

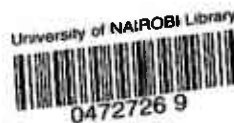
**CHURCH MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY OF NORTHERN UGANDA CONFLICT (1990-2006) //**

By

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**PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA
IN STRATEGIC STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

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University of Nairobi

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**Title: CHURCH MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN
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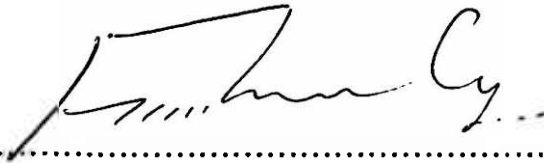
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Project Paper: Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies of the University of Nairobi.

DECLARATION

I, **Kulayigye Felliciano** do hereby declare that this research report is my original work and has never been submitted for any award in any university or higher institution of learning.

Signed:.....

Date :..... 30th September 2008.

APPROVAL

This research report has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission to the Board of Examiners of the University of Nairobi with my approval.

Signed:.....

Date:..... 14/11/08

DEDICATION

This research project paper is dedicated to all those whose blood was shed to make Uganda a better place for us all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to my sincere appreciation to the people without whose efforts the report would not have been produced to the acceptable standards.

First and foremost, am indebted to my supervisor, Professor M.Mwagiru without his expert guidance I would not have successfully completed the course in time. I also thank Mr Tony Owana for his invaluable contribution to the study.

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Finally I thank my family and friends, for the enormous support accorded to me, during the study.

I how ever take the responsibility for any errors that may be found in this report.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| RCC | Roman Catholic Church |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| AACC | All Africa Council of Churches |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |
| NCCK | National Council of Churches of Kenya |
| CNDD | National Council for Defence and Democracy |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| NGOs | Non Governmental Organizations |
| IDP | Internally Displaced People |
| DSC | Defense staff college |
| NDC | National defense staff college |
| WB | World Bank |
| MOU | Ministry of Defence |
| CRRC | Conflict Resolution Resource Centre |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| CEC | Conference of European Churches |
| SOC | Serbian Orthodox Church |
| VGC | Vienna group of church |
| PIEF | Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum |
| GOS | Government of Sudan |
| SPLA/M | Sudan people's Liberation Army/Movement |
| DOV | Decade to Overcome Violence |
| EWN | Ecumenical Water Network |
| UJCC | Uganda Joint Christian Council |
| CWA | Churches for Water in Africa |
| EECMY | Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus |
| FRELIMO | Front for the Liberation of Mozambique |
| RENAMO | Mozambique National Resistance |
| ARLPI | Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative |
| PVA | Peace Volunteers Association |

| | |
|--------|--|
| KJPT | Kitgum Joint Peace Forum |
| DPRT | District Peace and Reconciliation Team |
| DP | Democratic Party |
| UPC | Uganda People's Congress |
| NRA/M | National Resistance Army/Movement |
| UPDA | Uganda People's Democratic Army |
| HSM | Holy Spirit Movement |
| UNLA | Uganda National Liberation Army |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Education Fund |
| ICC | International Criminal Court |
| GOU | Government of Uganda |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| MP | Members of Parliament |
| KM | <i>Kacoke Madit</i> |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| RDC | Resident District Commissioners |
| APG | Acholi parliamentary group |
| GOSS | Government of Southern Sudan |

ABSTRACT

The research paper provides analysis into the non official actors in the management of internal conflicts in Northern Uganda. This is the output of the research work intended for the fulfillment of the requirements of the University of Nairobi for the award of the Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic studies. The research paper discusses the role of the church in conflict management in Africa and specifically focuses on the Lord's Resistance Army conflict in Northern Uganda.

The study was conducted on the realization that despite numerous efforts by various actors to manage the conflict it has persisted for over two decades. In spite of the strength of the church in the region there is not sufficient research regarding the role of the church in managing the conflict. The investigation of the problem therefore sought to provide analysis of the suitability of the church as a conflict manager.

This research aims at providing proposal on how the conflict in Northern Uganda can best be managed. It is expected to benefit the Policy makers, the church, security agents and other stake holders seeking to provide solutions to the conflict situation in Northern Uganda.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

There are thousands of religions in the world each with practices and beliefs that distinguish it from other religions. Religion however, is a lumpy and complex¹ variable and it is not the subject of this study. Since the end of the Cold War the subject of religion and organized violence has gained increasing prominence in international politics, yet the literature is still underdeveloped². Some conflicts are in one way or another related to religious intolerance;³ “The linking of religion to violence in many conflict settings around the world today, and are re-reading of such linkages made in the past, have prompted some to say that religion’s enduring connection to violence is a source of legitimizing of violence rather than the resolution of it’’.⁴

Certainly, those who believe that religion is a problem to be overcome, not an effective contributor to conflict transformation, can point to numerous examples throughout the world where it has indeed fueled tensions between communities. However, this would be negating the work of a growing number of religiously-inspired peace builders. Emerging from a variety of traditions, they not only assert that their faith can be a constructive force in rebuilding war-torn communities, but have shown through their efforts that religious individuals and institutions can play a positive role in conflict

¹ Monica Duffy Toft, Religion, Civil War, and International Order, a discussion Paper 2006-03 of the Belfer Centre for Science & International Affairs

² Douglas Johnston, Religion: The missing dimension of Statecraft (Oxford University Press, 1994).

³ www.religious.org

⁴ Schreiter, Robert J., C.P.P.S, "Grassroots Artisans of Peace." In Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities, eds. Thomas Barnat and Mary Ann Cejka (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 287-300. 287-88.

transformation. In particular, over the past half- century, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has evolved into a religious institution at the forefront of the struggle to promote peace and justice based on the dignity of the human person. Religious peace makers on the other hand have a track record in conflict management. In some cases such as the contribution of Saint' Egidio Community to the 1992 peace accords in Mozambique. Religious actors use their moral status and perceived neutrality as a foundation for engaging with multiple actors, including leaders of conflicting parties. In other cases as in seeking to prevent the re-emergence of war in Angola in 1998, religious actors engage their local and international networks to explore opportunities out side of a conventional diplomatic process. In neither of these cases did religious actors command the ground alone. Yet, it is exactly the potential for offering a different perspective on issues that may be at the root of the conflict, and to offer original spaces to meet, that bears promise for the involvement of religious actors in a range of conflict situations.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The armed conflict in Northern Uganda now in its 20th year has caused unquantifiable loss of lives and property. It has caused untold suffering and trauma to abducted children whose childhood has been destroyed as they are turned into killers of their kith and kin. The catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) underpins the sanctity of life⁵. Alice Lakwena, Joseph Kony's predecessor, named her rebel group, "The Holy Spirit Movement". The Catholic Church, which dominates the region, was not only silent to the blasphemous use of the name '*Holy Spirit*' but also the rituals she performed on her

