

## **Gender, Peace Building and Reconciliation in Uganda**

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**Abstract:** Gender refers to the cultural and social distinctions between male and female. These include the different attributes, statuses, roles, responsibilities, opportunities and privileges accorded to women and men as well as their access to and control over resources and benefits. In African Traditional society women were looked at as mothers. As such they were seen as co-creators of life with God. Hence they were not supposed to get involved in wars instead they were expected to play the role of reconciling warring parties. There is a good example among the Lugbara of Northern Uganda. However, both men and women in traditional societies in Uganda treasured living in peace and harmony. This meant being at peace with those around them, with God the creator, their ancestors as well as the entire spiritual world. But when war broke out in Northern Uganda, the rebels of Joseph Kony abducted both men and women and recruited them in waging war against the government troops as well as the civilians. Many women played an important role in bringing peace and reconciliation in Northern Uganda and Uganda as a whole. They have done this in different areas, such as being involved in the negotiations, sensitizing people about harmonious living from childhood to adulthood. Women like Betty Bigombe, Angelina Acheng Atyam and many others played a vital role in peace-building in Northern Uganda. The government of Uganda also played an important role in seeing to it that peace returns to the country.

**Keywords:** Gender, culture, peace-building, reconciliation, Messiah, Church, Religious, Leaders.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Gender refers to the cultural and social distinctions between male and female. These include the different attributes, statuses, roles, responsibilities, opportunities and privileges accorded to women and men as well as their access to and control over resources and benefits [1]. Gender is a concept used to refer to male and female to convey the social distinctions between them, for example, the positions they occupy, the roles they play and the social status they have which are socially constructed and allocated. Furthermore, this term is used to refer to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. In most societies, men and women differ in the activities they undertake, in access and control of resources and on participation in decision-making. In Africa, the cultural orientation of woman has greatly laid impact on their participation in society. Culturally, women are viewed as polite, soft-spoken, dignified, receptive, gentle and weak, yet if women are to participate in the nation's leadership, they need to have a degree of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and objective.

In Uganda, the government established the National Gender Policy in 1997, as part of Government policy to mainstream gender concerns in the national

development process [2]. The policy emphasis on gender is based on the recognition of "gender" as a development concept in identifying the social roles and relations of men and women of all ages and how these impact on development. In addition, the Constitution of Uganda also makes provisions for gender inclusion by establishing affirmative action in favor of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of Gender, labor and social development; which promotes gender equity and is responsible for spearheading and coordinating gender responsive development. Despite all these, Uganda is still far from being an ideal gender sensitive society. Many citizens still hold the traditional ideas about women and their roles in the African societies. However, Uganda just like any African society, treasure the idea of both men and women living in a harmonious and peaceful community.

In African traditional society, men and women were expected to live in peace and harmony as creatures of God. God was always looking after them, sending his messengers in form of Divinities, spirits and ancestors to watch over them. It must be noted that in some African languages the gender categories of God is totally absent. In many African societies the Higher Being or God the Creator is neither male nor female. In

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a few societies, like the Basoga, God is regarded as a parent, so He is both “Mother” and “Father.” The Basoga have the concept of Isebantu and Inhebantu meaning that God has the characteristics of both mother and father hence He is both male and female. This is comparable to the Biblical idea of Adam and Eve. Adam represents the male aspects of God and Eve the female aspects of God (Gen. 1: 27 TAB); God created them in His own image and likeness. Adam represents all men and Eve all women living in the world today.

The Africans believe that God the creator is One but He has messengers and representatives under Him, for instance among the Baganda, there is one called “Kayikuzi” the Messiah or the Savior. This is a direct representative of “Gulu” God who lives in the sky or “Katonda,” God the creator. Kayikuzi is Katikiro or Kamala byona, one who acts on behalf of God. It is also believed that he is one of God’s sons. It is believed that God had three sons: Kintu, Walumbe and Kayikuzi, and one daughter, Nambi. Kintu became the father of all humanity in Buganda and Nambi became the mother; Walumbe was the source of all evil comparable to Lucifer, Iblis in Jewish/Islamic concept or Satan. Kayikuzi’s duty was to act as savior, Mukombozi or Mujuni. Here it is evident that God’s messengers were categorized as male and female. In other Ugandan societies God is called “Ruhanga” among the western communities of Uganda and “Jok” among the northern peoples of Uganda; all these names mean God the Creator. God’s messengers, like Nyabuzana Adyeri, among the Banyoro of western Uganda is a woman divinity in charge of pregnant women who assists them through her mediums, the birth attendants at childbirth. Mukasa, among the Baganda who is in charge of Lake Victoria (Nalubale) who assists sailors and fishermen. This is a man divinity. The ancestors are both men and women who have just died and are known as the “living-dead” who watch over their relatives who are still here on earth, to make sure that they live in peace and harmony. God’s representatives have positions of power as parents, teachers, and leaders among God’s people. It is believed that God gives them special knowledge or truths which they have to convey to other people.

