education Association (UMEA) that promoted European education of Muslim children in any school of their choice in the country without being coerced to convert to Christianity. Islamic studies, alongside Christian religious education, were later legislated by the government and incorporated into the national teaching curriculum (Musisi & Kiggundu, 2019: p. 88).

Currently, in Uganda, learners in primary schools are expected to study their parent's religions. During examination, double set of questions is presented and one makes a choice to answer either Christian or Islamic questions. There are separate legislated aims and objectives for Christianity and Islam, crafted religious education curricula. The legislated outcomes of religious education are displayed in **Table 1**.

As it can be observed in **Table 1**, Christian Religious Education in primary schools aims at enabling learners to acquire biblical ethical lifestyles and become knowledgeable about the crosscutting elements in African traditions and other world religions (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2009a: pp. vii-viii).

Table 1. Christian and Islamic religious education in primary schools.

Outcomes of Islamic Religious Education		Outcomes of Christian Religious Education	
1	Experience attained to practice Islamic values at school, home, and to appreciate God's interventions in diverse life situations.	1	The learner has developed awareness and knowledge of: God's purpose, the Bible, the teachings of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the importance of belonging to a Christian community.
2	The learner's whole personality has been enriched.	2	To have developed the Christian ethical values of love and peace towards spiritual growth to maturity.
3	Islamic ethics and learners' cultural values reconciled to aid healthy lifestyles and peaceful living in society	3	A committed Christian walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ
4	The learner is acquainted with Qur'anic teachings.	4	To have acquired spiritual formation skills of praying alone and fellowshiping with others.
5	The teachings of Islam, as recorded in the Qur'an and practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, are appreciated and practiced by the learner.	5	Acquired the basic knowledge of biblical teachings.
6	Attained the basic knowledge of Islamic and Christian theology, and understood the convergence and divergence areas of the two religions.	6	To have come to knowledge of the basic beliefs of African traditional religion and other religions.
7	A learner knowledgeable about the principles and life of the Prophet Muhammad.	7	To have attained Christian ethical values of honesty, caring for others, justice, and tolerance.
8	The learner can trace the history and development trends of Islam.	8	Equipped with leadership qualities to offer services to society.
9	Learner to have attained life skills to live harmoniously with self and others.		

On the other hand, the Islamic religious education curriculum in primary schools in Uganda focuses on enabling the learner to gain knowledge of Islamic history, acquire Qur'anic ethical values, and gain insights into the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2009b: pp. vii-viii).

Dishearteningly, the Christian education curriculum wraps Islam in the docket of other religions that may include Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism. A learner is limited to understanding common elements, and yet Islam, in terms of followers, is the second most popular religious movement in Uganda. To the contrary, the Islamic curriculum is tailored to highlight similarities and differences between the two religions, which is a good step, but if the similarities were emphasized, the country would experience fewer incidents of religious hostilities.

However, knowing that Islam and Christianity are foreign religions hosted by African religiosity, there would be no need to run separatist religious curricula during the introductory stages of education in Uganda. The ideal approach would

be for the Parliament of Uganda to legislate and facilitate Christian-Muslim religious experts to contextualize the imported teachings of the two religions and develop a cross-cutting education curriculum. Of course, the separate religiosity and devotional routines of each religion should be respected, but when it comes to matters of innovation and community engagement, the Christian-Islamic Africanised education curriculum would be upheld. To a heartache brain crush, the entire Ugandan education curriculum is European-tailored.

Scholarly works document by [Maina \(2003: p. 3\)](#) infer that patriotic societies that have built interreligious cohesions around the world have spent a great deal of resources to integrate foreign cultures into their innate worldviews through contextualised education. Contextualised knowledge has shaped all aspects of civilised and digitalised societies. Innovative manipulation of social-cultural identity, language expressions, and spiritual manifestations have led to progressive community transformations.

Interestingly, Ugandan society is endowed with rich social traditions that have not been integrated with Europeanised education curriculum to respond to indigenous intellectual needs. In Uganda: a) there are literary works that provide intellectual underpinnings aligned with African values, morals, beliefs, and practices; b) there are orality tales projected through songs, sermons, teachings, prayers, proverbs, riddles, wise sayings, myths, legends, beliefs, customs, and conversations handed down through generations of indigenous people in many African language concepts; and c) there is symbolism which is expressed in indigenous arts, dramas, sculptures, rituals, shrines, sacred places, religious objects, ceremonies, festivities, dance, music, and names of people and places. However, the humanities and sciences taught in educational institutions transmit foreign cultures, leaving local people detached from their traditional language expressions ([Bota, 2009](#)).