⁵ Portier William, www.catholiceducation.org

fighters ordinarily condemned as devilish practices. Similar to Lakwena, her cousin Joseph Kony named his rebel group, the “Lord’s Resistance Army”. Again, the Church neither disassociated itself from the seemingly holy organization nor condemned its name. Even when the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) committed horrendous crimes against humanity involving abduction, rape mass murder of young men, women and innocent children, the Church kept a deafening silence but blamed government instead. The climax of Kony’s crimes saw him reject Sister Rachel’s pleas to free young abducted girls of Aboke Girls Secondary School when she bravely followed the abductors in 1998⁶. He did not even spare church leaders when Bishop David Ojwang of Kitgum Diocese was abducted, only to be rescued by the army the same night⁷.

Religious peace makers have a track record. In some cases such as the contribution of Sant’Egidio to the 1992 Peace Accord in Mozambique. Religious actors use their moral status and perceived neutrality as a foundation for engaging with multiple actors, including leaders of conflicting parties. In other cases, as in seeking to prevent the reemergence of war in Angola in 1998, religious actors engage their local and international diplomatic process. In neither of these cases did religious actors command the ground alone. Yet, it is exactly the potential for offering a different perspective on issues that may be at the root of the conflict and to offer original space to meet, that bears promise for the involvement of religious actors in a range of conflict situations. In conflicts that are heavily charged by religion, working conditions for the religious peace maker are more difficult. Seeking to isolate the religious dimension is rarely viable, but is more likely to stimulate the creation of religiously based ‘spoiler groups’. Even when

⁶ Else De Temerman, *The Aboke Girls*

⁷ *The New Vision News Paper*, January 4th, 2004.

religiously based groups appear unreceptive to coalition, therefore, it is important to find ways of consulting with them. The exclusion of religiously based parties in the process that led to the 1993 Oslo Accord, for instance, seems to have cemented opposition both from Hamas and the Israeli radical settlers.

A dialogue with religiously based groups in settings such as these may be led by diplomats or by religious actors, depending on context. Importantly, however, parties in religiously charged conflict tend to emphasise the religious identity of the peace broker, even when the latter does not. Religion is always part of a larger societal context, where it is both shaped by, and has an effect on, political, cultural and economic processes. Hence, religion is unlikely to create peace, just as it is unlikely to be the main cause factor of any armed conflict. In making the case for the salience of religion in peace making, the preparedness of religious communities to engage proactively in conflict resolution and transformation may have been exaggerated. None the less, there is need for diplomatic actors to strengthen the emphasis of religious dimensions in the context of peace making interventions. This presumes knowledge building, capacity development, and ultimately a new level of religious awareness in peace making.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

To evaluate the role of the church in the management of the Northern Uganda conflict.

Specific Objectives.

- (i) To find out the conflict management strategies of the church.
- (ii) To establish whether the church is an effective conflict manager.

(ii) To find out the challenges the church faces in peaceful settlement of conflicts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

R. Scott Appleby, a leading voice in research on religion and peacemaking, writes: “religion is a source of intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defense of human rights, integrity in government and reconciliation and stability in divided societies.”⁸

Ugandan independent analyst Barney Afako surveys a spectrum of peace efforts that have been tried over the past sixteen years, including several Ugandan government initiatives, various northern religious and traditional leaders’ attempts, and limited international efforts.⁹ Several lessons drawn by Afako are relevant today. First, both community (religious, traditional and others) and military leaders must be closely involved in any peace process, as these crucial figures can mobilise support for (or against) peace efforts among their powerful constituencies. Furthermore, a demilitarized zone designed to cool tensions and build confidence may be a model for future peace initiatives, as the exploratory talks in the zone set up in 2001 at Awoo Nyim led to considerable cooperation from the LRA. Unfortunately, the report does not go into detail about the substance of the unsuccessful talks, so that the reader is left with little idea as to what the LRA actually wants out of negotiations. One area of further research would be to glean lessons from how Uganda’s many other insurgencies since 1986 were ended, which may provide important parallels for today’s conflict with the LRA. Gersony argues that peace negotiations hold the way forward for ending the conflict, agreeing with Afako

⁸ Appleby, R Scott, *Religion as an Agent of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding*, 1996, pg 821

⁹ Ibid, pp 821

that these should be conducted directly between the two parties, as the “mediation of third parties, including the diplomatic community, would more likely encumber than facilitate a successful outcome.”¹⁰ However, his analysis is unfortunately unconvincing, as he fails to outline the substance of such talks and thus there is no evidence for how they would address the LRA’s (or Kony’s) seemingly non-political interests.

CHURCH IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The concept focuses on the amelioration of situations of conflict through assistance from third party such as the Church or through religion. The attention for the role of religion in conflicts has been stimulated by positive and negative developments, including the desecularisation of the world and the rise of religious conflicts. It has also been drawn by the increased engagement of Churches or church communities in the search for détente or constructive management of conflicts. When conflict parties confide in religious peacemakers, this may be because they are seen as impartial. The religious actors have few opportunities to introduce carrots or sticks in order to push negotiations forward, and if and when they do, there is always a risk that their fundamental credibility is undermined. Religious organizations seem most effective when their approach is open and inclusive, or when they are associated with one or both of the conflicting parties. This is most easily achieved in conflicts not charged by religion. The extent to which religious organizations interact with people on a grass root level, and do so in a context different from that of other actors, seem important for their results.¹¹

¹⁰ Appleby, R Scott, *Religion as an Agent of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding*, 1996, pp 822

¹¹ Schreiter, Robert J., C.P.P.S, "Grassroots Artisans of Peace." In *Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among Christian Communities*, eds. Thomas Bamat and Mary Ann Cejka (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003)