Among God’s messengers, there are heroes who have special wisdom like Lubaale or Mbandwa who communicate God’s messages to human beings. These are both men and women comparable to the saints in Christianity. These had attributes of God and showed them in their lifetime, like respect, kindness, compassion, mercy, justice. If one practices all these she/he is a hero. For example, Kiwanuka was a medical consultant among the Baganda, when he was still alive, even today he is consulted by some people about sickness, medicine and cure. Among the Banyoro of western Uganda, people say: “Ntamba na Kagaba, ntamba na Nkya” which means that the medicine men

and women nurse the sick with the help of God. Among these people, Nyamuhanga is the Master Creator, Nkya, is the Master planner and Rugaba is the Master provider. God also has messengers such as Nyabuzana Adyeri, in charge of pregnant women and childbirth. She is also an important agent in the smooth running of family life. Kagoro Araali (man divinity) in charge of cattle; Kaikara Adyeri was in charge of child welfare, Irungu was in charge of hunting and the hunters, Rubanga in charge of twins, Musana was the power of sunshine, Kwezi, in charge of the moon and Nyamuhaibona, the queen of all stars. Besides these there were Ancestors whose duties were to help, guide, support, educate and protect people who are still living in this present life.

The concept of peace among the Africans is both moral as well as religious. God is involved because he is the origin of order, harmony and equilibrium. Many African myths tell us that God established an orderly harmonious universe and society. It was some evil creature that brought evil into the world. For instance the myths of Kintu and Nambi, the first man and woman in Buganda, tells us that Nambi forgot the millet of her chicken and went back to collect it, when her brother Walumbe (Death) saw her, he asked her where she was going and followed her into the world, that was the origin of death. Numerous proverbs tell us that God is a God of peace and harmony, for example, the Igbo proverb says that God punishes the defaulter, as it is said that “It is only one who has committed perjury that is afraid of the thunder,” [3]. The thunder is perceived to be God’s agent of anger, thus punishing the evil-doer. When we look at the many civil wars and conflicts in Africa, it seems to show that Africans have no sense of peace. In fact Africans have a deep sense of peace and harmony because they believe that it was ordained by God.

#### **THE CONCEPT OF PEACE AMONG AFRICANS**

Generally, peace is perceived as the absence of war and conflict in society. Every person in the world including Africans cherishes the absence of war. More to this the Africans value harmonious living because they live in communities. J.Obi Oguejiofor, in his paper says that: “Traditional African world cherishes harmony, and harmony means living in accord with various spheres or levels of reality. Thus for genuine peace, one must live in accordance with right principles in relation with the supernatural, the deities and spirits, ancestors and fellow human beings,” [4]. The Africans’ view of peace is not just the absence of war or conflict but harmonious living in a community of the visible and the invisible world. If one member defaults it affects the others in the community and hence, cleansing or compensation has to be effected. If there is war or conflict between different communities, then, some people had to mediate. Most of the time the mediators were women because they were the most affected; for

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instance in patriarchal societies where women depended on men, war deprived them of their husbands and sons.

In today's world it is believed that every human being can contribute to create a culture of peace. What does this require? It requires that people follow the principles of good communication, that is, one has to make clear his/her position, especially when there is a misunderstanding. He/she should treat others with respect and listen carefully to other people's views and be open to receiving different viewpoints or alternatives. One must remember that there isn't only one correct answer to all problems. In fact one should be optimistic that something good always comes out of a non-violent behavior or approach. Peace-building is a specific way of creating peace by managing conflict; it is a more holistic approach that recognizes that treaties and peace agreements may not last. It is an ongoing activity which must be cautiously followed especially in unstable countries like Uganda. It involves a wide range and strategic approaches that address issues of security, socio-economic foundations of peace, governance and the need for justice and reconciliation to recover from the wounds of war like those of Northern Uganda and elsewhere in Africa.