The intelligibility of human beings is articulated in languages that are clearly understandable within their context. Christianity, Islam, and European education are customized in spring, autumn, summer, winter, and desert life language expressions. Bombarding tropical Africa ancestry learners with knowledge to figure out the Abrahamic religious universe, which is a resultant outcome of Angels and how the European empirical atmosphere is full of atoms, it is quite complex to the Africans who interact with nature through gods, spirits, and ancestors ([Ndemanu, 2018: pp. 73-74](#)).

African milk suckled languages enable individuals to define their customs and ideologies in dialects that are clearly understandable and applicable in their perspectives ([Palmer, 1969: pp. 134-135](#)). To the effect, if the current Ugandan education curriculum is well programmed to uphold African worldviews, then Christian-Muslim religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence would be the outcome.

3.3. Cultural Ceremonies in Uganda

Life transition celebrations, child birth, puberty rites, marriage, and death are points of contacts that draw Ugandans together irrespective of one's Abrahamic

religious affiliation. Cultural ceremonies are coloured with communal participatory activities aimed at transmitting oral traditions to the young generation and to remind everyone to maintain social order (Bota, 2009).

For instance, the Bamasaba tribal community in Uganda that cherishes male circumcision as cultural rite of transition of boy child from childhood to adulthood are programmed every even year. The celebration process that may run for days depending on a particular family's financial muscle, involves dances that are spiced with delicious eats, drinks, and attraction of gifts from relatives and friends (World Health Organization, 2021).

On the fateful day of circumcision, the candidate is surrounded by hostile elders holding machetes and armed with sticks in their hands. Should the candidate fail to express brevity while the knife is peeling off the penile foreskin or should the circumciser chop off the boy's penile gadget, then either way, each one of them is caned thoroughly. The candidate's expression of fear during the surgical process carried out without anaesthesia by the traditional expert chosen by the gods, is believed to provoke the anger of ancestors who pioneered manly braveness to protect family and society from social injustices, and if the disgraceful behaviour is not atoned for, then the entire clan suffers from misfortunes and disease epidemics (World Health Organization, 2021).

The ceremony is climaxed after the young man's penile foreskin is chopped off. As the blood oozes, local drums are sounded loud, women ululate, people twist their waists in joyful celebrations, while the money loaded relatives and friends drop gifts on the feet of the brave young man to welcome a hero in society as they publically view the adulthood transitory wound (World Health Organization, 2021).

Such cultural ceremonies bond the entire clan, tributary relatives, and friends together. The events are seasons of reflection on their ancestral heritage. For every generation: songs, sermons, teachings, prayers, proverbs, myths, riddles, wise sayings, myths, legends, beliefs, customs, chants, and conversations are orally repackaged by tribal elders with the aim of inculcating in young people commendable practices, values, and morals. Those who deliberately refuse to adhere to acceptable cultural standards are demeaned, isolated, castigated, denied involvement in community business programmes, and at worst, they are roughed up and subjected to public shame (Bota, 2009).

The negative aspects of indigenous ceremonies, from the time of inception of Christianity and Islam in Uganda were viewed as devilish and primitive practices. Certainly, using Islamic and European proselytization lenses, they were right. The standards under which certain ceremonies took place were measured to be barbaric, unhygienic, and involving untrained personals to administer therapy exposed people to disease epidemics (Nmah, 2016). Of course social evils such as human ritual sacrifices were observable evils and such are skyrocketing in the country. In Uganda, 22 cases of human sacrifices were recorded in 2019, 45 in 2020 and 65 in 2021 (Olukya, 2022). However, crimes against humanity are not

different from the current day brutal human organ extractions and trafficking ongoing in the European and Islamic markets (Reisen, 2017: pp. 183-186).

No matter the magnitude of condemnations projected by the missionaries and their African converts, Islam and Christianity have existed for decades in Uganda, but the two religions have failed to disconnect indigenous people from their cultural practices. Muslim and Christian missionaries egocentrically imposed their cultures. They refused to take backseats to learn the un-detachable aspects of African cultures. In the physical arena, Ugandans are Muslims and Christians for purposes of attaining public goods, but in their innate ancestry, their God ingrained identities vibrate, and such magnetic forces draw them together as a people of Black culture ancestry. However, Christian and Muslim religious leaders in Uganda have not taken steps to colour cultural ceremonies with Christian and Islamic religious practices. If Christianity and Islamic practices are assimilated into African cultural ceremonies, then they can be pivotal in building a conflict-free society.