All forms of religious organizations conventionally include a clergy, a leadership that is given the moral power to direct the membership and to act on its behalf. Who are placed in leadership positions and what qualities they have are therefore immensely important. Religious leaders may potentially have significant resources for influence. They have a well established and pervasive influence in the community, a reputation as an apolitical force for change based on a respected set of values, unique leverage for reconciling conflict parties, and the capability to mobilize local, national and international support for a peace process.¹²

According to Mwagiru Makumi in *Theory, processes and institutions of management*, the church involvement in conflict management falls squarely under track two conflict management. He opines that the arm of track two diplomacy is track two conflict management¹³. According to Mwagiru the strategies which track two conflict management approaches have adopted in Africa are basically those of Church organizations such as the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC), World Council of Churches (WCC) and National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK). These are the track two actors that have been most prominent on the African conflict management scene¹⁴. Track two diplomacy is the unofficial intermediation and or negotiations by non-officials linked to conflicting parties, adversarial groups or states. Track two diplomacy aims at developing strategies, influencing public opinions, and organizing human and material resources in an attempt to clarify outstanding disputes and explore options for

¹² Johnston Douglas, *Religion: The missing dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 2003, pg 14

¹³ Mwagiru M, *Conflict in Africa: Theory, processes and conflict management*, watermark publications, Nairobi, 2000. pg 138

¹⁴ Ibid pg 138

resolving them.¹⁵ Track two conflict management is a supplement to track one, with the potential of making significant contributions in opening channels of communication between parties across the conflict lines.¹⁶ The broker in track two is not appointed by a government or a multi-lateral organization. Track two negotiation participants are not appointed by the parties, and they negotiate in an unofficial capacity, facilitated by a broker that is not a formal state actor. This has the consequence that they have more room to Manoeuvre in that they are not directly in the limelight.¹⁷ The relatively informal standing of track two allows for the initiation of talks on sensitive issues that cannot be dealt with in formal settings. Unofficial parties have no resources or leverage to bring to the table and therefore generally take on a more facilitating or educational role.

Churches and religious organizations may acquire a particular position in this larger negotiation context. In Track two, churches act on the basis of normative system and identity of their believers, with a constructive potential.¹⁸ According to Villumstad, religious leaders have direct access both to the grassroots level and to the top leadership level. Their access to the grassroots is through their own religious communities, or constituencies. Their access to the top leadership is through their representative mandate from smaller or larger constituencies within the larger community. Their strategic potential to make a difference in conflicts is considerable, and transcends different levels in national and international contexts.¹⁹ The church has always argued that it is a suitable

¹⁵ Agha et al, 2003,pg 1-9

¹⁶ Chigas,2005,pg 126-141

¹⁷ Lederach, John Paul,"Preparing for conflict: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures".
<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/contmns.htm> pg 147, as accessed on 19th July 2008.

¹⁸ Villumstad,nd, pg 13

¹⁹ Ibid pg 14

conflict manager because of its vocation. In view of the church, its mission is one of peace and reconciliation²⁰.

CHURCH IN MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL CONFLICT IN AFRICA

In Mozambique the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio became a key mediator in the conflict in the mid-1970s. The successful involvement of Sant'Egidio is commonly considered as, on the one hand, a consequence of the community's neutrality in the conflict, while on the other hand, as a result of the shared normative ground the community's ethos offered to the parties.²¹ In other cases as in seeking to prevent the re-emergence of war in Angola in 1998, religious actors engage their local and international networks to explore opportunities out side of a conventional diplomatic process. The Addis Sudan peace process of 1972 was brokered by the All African Council of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Peace negotiations in Burundi were further complicated by strains between Nyerere's facilitation team and the Rome- based Community of San Egidio that hosted the first secret talks between the government and the National Council for Defence and Democracy (CNDD) rebel movement. At the vanguard of Catholic peace building activities is Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Founded by the bishops of the United States to help the poor and marginalized throughout the world in 1943, the agency now works in

²⁰ Mwangiri M, *Theory, processes and conflict management*, watermark publications, Nairobi, 2000. pg 138

²¹ Appleby, R Scott, *Religion as an Agent of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding*, 1996, pg 829

nearly 100 countries on five continents²² Beginning as an organization focusing largely on development issues and international aid, it has now positioned itself as a force for building peace in specific local contexts. Numerous scholars trace the genesis of this orientation to the agency's experience in Rwanda. The United States Institute of Peace reports: No single recent event has affected the direction of CRS so deeply as the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. CRS had years of experience in Rwanda and was highly regarded, but was totally unprepared for the genocide and had not devoted resources and energy to forestalling this slaughter

CHURCH IN NORTHERN UGANDA CONFLICT

Religion has been notoriously part of the problem of Uganda, fostering faction and party strife, exacerbating old tensions and creating new divisions. In Northern Uganda, the strife between Catholics and Protestants was particularly vicious. The situation in 1985 was one in which Protestant political power was seen to disintegrate and the Catholics saw this as an opportunity for them to regain power lost in 1961 with the ascendancy of Gen Tito Okello, a catholic²³. Anglicans have had to cope with the consequences of this, in addition to responding to the trauma that has confronted Acholi society generally.

The collapse of the Obote regime did provide opportunities for a more constructive engagement with the new government on the part of Catholic leaders in Northern Uganda. Inevitably the Catholic Church has been critical of a southern regime that increasingly found it incapable of handling the crisis in the North. A new generation of lay Catholic leaders has been engaged in critical analysis and practical political

²² ibid

²³ Modoola D, Politics, Class and Ethnicity in Uganda

engagement, both as opposition MPs in parliament and from within government. The strong sense of national identity and inclusiveness within Ugandan Catholicism has been important in letting the voice of Acholi church leaders be heard. This has always been more problematic for the Anglican Church of Uganda. In Acholi itself, both churches have painfully learnt the need for a practical ecumenism in the fostering of peace initiatives, in addressing justice and peace issues, in exploring ways of effecting cleansing, healing and reconciliation.²⁴ Both have insisted on the theme of the restoration of rebels, their rehabilitation and their reincorporation into a common life. There is a degree of idealism in this construction of hope, but that perhaps is necessary in overcoming the despair inherent in the actual situation. Celestin Monga has written of the need for people continually 'to invent in their daily lives an approach to the world that helps them give meaning to the era in which they live.'²⁵ For Monga, this is seen above all in irony, the importance of subversion, of 'collective insubordination': "This. . . allows one to conceive of other freedoms and to survive the hardships and cruelties of everyday life, the totalitarianism of political power, the theological deliriums of fundamentalists attached to a traditional culture little adapted to the times, and the yoke of the family-obsolete but still very much present."²⁶ But perhaps the experience of the Acholi churches as they have agonised over their situation, is that it is not only in ironic subversion, but in the constructive envisioning of new futures, however abortive the attempts have proved so far, that hope is preserved and created afresh.