#### **THE CONCEPT OF RECONCILIATION**

The term reconciliation is derived from the Latin word, *conciliates*, meaning to come together, to assemble. It denotes the coming to agreement of two or more persons after misunderstanding or estrangement. Reconciliation heals the wounds of those who have already been wounded by disagreement. The ailing members come to their senses and seek to come together. When different groups hate each other, it means that the parties are not in the right relationship with God. They alienate themselves from God. The first step in the reconciliation process is with one another, then with God.

#### **WOMEN AS PEACE BUILDERS IN TRADITIONAL AFRICA**

Women are the first educators of children hence concepts of peace are instilled in children from the time they are born and throughout their childhood to adulthood. A child is taught how to play with other children without causing harm to them by the guidance of the mother. Nwoye, M.A. says that: "...the culture of peace in traditional African societies was implanted in a child through responsible upbringing and socialization undertaken and supervised by mothers," [5]. This is true because Africans value peace as an important tool to enable them to live in a community without any disturbance. It is the responsibility of the mother to see that her child acquires this skill otherwise one would be a misfit in society. It was also the duty of the elderly to instill these values in children through songs, stories, proverbs and folk tells told at the noon light in the evenings before going to bed. Through such training,

the culture of peace was deeply entrenched in the children's mind and became a foundation for harmony and peaceful living starting from the family, community and the whole society.

In order for the culture of peace to take root it was important for women to teach such virtues as patience, tolerance, honesty, respect for others especially the elders, community leaders, and other people in general. In addition, compassion and community living were very important, plus gentleness and self-control. Nwoye, says that: "...traditional Somali customary principles...state that the under listed crowned heads cannot be killed: women and children...refuges, elderly and the sick...whoever kills these is a coward and is ostracized," [5]. In other parts of Africa, it was also women's duty to educate the young and shape them into responsible citizens.

In societies where God is seen both as male and female, the mothers take after Him because God does not want people's lives to be tempered with. He wants everyone to live in peace and harmony. In African societies grandparents had a big role to play, they supervised both the parents and grandchildren. They also represented the spirit world the parents represented the present world while the children represented the future. The girl children learned from their mothers and grandmothers while the boy children were trained by their fathers, uncles and grandfathers. The grandparents in Bunyoro society trained the children in heart connection, for example, the grandmothers called their boy grandchildren "husbands" while the grandfathers called the girl children their "wives." This was symbolic to teach teaching heart connection from the time they are young to adulthood. This was to train them to love, value and respect the elderly in society.

In some African communities, the elderly woman was greatly respected in time of conflict she would intervene to calm the situation. It is said that among the Zande, the oldest woman would go and meet with the opposing clan leader but if this failed then women would go naked and on their knees and say to those fighting that: "We are your mothers, we do not want war we do not want bloodshed. Do not fight with your brothers. They have sent us to sue for peace,"[5]

This shows us that women were peace-makers. They did not want their husbands and sons to die but they opted for peace in the community. Life was more than political wrangles or wealth which men got from the defeated enemy.

Another example, where women are seen as peace builders is among the Lugbara of Northern Uganda. Among these people, there is a belief that a woman can protect her son from external harm by

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wearing a birth belt. This belt supports pregnancy hence life. The use of the belt is considered a powerful charm that protects children from harm. Before warriors set out for an attack and each of them informs his mother so that she can wear the belt while he is away. To prevent conflicts, women refuse to wear the belts prompting the worriers to abandon the mission. Women could also lay their belts in front of worriers who are about to go for a raid. Crossing this belt is considered a curse. For instance, when fighting is raging, a woman may remove her belt and lay it between the fighting men. The fight ceases immediately.

### **WOMEN IN CONFLICT IN MODERN TIMES - UGANDA**

Why do women engage in conflict resolution and peace-making? This is because when war breaks out they are the ones who suffer most. Let us take the example of Northern Uganda, where conflict has been raging on for more than twenty years. Who has suffered most in that conflict? When we look at the statistics we find that women and children have been affected most. The report of Save the Children says that, in that conflict women and children make up the most vulnerable affected population. It is estimated that in Northern Uganda about 600,000 people have been displaced and live in camps. Women and children make up an estimated 80% population of all displaced peoples (Save the Children Denmark, 2002). They live in congested camps with very little space for families to function properly. These displaced women and children cannot meet their demands for food, safe drinking water and sanitation, plus health care. The food distributed by WFP is limited to pulses, cereals and vegetable oil. Most of the time people go hungry for many hours and sometimes days, especially the women who are the care-providers. The woman always gives food to her husband and children and if there is nothing left, then she stays hungry and waits for the next distribution. Food is brought in from Kampala, the capital city, which is about two hundred miles away, and at times it is snatched by the rebels before reaching the camps. People in these camps live in extreme poverty and are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of moral breakdown. Some young women resort to prostitution for survival and hence the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