3.4. Cultural Systems in Uganda

Uganda's cultural institutions that independently existed as tribal chiefdoms have been in existence for centuries. It was on their wings that Muslims and Christian missionaries had their landing in Uganda. Tribal chiefdoms were dismantled by the British colonial masters in the 19th century and incorporated into a giant and civilized tribe of the time, 'B-Uganda' (Stonehouse, 2012: pp. 86-151). Since then, indigenous cultural institutions were sent to the abyss, and the last nail was hit during the political leadership of Milton Obote in 1966. In 1993, legislations were enacted that brought life to the dry bones (Ezekiel 37: 1-14). Currently, tribal cultural institutions are at play in Uganda (Kakumba, 2023: p. 1).

In Uganda, a common hierarchical cultural leadership system cuts across all tribes, thus: a) Family Heads. These include mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, and grandparents. They are the spiritual leaders of the smallest units of Ugandan society. Their duty is to pass on cultural values to their children, provide for the family's basic necessities, and ensure that family members are equipped with skills on curative and preventive measures to ward off the misfortunes caused by evil spirits and bad-hearted people. Next to family heads are b) Village Elders. These are people endowed with constructive wisdom. They are guardians of cultural traditions. Their roles are to ensure that disputes that might break the harmony of the community are settled, moral behaviour is maintained to strengthen family ties, and traditions are upheld and respected (Kakumba, 2023: p. 5). c) Village Chiefs come third on the cultural leadership ladder. These are the village elders' team leaders in a local community. Their duty is to make pronouncements of the traditions of ancestors, and to endorse the laws and customary decisions enacted by the village elders. Chiefs, in accordance with the annual seasonal calendar and human life transitions, represent the entire village during colourful ceremonies to appeal to the departed ancestors in that community and the gods for life-provi-

sions and protection. d) Clan leaders who supervise the activities of village chiefs occupy the fourth level. Matters beyond the lower leadership's handling are forwarded to them. Complex issues are sent to the parliament, which is chaired by the tribal leader (Kakumba, 2023: p. 5). e) Tribal leaders are people who occupy monarchy spaces or who are elected by tribal constituents. They oversee the operations of several clans that together form a tribe. They are custodians of cultural traditions, institutions, and resources that promote the welfare of the people they lead. They have the final say on all matters related to the upholding of cultural traditions. If their well-researched and divine instructions are not obeyed, then the rebellious individuals, or families, or village, or tribe face the wrath of the gods (Kakumba, 2023: p. 5).

Although Ugandans subscribe to secular state laws, indigenous people have a strong belief in the supernatural forces invoked by cultural leaders that influence equilibrium, harmony, and orderliness in all communal life spheres (Kakumba, 2023: p. 8). The fact that Christian and Muslim congregations in Uganda are not tribal customized, the current cultural leadership systems are fertile grounds for interfaith relationship building, which, if Christian and Muslim religious practices are Africanized and exploited by religious leaders, then incidences of interfaith hostilities can be constrained.

3.5. Clubs in Academic Institutions

Clubs in schools are student led organizations focused at inculcating specific life sustenance skills that may not be fully attained when one attends programed course curriculum only. Clubs have existed in education institutions since days ancient, however, they came to prominence from 1902 onwards. Since then, clubs became avenues for: motivation of students to work towards their career aspirations, equipping young scholars with leadership potentials, and challenging learners to build meaningful social relationships (Adams, 1976: pp. 8-12).

In Uganda, clubs came along with the introduction of formal education by the Protestant and Catholic missionaries. Unlike what went on in Qur'anic education centres, in Christian schools, clubs that were replicas of the Western world flourished in the 19th century (Baba et al., 2017: p. 58376). The year 1944 witnessed marriage of Qur'anic schools and Christian missionary schools in Uganda whereby state laws were enacted, forbidding coercive religious conversions that had scared Muslims to benefit from Western education. Implementation of parallel religious education curriculums in all schools in Uganda was legislated and by 1960, young people enjoyed the benefits of clubs in schools irrespective of their religious backgrounds (Musisi & Kiggundu, 2019: pp. 88-89).