²⁴ Gersony, R. (1997). *The Anguish of Northern Uganda: Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflicts in Northern Uganda*, U.S. Agency for International Development, Kampala,

²⁵ Celestin Monga, *The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner, 1996, pp 114.

²⁶ Celestin Monga, *The Anthropology of Anger: Civil Society and Democracy in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner, 1996, pp 114.

According to Kevin Ward, both Catholic and Anglican churches in Acholi belong to nationwide institutions. They are able in differing ways (according to their own somewhat different relation to the central structures of their church) to exert influence on the central state institutions with a view to ameliorating the situation. The churches have been at the forefront of peace initiatives throughout the 1990s, and have, in consequence, been regarded with a level of hatred by the 'rebel' forces of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army, and with distrust by the Uganda Government. They have been regarded as essential partners with the Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in their work of relief and initiatives in conflict resolution. They have been able to address, perhaps more effectively and positively than before, the Acholi world view and apprehension of spiritual realities.²⁷

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This study is analysed using the "Conflict transformation theory" as postulated by John Lederach²⁸ According to him, conflict transformation is the process of understanding the nature of the conflict and working with its dialectic nature.²⁹ He pointed out that conflict transformation was different from conflict resolution because the latter implied that conflict was bad, hence something that was short term and should be ended permanently. On the other hand, he noted, "conflict management" suggested that people could be directed or controlled as though were physical objects; he preferred conflict

²⁷ Kevin Ward, *The Armies of the Lord: Christianity, rebels and the state in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999*, P 189

²⁸ John Paul Lederach, "Preparing for conflict: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures". <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/contmnns.htm> as accessed on 19th July 2008, p3-23

²⁹ *Ibid*, p 15

transformation instead. One of the main tenets of the theory includes the belief that human beings that are involved in the relationship naturally create social conflict, but once it begins it transforms the events, people and relationships that created the initial conflict. He explains that the changes could be predictable in some aspects, especially in communication patterns, social organization as well as in altering images of self and the other.

The other tenets of the theory are that the transformation process should include 'peace', 'justice' 'truth' and mercy. According to him, the starting point of conflict transformation is truth, which is the identification and acknowledgment of what happened. Justice involves the pursuit of the restoration, of rectifying wrongs and creating right relationships based on equality and fairness. Mercy involves compassion, forgiveness and a new start. It is oriented towards supporting persons who have committed injustices, encouraging them to change and move on.³⁰ The final result is peace, which is in the form of reconciliation and may be experienced as a ceasefire. "Conflict transformation" also suggests that left alone, conflict can have destructive consequences. However, if the consequences are modified, social; structures, self images and relationships may improve as a result of the conflict instead of being harmed by it. This would involve re-defining issues to change perceptions of issues and actions of other people or groups. In conflict transformation theory, transformation also touches the way the conflict was being expressed. Ideally, its expression should change from being competitive, aggressive and violent to being non- violent, advocated and mediated. Lederach sees advocacy and mediation as being stages of the conflict transformation process. Advocacy, in his opinion, was important to raise people's awareness of the issue

³⁰ Ibid, pg ,21

being contested. It prepared a way for mediation, which is the process of steering the conflict from mutually destructive modes towards dialogue and interdependence.³¹

In Lederach's view, transformation is holistic, from the personal to the systems level. Whereas at the personal level conflict transformation involves the pursuit of awareness and commitment to change, at the systems level it involves increasing opportunities for equity and non-violence. Finally, since conflict usually accentuates the differences between people and their opinions, effective conflict transformation is aimed at improving mutual understanding. Even when peoples' needs, interests and values are non-reconcilable and different progress can be attained if each group strives for some relative understanding of the other.³²

Lederach's theory has been criticized by some scholars, among them Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan Funk.³³ They pointed out that the theory was one-sided; it put too much faith on institutional formulae and too little emphasis on communal cooperation in pursuit of values as well as celebrating human self-determination, while Islamic approaches put more emphasis on divine purpose. They also noted that the theory viewed the process of resolving or transforming conflict as drawing a lot from expediency and technique. By doing so, the theory neglected human relationships while focusing on isolated facets of the whole.

HYPOTHESIS

This study tested one hypothesis.

³¹ John Paul Lederach, "Preparing for conflict: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures". <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/contmnns.htm> as accessed on 19th July 2008, p.10-15

³² Ibid, p 21

³³ Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan Funk "Islamic views of peacemaking" <http://www.2.norwich.edu/hkearsle/video/sais-lecture.pdf> as accessed on 19th July 2008.

- (i) The Church has played a role in conflict management in Northern Uganda.
- (ii) The Church is not a good conflict manager

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study was a historical analysis of secondary sources of data as well as oral interviews of those that have been involved in the conflict, either as victims, actors or/managers of the conflict. The gathering of data began immediately the researcher obtained a go ahead from the college. To collect primary data, the researcher interviewed some civilians in Kalongo and Wol Internally Displaced Peoples' Camps (IDPs), to appreciate their perception of the conflict and its handling.

The study engaged civil leaders in the conflict affected region, to establish the views about the various management efforts of the Northern Uganda conflict. The study could not have been complete if it did not capture the views of the military as a main actor in the conflict, as a party as well as an actor in the management efforts. The study benefited from some of the religious leaders that have taken part in the several attempts made to resolve the conflict peacefully. Among the secondary sources, the study drew information from books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, a number of agreements, signed by the Uganda government and some of the rebel groups and the Internet. All the secondary data was obtained in Kenya and Uganda. This was through extensive reading of published documents in the form of books and journal as well as soft copies from Internet based sources. This was from Defense Staff College (DSC) library, National Defense Staff College (NDC) library, World Bank (WB) library in Kampala, Ministry of

Defence (MOU) library, Kampala, All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) resource center as well as center for Conflict Resolution Resource Centre (CRRC).