### **WOMEN AND PEACE-BUILDING AND RECONCILIATION IN MODERN TIMES**

Many women are engaged in peace-building through instilling good morals in children in the education sector. All over Africa women give both informal and form education starting from childhood to adulthood. They teach in nursery, primary, secondary and in Higher Institutions of learning. In homes, women train children good manners on how they ought to behave in public and in schools, they are taught how to live harmoniously with other people in society. Examples of schools where women are headmistresses

and teachers are: Nabisunsa High School, Trinity College, Nabbingo, Namagunga High School, Duhaga Girls, Mary Hill High School, Sacred Heart High School, all these are in Uganda. Besides this, some women such as Betty Bigombe have taken the initiative to spearhead negotiations between the government of Uganda and the rebels; that is Kony's group in northern Uganda. The women Parliamentarians have been working hard to lobby for fair laws which can promote peace in homes and society at large. They have been lobbying for the Domestic relations Bill which is a controversial bill because some members of society say that it is against their religion. This bill if enacted can settle many conflicts and bring about good relationships in society. They have demanded to be included and participate actively in the joint commissions dealing with peace and security matters in the country. They argued that conflict resolution requires women's different skills and leadership styles to provide human security. In line with this, the Zanzibar Conference on women of Africa for a culture of peace it was observed that the marginalization of African women in decision-making has denied Africa the use of women's talents, experience and skills as agents for peace and development.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper aims at using the gender theoretical framework of Maluleke and Nadar who discuss the oppressed as the agent of transformation in their paper on "The Agency of the Oppressed Discourse: Consciousness, Liberation and Survival in Theological Perspective." [6]. They say that South African male Theologians have taken up the discourse with the basic message that the oppressed are the active agents of change. The authors argue that this cannot happen unless the oppressed are given space and freedom to express their views. The powerful will continue talking on behalf of the powerless. This is one way of controlling the powerless. They suggest that the discussion of the agency of the oppressed should no longer be a monopoly of the powerful but should include the powerless. I want to argue that the women in northern Uganda and anywhere else in Africa should be given the opportunity to give their views on what and how to end the conflict. These women have found ways and means of survival in the most violent situations and such survival tactics and methods could be used as agents of change in negotiating with the rebels. I want to advocate full participation of the oppressed in the resolution and reconciliation of the conflict in the northern Uganda and in Africa as a whole.

In this paper I argue that the women in the conflict situation, are key in helping the world to know about their plight and maybe the international community will come to their aid and assist in solving the conflict. I also want to argue that sometimes women



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are caught up in a situation where they can do little to get out of it on their own they need outside intervention to save their lives, their children and the whole community. The women in northern Uganda know their situation well they can speak about it by telling their own personal stories. They know who holds the power and they are being crushed together with their children and community but are unable to save the situation. Who holds the key to end the conflict? Some people say the government can do it if it has the will others say maybe if the international community could intervene, the war would be over within a short time. What about the HIV/AIDS infection that is spreading like wild fire in the camps? The argument here is that once the people go back to their own homes they will be in a better position to contribute towards controlling the spread of the disease.

The psychological torture of women and children has been narrated by those who have been abducted and managed to escape the rebels' strong hand. Jackie one of the former abductees told her story to the group of women and it was reported by Monitor News Paper on February 27, 2005. Jackie was one of the 139 young girls abducted by Kony from St. Mary's College Aboke, in Apach district on the night of October 10, 1996. The Headmistress followed Kony and also appealed to the government and international community and was able to rescue some of the girls but Jackie was not lucky to be among those. She was in her second year of High School when this happened. As a young girl she dreamed of becoming a doctor. When she was kidnapped she was taken to Southern Sudan where she became wife to Kony. She had a child with him and stayed with him until she was rescued by the Uganda Army two years later.

Reflecting on it later she said that it was a horrible experience. She is now in a rehabilitation program where she is supported psychologically, trying to pick up the pieces. She never dreamt of slipping out of Kony's den. Her ambition now is to pursue her former dream of becoming a doctor. This gives us a glimpse of the physical and psychological torture endured by many girls and women in the war-torn northern Uganda. Many other women and girls who were abducted like Jack never made it back to Uganda, they died in Southern Sudan.