Immoral students in Uganda notwithstanding who indoctrinate others to engage in hooliganism, strikes, drug abuse, arson, and various silly risky lifestyles, clubs that are supervised by seasoned professional are building professionalism in learners. Young people as they interact with their peers and various senior specialists, they: attain intellectual insights, acquire new perspectives on societal

events, interact with opposing viewpoints respectfully, and network with friends from diverse cultural upbringings (Rumanzi & Katahinga, 2023). Clubs in schools, then, are powerful interreligious building opportunities that if Christian and Muslim specialized programmes offered to students are Africanised, then cases of interfaith hostilities can be minimal in society.

3.6. Information Technology

Information technology industry that came to prominence in early 19th century is booming (Awati, 2021). Technological based media tools that include: interactive zoom video conferencing, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, Internet, teleconferencing, websites, mobile phones, radio stations, and television stations have affected every aspect of human activity. They have promoted opportunities of knowledge sharing throughout the world. People are able to make decisions about their life career pursuits, share information, interact with diverse knowledge, and make informed collaborative decisions (Hussein, 2008).

Accordingly, Christian-Muslim religious organizations in Uganda are in business with information technology. Systems are observable in their education institutions, community based organizations, and business companies. However, how such technological arrangements are being used to inculcate a spirit of interreligious coexistence and foster peaceful coexistence of the followers is a question to ponder on. If information technological tools were being used rightly and focussed on well-articulated objectives aimed at enhancing respectful interreligious coexistence, then, the media wouldn't be awash with incidences of hostile clashes between Christians and Muslims. Information technology then, when transmitted Christian and Muslims programmes are well Africanised in an interreligious collaborative sense, Christians and Muslims can be influenced to overcome barriers associated with religious hostilities.

3.7. Games and Sports

Games and sports that vary from society to society have existed since antiquity (Erasmus+, n.d.: pp. 3-21). The Greece-Roman society innovated several games that spoke to their cultural leisure needs. Games were played in honour of their gods and political heroes. Gendered leisure festivities were organized in transition age groups. Clans, states, and clubs competed against each other. The primary winners were cherished and rewarded handsomely. Supporters of the winning teams attained a sense of pride and were emotionally energized (Erasmus+, n.d.: p. 4-20). The losers became emotionally traumatized. The weak ones committed suicide, but the emotionally intelligent looked forward to seeing their teams take the lead in the near future. Such arrangements created bonds of social identity (Joshua, 2021).

Similarly, games and sports leisure activities in recent times have been found to help people in their communities to engage in social events that build their self-esteems and boast their business outputs. Companies that arrange for leisure

events benefit greatly through the sale of goods and services to spectators. Heroic players have turned out to become role models (Charaf, 2016).

It has been observed by scholars that it is through games and sports that people are inspired to rework on their tainted past, to reconstruct their social capital, and to become advocates of societal change (Rodriguez-Bravo et al., 2020). Studies done in Uganda reveal that 88 percent of young people have high interest in games and sports. Boys (89 percent) and girls (68 percent) keenly watch games and sports on social media (Africa Youth Ministries, 2023).

Games and sports, although they attract substantial monetary costs to establish recreation spaces, they have been found to be pivotal at building strong and healthy social relationships. People with similar life career pursuits and social experiences get connected (Dalen & Seippel, 2021). Therefore, constructive and well-Africanised leisure religious activities when well programmed, can be paramount at influencing Christians and Muslims in Uganda to positively participate in interfaith community development programmes.

3.8. Religious Land and Estates

During the British rule in Uganda, village chiefs were mandated by the constitution to gift religious bodies with land (Hansen, 1986: pp. 59-61). Missionary Christian organizations that were driven by indigenous Christian community self-sufficiency theory acquired big chunks of gifted land (Alava & Shroff, 2019: pp. 1-2) as compared to the Muslim communities who staged mainly in urbanized areas and thinly dotted in rural localities to teach their followers Qur'anic basics (Scanlon, 1964: p. 7).

Currently, mainline Christian organizations in Uganda are planted on big chunks of land that were denoted by indigenous people as compared to Muslims who have small pieces that in most cases, accommodate Mosque buildings only. There are educational institutions, commercial buildings, health centres, and demonstration projects housed on Christian lands. However, the extent Muslims have stretched their hands to benefit from Christian owned estates is a dilemma to ponder on. If religious leaderships come up with Africanised documented interreligious resource sharing policies, then Christian and Muslim communities can benefit from each other economically and intellectually.