Several conferences and seminars on the Northern Uganda Conflict have been held at different times during the period of the conflict. Reports of conferences and meetings were obtained to fill any gaps left by information obtained from books. Most of the reports were from the Internet and Uganda's News papers. The writer happened to have toured the conflict region several times in line with his duties prior to enrollment for the current training he is attending. He therefore eye witness accounts from Pabbo, in Gulu district, which was home to seventy seven IDPs; Adilang, Patongo, Kalongo, Omiya Pa Cwa and Wol in Pader district.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenges of conflict management are not how to eradicate conflict but rather how to deal with them so that their harmful effects do not affect our societies and ruin human relationships.¹ Conflict management thus, has become a pre-occupation of both official and non official actors. The Non-official mediators use Track two mediation tools.

Track two diplomacy like Track I, is a top down conflict management tool but usually involves un official middle level leaders, from international NGOs, churches, academics and private business. It is usually used as a supplement or precursor to track 1². In particular, local-level Track II approaches to conflict management and reconciliation are key. For example, organic peace conferences in 1993 and 1996 have led to stability in Somaliland. The Dinka-Nuer reconciliation conference held in March 1999 in southern Sudan is an important adjunct to broader peacemaking, and the implementation of the provisions of their agreement and follow-on process should be fully supported. Religious leaders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) there and in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and northern Uganda have undertaken reconciliation initiatives which should be watched closely and supported when appropriate. Future Track I efforts should be cognizant of such grassroots initiatives.³

Church leaders and representatives from the Balkan region and other parts of Europe and North America met in Oslo, Norway, from 14 to 16 November 1999 to assess the Kosovo crisis and its impact on the Balkan region and the rest of Europe. The

¹ Mwagiru, M, Munene, M& Karuru.N, *Understanding Conflict and its Management*. (Watermark Printers Limited, Nairobi, 1998) p.32.

² Learnely Lillian & Chiwandamira Lyn, *Understanding Conflict & Peace building in Africa*, April, 2006.

³ *ibid.*

Conference was organised by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), the World Council of Churches and the informal Vienna group of church (VGC) leaders⁴. The conference was hosted by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and by the Reformed Churches in Bern-Jura-Solothurn. The event was part of the international inter-church advocacy initiative Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the WCC⁵.

Kobia acknowledged that churches "are seriously divided on this issue". There are "differences amongst us in our readings of the biblical texts," he said. However, "those differences must not be an obstacle for common action for a just peace."⁶ Recognizing the "crucial importance" of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, "especially in regards to this situation," the conference amounts to an "intra-Christian theological dialogue where we start amongst ourselves," Kobia said. "We have not spent sufficient time or energy attending to our own perspective and differences within the [Christian] family," he added. "The churches have a key role in the resolution of this long and bloody tragedy of suffering and struggle," said Kobia, who compared the conflict to "another apartheid situation." They are called "to heal and to bring all sides to reconciliation rooted in the ethical and theological imperative for a just peace."⁷

⁴ Report of the consultation convened by CEC in cooperation with the WCC and the Serbian Orthodox Church, Oslo, 14-16 November 1999.

⁵ Report of the consultation convened by CEC in cooperation with the WCC and the Serbian Orthodox Church, Oslo, 14-16 November 1999.

⁶ Report of the consultation convened by CEC in cooperation with the WCC and the Serbian Orthodox Church, Oslo, 14-16 November 1999.

⁷ *ibid*

The first civil war in the Sudan lasted 17 years before a peace deal was brokered with the facilitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in 1972, in Addis Ababa Ethiopia⁸. In 1983, civil war erupted again between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan people's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) as a result of failure to implement the 1972 agreement. It is estimated that 2.5-3 million people have died as a result of the war and over 4 million have fled their homes, many to neighbouring countries. Religious intolerance has made the conflict deeper⁹

The World Council of Churches has a longstanding commitment to peace and reconciliation, and to heal broken communities in order to build a culture of peace. The WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva, 26th August to 3 September 1999, in its message - The Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace - stated:

“We offer with the Decade to Overcome Violence a truly ecumenical space, a safe space for encounter, mutual recognition, and common action. We will strive together to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. We will work together to be agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and communities as well as in political, social and economic structures at national, international levels. We will co-operate to build a culture of peace that is based on just and sustainable communities”.¹⁰

The Central Committee's message coincided with the United Nations “Decade for Culture

⁸ eisa.org.za/index.html: *Memorandum & Recommendations on Response to Armed Conflict & International Law*.

⁹ *Public Issues: Statement on Sudan*, by the Executive committee of the WCC, Seoul, South Korea 24th – 25th 2004.

¹⁰ The WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva, 26th August to 3 September 1999.

of Peace and non Violence for the Children of the World”. The two initiatives were meant to motivate and strengthen each other.

Convened by the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) and hosted by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), the “Churches for Water in Africa (CWA)” Conference took place in Entebbe, Uganda from 21st to 25th May 2007, with participants representing churches, church-based organisations, faith based development agencies, and other civil society organisations from 19 African countries¹ as well as guests from Europe and Latin America. The purpose of the Conference was to deliberate on the water challenges in Africa, to exchange experiences on the water related development work and to share theological reflections on water and the role of the churches. The Conference raised concerns about ongoing and potential conflicts over water at local, national and inter-state levels. Having discussed different experiences, for example the Nile, we express our conviction that water conflicts can be turned into signs of hope, if non-violent solutions are sought. This must be done together with the affected population, based on mutual respect for the right to water.

At the turn of the 19th century, Ethiopian Christians began proclaiming the gospel with the help of the Lutheran missions in the country. From these joint efforts the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was instituted as a national church in 1959. It takes its name from its first congregation in Addis Ababa, Mekane Yesus, meaning the “Place of Jesus”. The peace, justice and advocacy commission, established in 1998, aims at making the prophetic voice of the church heard and

equipping the members of the church for peace-building.¹¹ This is achieved through training, integrating peace education into development and evangelism programmes, lobbying, conflict management, interreligious cooperation, etc.¹²

According to Professor Maxwell Owusu (University of Michigan) in Ghana, there is a long history of church or missionary intervention for peace and order in serious political and social crises.¹³ The peace making motives of Christian leaders were based on the conviction that the maintenance of law and order was essential for the spread of Christianity, the promotion of social- economic development and spiritual as well as material wellbeing.¹⁴

The community of San Egidio, facilitated the Peace Talks between the Burundi government and the CNDD that led to an agreement in March, 1997.¹⁵ According to Ndayizigiye, the Catholic Church in Burundi, took one side and helped the oppressed Hutu ethnic group.¹⁶ Once the church takes sides then its impartiality is compromised which therefore undermines its mediation efforts towards conflict resolution. Notwithstanding Galtung's view that a conflict manager does not necessarily have to be impartial.