#### **A CLOSE LOOK AT THE CURRENT SITUATION**

On February 27, 2005 the *Monitor* (Ugandan popular newspaper) reported that "A gang of marauding rebels mutilated eight women in Ngomoromo, Kitgum district recently. The reporter said that one of the Government Officials condemned this as a heinous crime against humanity perpetuated by elements opposed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Northern Uganda. The eight women's lips were cut off by Kony's rebels. Whenever the rebels capture women,

they usually mutilate them to scare them from escaping [7]. In Apach, another district in the North, the rebels butchered to death eleven people and most of these were women [7]. The Uganda Army's spokesperson said that they had deployed special troops to track down the rebels and make sure that they pay for the pain they have inflicted on women[7].

Some people say that if the government had the will to end this senseless war, it would have ended long time ago. For example, Margaret Aloyo describing the experience of much suffering of the people said: "We headed to Pabbo IDP camp, and arrived at Parabong IDP camp, only to be welcomed by smoke, roofless makeshift shelters! Children, women and men were all over the place, with hands in anguish. Already ten huts had been burnt down in the early hours of the day. One of the women standing near us had gone to look for food and her husband had gone to the shopping center to look for a job to earn a little money for the family, they have four children when they came back they found their hut burnt down and did not know what to do next! The rebels had run away with people's property. When asked about their most urgent need, the people in Pabbo camp which has 67,000 people, said that they wanted "peace" so that they can go back to their own homes,"[8].

#### **BIBLICAL REFLECTION ON PEACE-BUILDING**

Peace is a state of affairs in which people love one another, look after each other's interests and meet each other with consideration and forbearance. In addition to this, peace is an order in which all concerned are friends, loving, cherishing and considering one another. It implies responsibility for other people, the practice of friendship and preservation of freedom. In Christian terms peace means that a person has a right relationship with God. This entails forgiveness, reconciliation and union. The scriptures point to an eschatological peace, a final, full realization of God's salvation when all creation will be made whole.

In the Old Testament peace is perceived as a gift from God and the fruit of God's saving activity. The Old Testament focuses primarily on unity and harmony of the community and the restoration of the right order among all creation. The right relationship between the people and God which breeds peace was grounded in and expressed by a covenant union in which God promised to be present to the people, saving them and leading them to freedom.

The Old Testament teaches that peace is of God (Isaiah 45) and the condition of peace is the presence of God (Numbers 6:26). This means that in order for people to be peaceful they have to be righteous and in the presence of God. In the Old Testament, therefore, to be at peace is to be upright and

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faithful to God, and at the same time to be an upholder of truth. To be at peace is to practice justice (Isaiah 59:8). Peace is thus, the antithesis of wickedness (Psalm 34:14).

The covenant between God and the people was a covenant of peace. People were to be obedient and faithful to God, so as to achieve everlasting peace. Total commitment to God alone through the covenant was the only sure way people would achieve peace. The covenant was referred to as a covenant of peace because it restored people to wholeness of relationship. The covenant bound the people to God in fidelity and obedience. God was also committed in the covenant to be present with the people, to save them and to lead them to freedom. In addition to this, justice and integrity marked the people living in fidelity. They were expected to care for the needy and helpless. The categories of people to be helped were the weak, the widows and the orphans.

In the New Testament the Messiah was seen as the prince of Peace. The prophets anticipated that the Messiah would inaugurate a reign of peace. In the Gospel narratives of his birth, the promise of peace heralds his advent. The angels sang “and on earth peace.” In his earthly ministry Jesus taught people to be peaceful with one another. In his life, he lived at peace with those around him, even his enemies. When he was abused, beaten and mistreated, he did not pay back; instead he prayed for his enemies, “Forgive them Father for they do not know what they are doing.” Christians are urged to follow in the footsteps of their master and savior Jesus, by being peaceful people and peace lovers. They can only do this by being transformed by the power of God.

People’s lives can be transformed only by truly meeting Jesus Christ. Many Christians know a lot about Christ, but they hardly ever meet him. If people do not meet Jesus in the Gospel their lives can never be changed. Personal encounter with Jesus is very important. In the Gospel we see that meeting the Lord was the life experience that changed the lives of Mary Magdalene, the disciples of Emmaus, Saul, the Samaritan woman and Zacchaeus. Their meetings with Christ liberated them and led to true conversion, communion and solidarity.