3.9. Community Social Groups

Narratives documented in the Bible and Qur'an portray specific social groups that synergized their monetary resources to build social capital. Everywhere Christianity and Islamic civilizations became rooted, social groups flourished. The impact of formalized social group relationships came to prominence in 1930s in the United States of America. Work groups were key to building community social capital during industrial revolution age. In specialized groups, people got to know each other, listened to the testimonies of successful others, and they came to recognize useful resources around them. In their unique settings, people discussed

the challenges that were affecting them and came to identify life career opportunities in their cultural settings (Team Member, 2022).

Unlike United States of America that cherishes individualism in a social setting (Bazzi et al., 2017: pp. 5-17), Ugandan society treasures communal responsiveness. Each Ugandan social group has unique responsibilities interconnected to the communal good of everyone in the wider community. In each social strata, there are individuals who subscribe to Christian and Islamic faith. Religious differences withstanding, indigenous people are absorbed in community self-help groups; live in interfaith marital relationships; transect businesses in Christian and Muslim built rentals; and many share vocational environments as civil servants, casual labourers, and business people (Mugyenzi, 2000: p. 41).

In addition, challenges such as disease epidemics, disasters, famine, criminalities, and social injustices draw Christian and Muslim professionals in organized groups to find solutions to life parasitic trials. Even when some people get involved in social groups with ill motives of stealing and destabilizing others, the strata of social relationships and their uniqueness are engagement opportunities that, if Christianity and Islam are Africanized by religious leaders, they can be avenues for solving challenges that cause interreligious hostilities in Uganda.

3.10. Business Partnerships

The mandate to give names was not limited to naming creatures in the microscopic Garden of Eden, but also meant birthing business ideas and giving them rightful customer-catch names. Once a customer-friendly name is in use, the next step is to pursue intellectual property rights through legal registrations. The realization of business operations' legal status enables social groups to market their innovations in the competitive business world without much interference (Abinyo, 2014: pp. 1-16).

To the contrary, religious business social groups, as compared to government institutions and private firms, are driven by the agenda to propagate their doctrines, and for that reason, non-adherents are locked out. The religious group that is well-connected to customers and receives substantial donations empowers its followers with life survival skills. However, in the residential surroundings of the lucky beneficiaries are religious others held in chronic poverty. It's these starving people who make religious coexistence environments hostile. It is hard to lock them in a world where they are incapable of meeting their life survival basic necessities when the lucky saints have what it takes to access quality education, medication, and housing.

Hearteningly, Christians and Muslims instituted business organizations to open their gates for non-adherents to their faith to benefit from their services, which will take a lengthy time to be realized in Uganda. Nonetheless, working towards strengthening relationships between Christians and Muslims who coexist in government and privately owned business social programmes is most likely to be an easier option. Of course, the strategy is possible when knowledgeable Chris-

tian and Muslim religious leaders are appointed to leadership roles in secular and private institutions as board members. On the other hand, if Christian and Muslim gender balanced Africanised hierarchical interreligious task forces are birthed to solve hostilities and engage in Christian-Muslim business collaborations, then peace can prevail in Uganda.

3.11. Human Resource Professionals

Before formal education was introduced in Uganda, informal training was the norm, carried out by family heads and tribal elders who inculcated in young people acceptable cultural norms that enabled them to coexist with others in society peacefully and productively. Qur'anic schools were the first to be introduced in Uganda by Arab merchants, and later, Christian schools operated by missionaries were established. Since their inception, educational institutions in Uganda have produced professionals across diverse academic fields (Scanlon, 1964: pp. 7-16).

The professional fields of Christians and Muslims in Uganda are rich in human resources and intellectual talent. There are religious adherents who are lawyers, medical doctors, farmers, business people, politicians, music artists, and scholars who hold influential positions in the labour market. If professionals are brought to a round table to theorize on the development of Christianity-Islam projects, to Africanise the education curriculum, and to examine the African spirit of collective responsiveness, they can bring to society when their professional competences are synergized. Then they could volunteer their professionalism to build strong interreligious relationships in their communities.