In Mozambique, the church supported the Portuguese colonial government, including the war against the freedom fighters. The church was so powerful and participated in the exploitation of the poor which left Front for the Liberation of

¹¹ Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

¹² Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

¹³ Smock David R, Creative Approaches to Managing Conflict in Africa: Findings from USIP funded projects.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Ndayizigiye Berchman Jean, Humiliation & Violent Conflicts in Burundi: Paper presented for Round Table 1 of the 2005 Work Shop on Humiliation & Violent Conflict, Columbia University, NY, Dec 15-16, 2005.

¹⁶ *ibid*

Mozambique (FRELIMO) embittered and at independence, the new government nationalized church property, which made the two sworn enemies.¹⁷ The churches, nevertheless mediated between FRELIMO and Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO), the belligerents in the post independence conflict and were accepted.

In a nut shell various church organizations have been involved in conflict mediation as a matter of moral obligation grounded in the belief of the sanctity of life and therefore the need to ameliorate human suffering. Mwangi argues that conflict managers who want to be effective must be familiar with the various methods of managing conflict. This does not mean just knowing what the methods are, but also appreciating which method to use for which conflict and the problem for each type of conflict management and this necessitate a strategy; informed by theory, because “theory gives a vision and a sense of direction...”¹⁸

¹⁷ *Journal of Church and State*, March 22, 2004: The Catholic Church in Conflict Resolution in Mozambique Post-Colonial Conflict, 1977- 1992.

¹⁸ Makumi Mwangi, *Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*. Centre for Conflict Research, Nairobi (2006) pg 139.

CHAPTER THREE: CHURCH IN INTERNAL CONFLICTS

MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The church has become not only a regular conflict manager, but an indispensable as well. With the end of the cold war, intra-state conflicts have replaced/ 'substituted' inter-state conflicts. This scenario has attracted non state actors in the mediation efforts to manage the conflicts with the intention of minimising human suffering. These actors include among others the Church, which has played a significant role in the field of conflict management in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The peace making motive of Christian leaders could be based on the notion that maintenance of law and order is essential for the spread of Christianity. Is the church, never the less effective conflicts manager? Could there be ulterior motives behind the face of Christian philanthropy motivated by love for 'God's children'?

According to Burton, officials assume that conflict occurs because of scarcity, so, if conflicts are permitted to run their course, then resources will be allocated on the basis of the level of power possessed by the competing parties. This makes no provision, however, for considerations of justice and equity.¹ Burton believes that such conflicts often reflect a deeper source of discontent; the absence of workers participation in the decision making process. Borrowing Burton's argument, it is evident that the involvement of non official actors, bring representation of the common people into the mediation of the conflict. Participation will not mean that conflicts no longer recur, but it

¹ Banks M (ed). *Conflict in World Society a new Perspective on International Relation.*(St. Martin's Press New York 1984) p. 90.

does mean that they will take a different form and will be amendable to more creative solutions.² This could be explained by Mwangi's observation that track two management methods tend to use "track one approaches, strategies..."³ Consequently, they have not had a significantly long term impact.

Track two diplomacy like track one, is also top down but usually involves un official middle level leaders, from international NGOs, Churches, Academics and Private business and is used as a precursor to track one.⁴ Track two local efforts have a dual-face: their autonomous origin is critical in sustaining their credibility, yet they cannot endure without a supportive central government⁵. In conflicts such as Acholiland, the central government is important in tying the hands of local recalcitrant officials who may be less receptive to alternative approaches to conflict resolution. Local state actors need direction from central government to appreciate the contributions of middle level actors such as the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI). But when such actors participate in creating new institutions with government actors, they risk compromising their autonomy and at times legitimacy.

The ambiguous relationship between Track two actors and state officials is inevitable in light of the complementary roles spawned by the challenges of seeking outcomes to civil conflicts. The religious leaders and their allies have hemmed the government into doing things that it might not necessarily want, but such efforts need to be sustained by responsive national and local contexts. Autonomy is, therefore, not a

² Banks M (ed). *Conflict in World Society a new Perspective on International Relation*.(St. Martin's Press New York 1984) p. 90.

³ Makumi Mwangi, *Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*. Centre for Conflict Research, Nairobi (2006) pg 138.

⁴ Learnely Lillian & Chiwandamira Lyn, *Understanding Conflict & Peace building in Africa*, April, 2006

⁵ Makumi Mwangi, *Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*. Centre for Conflict Research, Nairobi (2006) pg 140

zero-sum phenomenon since Track two efforts ultimately operate within the opportunities and constraints of larger political contexts. Realistically, local peace-building efforts are aptly perceived as complementary, rather than competitive to national and regional initiatives⁶.

Middle level community track two efforts like problem solving work shops, work well when they focus on narrow issue such as peace and reconciliation, which generate broad consensus and are easy to mobilize opinion around. The question of focus is tied to one of role multiplication that generates the need for institutionalization. The dilemma, however, is that even focusing on narrow issues requires a modicum of institution building, which the ARLPI has had to do. As these roles multiply, yet should remain non directive⁷ these local actors are forced to create more elaborate organizational structures. This explains the emergence of institutional conflicts, as the ARLPI takes on a life larger than what some of its supporters envisaged. If the church leaders are to be effective in conflict management therefore, they must have a strategy informed by theory; because “theory gives a vision and a sense of direction...”⁸

Perhaps one way out of the problem of role multiplication and institutionalization is for such organizations to articulate clearly their missions from the outset. For faith-based institutions in conflicts, it is also critical to define their relations with other existing institutions. The long-term mission of the ARLPI has yet to be effectively articulated to the lower ranks of the religious hierarchy, creating the impression at present, that the

⁶ Makumi Mwangi, *Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*. Centre for Conflict Research, Nairobi (2006)

⁸ Makumi Mwangi, *Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*. Centre for Conflict Research, Nairobi (2006) pg 139.

initiative is led and driven by few individuals. Potential intra-organizational problems might arise without a conscious attempt to define its future vis-à-vis its targets and constituencies. Long-term efficacy of such track two efforts is depended on addressing the broader causes and sources of the civil conflict. In the face of continuing conflict, the ARLPI role needs to be seen more realistically as essential halfway house between national and regional initiatives. The persistent question the ARLPI obtains from the people in Acholiland is: Where is the Peace? It underscores the dilemma of advocating for a peace that seems to lie with parties beyond the reach of local actors. Religious leaders will be even more pertinent in the post-conflict reconstruction phase as they purvey the message of healing and reconciliation to a traumatized society⁹.