In addition, to follow Jesus is to live like him, to accept his message, to make his criteria one’s own, to embrace his destiny, to share his proposal. The will of God is to invite all to the communion with the Trinity, and with the brothers and sisters in society. Justice and solidarity must characterize this. The church leaders have to put into their own lives all these; and only then will peace be theirs and they will be able to promote it in society. We have to remember that for all

Christians, peace is not a value or an ethical commitment. Christ is the peace of all peoples.

In the light of the Gospel, when we look at Uganda and Africa as a whole, we find that, our countries are shaken by violence and wars. Many countries in Africa have and still are suffering from armed conflicts. For example in Southern Africa, conflicts have happened in Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho and Mozambique. In Eastern Africa, countries like Burundi, Uganda, Chad, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea have suffered the same fate. What is the role of the Church in solving these conflicts?

The mission of the church leaders is to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to all peoples of the World. This was the mandate to the Apostles: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). The same mandate is given to the Church leaders in Uganda today. How can they preach the Gospel in country characterized by conflict manifested in political, economic, social, religious and ethnic conflicts?

Faced with such an enormous challenge the religious leaders of Uganda have ventured into the area of conflict resolution. The first step, which involved writing letters to the people of Uganda, was to no avail. Then they held a big meeting spearheaded by Bishop John Baptist Odam of Gulu Diocese. All religious leaders Christians, Moslems and Traditional leaders working together to find ways of resolving the conflict in northern Uganda. The first method they used was to get government and the rebel leader, Kony to sit around table and negotiate; but this did not happen, the religious leaders themselves entered into the negotiations. They also tried mediation but all these have not worked. Maybe they need to find the root causes of the conflict and address them. They need to persuade government and the rebels to be transparent and also use women in the negotiations. The religious leaders have also engaged in sensitization of the masses and education.

Besides education and preaching in the churches, some religious leaders have shown in practical terms that they are in solidarity with the suffering people. For example, the Joint Christian Council in Uganda prayed together for peace. This was done on Good Friday 2004. Afterwards they collected money and other materials things and these were supplied to the needy and suffering people in the war torn areas. Another example is, the Christian community of St. Augustine chapel at Makerere University collected items such as clothes, blankets and money. During lent time and their representatives took these items to the suffering people in the north. In

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addition to this, Caritas Uganda, a religious organization did the same thing to assist those in need. Many other religious groups are still collecting money and other items to assist those in need.

## CONCLUSION

Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed distinction between male and female persons in society. Societies assign different roles to men and women and this brings about inequalities among them. In African traditional societies people were supposed to live in harmony and peace because they believed that God the Creator was a God of peace and He had ordained order in the universe and society. In some societies, especially the patriarchal ones, women mediated between conflicting communities. It was the women's duty to train and instill in children the culture of peace by teaching them the virtues of patience, tolerance, co-operation and sharing. Africans believed that God the Creator had ordained order and harmony in the universe and society, therefore, people were supposed to live harmoniously with both the visible and the invisible world.

When war breaks out it affects mostly women and children and a good example is shown by the civil war in northern Uganda. This war between Kony and the government of Uganda has dragged on for the last twenty years and has caused untold suffering to many women, children and men. Some women like Betty Bigombe tried to intervene by entering into negotiations on behalf of government with the rebels. Although they have not succeeded but it was a good starting point, presently, the negotiations are going on in Juba, Sudan and there is hope that maybe peace will return to Uganda. I think that women and men in Africa should try to work together to bring peace and revive their original ideal of harmonious community living just as in traditional Africa. If this happens then they will set a good example to other continents of the world.

The Church leaders ought to make reconciliation their priority. This reconciliation should be based on truth, by pointing out the responsibility and causes of the conflicts. The people or the masses need to be educated about peace with the aim of avoiding future conflicts. The generation that was born in the bush with the rebels needs special attention if they are to live a norm life like faithful citizens. There is need to build a culture of peace, which means teaching values like truth, justice, tolerance, sharing and solidarity. People need to be educated to have a strong commitment towards the promotion and defense of human rights. Dialogue demands protracted patience,

persistent and magnanimous tolerance. Arrogance is peace's worst enemy. Peace by violence and physical elimination of enemies lead to doom. The right road to peace is through sincere dialogue. Jesus trod that path and was victorious. The mission of the Church is to gather and reconcile humanity into one family. The church cannot remain indifferent to divisions, war, violent death and hatred, all of which separate humans from one another. Every mediation of the church, therefore, is indissolubly linked to her prophetic mission. We may say that every struggle for peace is a struggle for the kingdom and for human dignity; it is the fruit of the spirit. Finally, the discovery of the complementary role of all members of the church in a culture for peace is important in creating public opinion.

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