3.12. Enforcement of Legislative Regulations

Legislative guidelines are observable in sacred texts. Throughout biblical and Qur'anic texts, instructions are provided to guide mankind to lead a productive life. For Adam and Eve to be productive and build an iconic legacy, one of their roles was to adhere to the rules that regulated their vocational calling. They were strictly instructed not to eat the fruit that would inflict on them infirmities (Genesis 2: pp. 16-17).

Codes of conduct fences in reference to Adam and Eve's execution of the assigned responsibilities were well explained to them. It meant that if they did their work properly and respected boundaries, there would be no need to subject them to suffering. However, the death of their vocational careers with lethal consequences of guilt, shame, and public humiliation would happen when they cross the red line.

In line with Garden of Eden guidelines, Ugandan laws provide for freedom of worship (U.S. Department of State, 2022), but the legislation does not regulate interreligious cooperation guidelines. The cardinal duties of clergy are to design and disseminate staged programmes intended to foster respect for the rule of law and positive behavioural change at the individual, household, and wider community levels. Christian and Muslim religious leaders are custodians of community

moral values. If interreligious coexistence regulations are Africanised, legislated by the government, and enforced, then incidents of all manner of discrimination and doctrinal controversies can be minimised (Mugyenzi, 2000: p. 42).

3.13. Interfaith Peace-Building Models in Uganda

To cement intra-faith and interfaith relationships in Uganda, several interfaith peace-building groups exist. The major ones that have had impact on society are: Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) and Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL). While each organization works independently to address the development needs of its faith communities, they occasionally collaborate to quell inter-religious hostilities and promote peaceful coexistence. The case recorded in contemporary literature was their joint intervention between majority Muslims and minority Christians of Yumbe district in Uganda (Mbugua, 2022: pp. 12-15).

In Yumbe district, Christian-Muslim conflicts had resulted in the destruction of property, suicide bombings, and massive loss of lives. To minimize interfaith conflicts, the interfaith peace-building approach began by holding joint meetings with religious, cultural, and community opinion leaders. Community leaders were sensitized and trained on aspects of interfaith conflict mitigation, Christianity and Islamic justice, interfaith dialogue, respectful interreligious communication, and peaceful interfaith relationship-building (Mbugua, 2022: pp. 12-15).

After the community leaders had been trained, they identified young people from their faith groups and mobilized them to undergo similar training. The trained team was then dispatched to religious institutions, public social centres, and households to initiate, incubate, and pilot interfaith peace-building projects. Peace-building interreligious games, sports, and music-dance-drama were organized at staged intervals, from the local village level to the district level (Mbugua, 2022: pp. 12-15).

Interfaith peace-building initiatives were enhanced through radio talk show programmes. Next, seed capital was given to interfaith groups and individuals to engage in income-generating activities. Income-generating projects and agricultural products were promoted in common markets. In addition, legal clinics and paralegal networks were instituted to provide free legal services. The outcome of the peace-building initiatives was increased household incomes, reduced interfaith hostilities fuelled by high levels of youth employment, and reduced illiteracy in the region (Mbugua, 2022: pp. 12-15).

Looking at UJCC and MCJL's joint interfaith peace-building initiatives, it is uncertain whether cultural contextual approaches can be replicated across the diverse cultures in Uganda. If it were so, then the increasing trends of Christian-Muslim hostilities countrywide would have been checked. Probably, resources are minimal. The interfaith peace-building approach appears to be costly in terms of time, expertise, and financial investment. However, if cross-cutting Christian-Muslim practices are Africanized, legislated, and rolled out by the government of Uganda, then interfaith hostilities in the country can be minimised.

4. Conclusion

Christianity and Islam have more in common than what divides the African adherents. The two religions share ritualistic commonalities to a greater extent and differ slightly in ceremonial aspects, and each party ought to have sufficient knowledge of the other's. In Uganda, separatist religious programmes are being promoted in academic institutions and the private employment sector. The outcomes of separatist missionary programmes have fuelled Christian-Muslim tensions among people who share a common Black cultural ancestry.

Uganda is endowed with cultural heritages that call for Europeanised Christianity and Arabized Islamic practices to be Africanised. The contextualisation of Christianity and Islamic practices within African thought patterns needs to be taken seriously by religious leaders and policymakers. Nevertheless, if sustainable progressive coexistence results are to be realized, Christian-Muslim dialogue engagements are paramount, without which, discrimination in the civic sector, religious provocations, destruction of property, and merciless killing of human beings are most likely to skyrocket in the country.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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