The ARLPI's core activities, education and training of Peace Volunteers Association (PVA), plus peace advocacy, need increased and consistent funding. Funding that strengthens the institutional capacity of the ARLPI is necessary to meet its growing roles and to build a lean, competent, and professional organization to oversee the work already in progress. There is also need for a better coordination of the ARLPI's roles with national religious organizations. In addition, institutionalization of the ARLPI needs to be accompanied by more transparency and accountability. Funding of activities auxiliary to the institutional mission of the ARLPI such as the peace campaigns is bound to compromise the core activities of the ARLPI, reduce its institutional credibility and hamper future mobilization efforts.¹⁰ Peace campaigns epitomize the ARLPI's institutional outreach and collaboration, but they might dent its image, particularly when donor funds are not spent appropriately. The proliferation of proposals for donor funding

⁹ ARLPI, 2003 Report.

¹⁰ Rodriguez C The role of Religious Leaders, Gulu, Northern Uganda, 2002.

for peace efforts that replicate the ARLPI's roles represents a troubling spiral of competitive bidding, particularly since most of the proposals are from organizations with tenuous links to the community or the major actors in the conflict.

The ARLPI's Track II intervention role embraces community activities that range from lobbying for amnesty for the rebels, educating the population about peace, and providing an alternative forum for the articulation of local grievances. Within a very short time, these activities have spawned new local institutions, primarily the Kitgum Joint Peace Forum (KJPT) and the Gulu District Peace and Reconciliation Team (DPRT). These institutions are a testimony to the ability and willingness of local people to contribute to peace¹¹. But the ARLPI's intervention and the institutions it has spawned are still new and untested, dependent for their long-term efficacy on comprehensive regional and national solutions to the civil conflict.

Attempts to bring together the three major religions under the umbrella of the ARLPI are a departure from the legacy of religious polarization and partisanship. Like the rest of the country, the north inherited a pattern of close institutional affiliation between religious groups and political parties, notably the association of the Catholics with the Democratic Party (DP) and the Anglicans with the Uganda People's Congress (UPC).¹² This sectarianism was exacerbated by Idi Amin's efforts to promote Islam as the dominant religion throughout the 1970s¹³. Although Museveni launched a campaign against sectarianism starting in 1986, these divisions remained salient to political life. By transcending the inherited institutional divisions, the ARLPI views its organizational

¹¹ Rodriguez C The role of Religious Leaders, Gulu Northern Uganda, 2002.

¹² Gilbert M. Khadiagala, The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda March, 2001, pp 3

¹³ Kabwegyere Tarsis, Politics of State Formation in Uganda. Fountain Publishers, Kampala. 1997.

framework as a major phase in anti-sectarianism, not just in the north, but the rest of country.

In conflict resolution in Northern Uganda, the Mennonites have been particularly active, working with both Church of Uganda and Catholic agencies. In 1999, Cosmas Lam, was a young Catholic layman in Kitgum, Lam facilitated an ecumenical training course for 'peace animators', held in the ¹⁴Catholic Comboni Centre.¹⁵ The Resident District Commissioner, Jollo Ben Ochaya, the Anglican Bishop, Mac Ochola and the Catholic priest of Kitgum, Fr Carlos Rodriques: were speakers. The conference was wide ranging, dealing with political engagement, and the need for reconciliation at the local level to enable the reintegration of former rebels. It also faced on-going issues of conflict not specifically related to war situations, especially those of small communities and domestic violence. The conference was part of the Community Peace (Education) Building Programme organised by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative. ARLPI had organised a gathering of religious leaders in Gulu the year before, with the theme of 'Bedo Piny', signifying the restoration of peace and prosperity to the land, a space for discussion and debate.¹⁶

In 1999, conferences about peace were in abundance, partly because of a change in government policy. After the breakdown of the peace negotiations of 1995 the

¹⁴ *The Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) is an initiative of the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the All Africa Conference of Churches, Latin American Council of Churches, Church of Sweden, Bread for the World (Germany), Norwegian Church Aid, Church World Service (USA), Cairos Canada and others. The EWN is committed to the exchange of best practices on community based water programmes and to the advocacy work for the human right to water. Its secretariat is hosted by the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland.*

¹⁵ Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp208 ,retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008

¹⁶ Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp208 retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008

government had been reluctant to get further involved in peace talks, and its good faith in conducting them had even been questioned by Acholi, who spoke sardonically of 'peace jokes'. The churches had constantly urged a resumption of substantial dialogue. In June 1996 the Uganda Joint Christian Council in Kampala, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Wamala, had made a plea to Kony to stop the violence. The Council in turn pledged 'to help promote dialogue and reconciliation between you and the Government of Uganda'. It reminded the Government of its responsibility for promoting 'peace, unity and development': 'The Church cherishes the principles of reconciliation and we call upon the Government of Uganda to seek peaceful means of bringing the war in Northern Uganda to a speedy end.'¹⁷ By 1999 the Government was ready for more initiatives and had introduced an Amnesty bill into Parliament. These efforts by the church hemmed the government but had no impact on the rebels; instead the Cardinals emissary, Mzee Lagony Francis, an Uncle to LRA army commander, Otti Lagony was sit into pieces.

The churches have been involved in the government talks, as well as the plethora of Acholi initiatives (both within Uganda and among those in exile in Europe). The churches themselves have units or departments devoted to these issues, such as the Catholic Committee on Justice and Peace, with chapters in Gulu and Kitgum. In 1998 Anglican Bishops from northern dioceses in Uganda held a retreat in Apac (Lango), on 'Peace and Reconciliation'.¹⁸ One of the most important features of this conference was the presence of the Bishop of Luweero, Evans Kisekka, who said that he had 'come from the former danger zone . . . 'to weep with you'. One of the resolutions was that in each

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp208 ,retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008

diocese the bishop should liaise on a regular basis with the 'local leaders on peace and reconciliation'. Religious leaders have been very active in this regard in Northern Uganda, not least in the international gathering of Acholi of all political persuasions in London in April 1997 and July 1998, the Kacoh Madit (the Great Gathering).¹⁹ Out of these meetings came a commission for Dennis Pain, through the organization International Alert, to write a report which examined possible ways forward. As well as an examination of the historical development of conflict and the political impasse, Pain's report examined the mechanisms for resolving the conflict and establishing and maintaining peace in accordance with Acholi cultural norms.²⁰ The report highlights the concept of Mato oput (reconciliation) and the ritual of Gomo Tong (Bending the Spear) as important for an understanding of the processes of conflict resolution. Pain, a sociologist and a Christian with long associations with Northern Uganda, was partly responding to a climate within Acholi Christianity favourable to the search for indigenous religious values.

For the Catholics the enculturation theme has been expressed by Fr Vincent Okot in his thesis, *Reconciliation: A Moral Therapy for Uganda*,²¹ and in the work of Fr Santo Ojok, the pastoral coordinator of the Gulu diocese.²² The Mennonites do not have any churches in Acholi, but they do have an historic presence in Tanzania and Kenya. The

¹⁹ *Kacoke Madit: The Quest for Peace in North Uganda* [Articles, commentaries, statements, resolutions and documents from Kacoke Madit 1997 and 1998 conferences and other *Kh4* activities], London: The MK Secretariat, 2000.

²⁰ Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp209, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008.

²² Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp209, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008.

'peace witness', fundamental to Mennonite identity, has produced a number of studies of how traditional African communities resolve conflict, for example in their Kenyan Pastoralist Community Development programme.²³ Bishop Kisekka in his speech at the Apac retreat mentioned Baganda methods of achieving reconciliation. Bishop Ochola,²⁴ who has had a central role among Acholi leaders in the construction and implementation of such initiatives, talked of an Acholi 'natural theology', based on, or parallel to, the Ten Commandments, involving mutual respect, truth telling and respect for property. He also stressed the respect traditionally accorded those who broker reconciliation and forgiveness. He saw these values as basic to 'being Acholi', the British had created and fostered the myth of the Acholi as a military people²⁵. The articulation of such resources for conflict resolution by the intelligentsia of Acholi can be seen as a counterpoise to the ways in which Lakwena and Kony have deployed the repertoire of the spirits in the service of anger and punishment.²⁶

Over all, track two conflict management, tends to address the violence in the conflict, which in most cases tend to focus on the appeasement of the belligerents, at the expense of the underlying and long term causes. This is the same short coming of track one conflict management strategy. According to Galtung, conflict can be viewed as a triangle with contradictions, that is, causes at the top, and behavior and attitude at the bottom corners.²⁷

²³ Ibid,pp209

²⁴ Bishop Ochola is a Retired Bishop of Kitgum Diocese and his wife died of a rebel land mine, in 1996.

²⁵ Karugire Rubaraza, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, Kampala :Fountain Publishers 1996.

²⁶ I Kevin Ward, 'The Armies of the Lord': Christianity, Rebels and the State in Northern Uganda, 1986-1999, pp209, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> on Thu Feb 14 09:25:38 2008.

²⁷ Galtung Johan, Violence, Peace and Peace Research, in *Journal of Peace Research* 3, pg 167-192.

CHAPTER FOUR: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

Conflict and violence have plagued much of Uganda's forty six years of independence, from Obote's attack on Kabaka Muteesa's palace,¹ Idi Amin's military coup in 1971 to the fourteen insurgencies since Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) took power in 1986. Indeed, violence in Ugandan politics dates back further, to the attack on the residence of the Kabaka of Buganda in 1966, followed by the abrogation of the 1962 independence constitution by Obote. The attack brought the quasi-federal arrangement under the constitution to an end and forced the Kabaka to flee to the United Kingdom.² Yet, the most protracted of these conflicts has been the continuing war in northern Uganda, which has lasted nearly 18 years, encompassed five different rebellions and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in districts from Adjumani to Soroti. In addition, the war has displaced over 1.4 million people and all but destroyed northern Uganda's agriculture, its economic base.³

The Milton Obote – King Muteesa conflict, became an Obote – Buganda region conflict that saw the former declare a state of emergency over the region. This conflict left the church ineffectual since the feuding leaders belonged to the Anglican Church, yet the Catholic church was watching the situation with glee since its candidate Benedict Kiwanuka had been rigged out of power by the British purely on religious grounds. Ethnicity seems to have compromised matters spiritual as the church leaders from

¹ Mudoola Dan, *Communal Conflict in the Military and its Political Consequences*, in Kumar Rupesinghe, *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*, (London: Ohio University Press, 1989).

² John Saul. S, *The Unsteady State: Uganda, Obote & General Amin*, in *The Politics of Transition in Africa*, edited by Giles Mohan & Tunde Zack-Williams, Roape Publications, Africa World Press., 2004.

³ World Food Programme Emergency Report No 4 of 2004. Available at www.reliefweb.int

Buganda felt attached to their Kabaka (king), while the rest of the country agreed with Obote's move to neutralize Buganda.

Beginning 1986 when Museveni captured power from General Tito Okello Lutwa, the northern war was initially a popular revolt by Okello's ousted army troops and their numerous civilian supporters who formed the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). Both these rebels and their successors, who came together to form the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Auma "Lakwena", received massive popular support in the north and thus seemed to act on behalf of an Acholi population that was both alarmed by, and angry at, the new Museveni regime. Fear of national marginalisation by a government they perceived to be dominated by western Ugandans, as well as fear for retaliation for atrocities committed in central Uganda⁴, plus resentment against what were believed to be National Resistance Army (NRA)-sponsored atrocities and devastating cattle raids, were at the heart of the early insurgencies.⁵

The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) forces were defeated in March 1986, but many remnants of the former army joined with Acholi politicians, former Idi Amin troops and others in Juba, southern Sudan to form the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) that same month. These ex-soldiers initially posed a threat to the new regime, but the NRM's carrot-and stick approach resulted in a peace deal in June 1988 that brought most of the fighters out of the bush⁶.

⁴ Museveni K Yoweri, *What is Africa's Problem*, NRM Publication, Kampala, 1992 pg 32.

⁵ Olara Otunou, 2006, Interview first aired on *Uprising*, KPFK Pacifica Radio in Los Angeles. on the host and producer of *Uprising*. Retrieved on 23 January from 2006 from <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm>

⁶ Ocitti, J. 1999, *Political Evolution and Democracy in Uganda: 1952-1996*, The Edwin Mellon Press, Lewiston

The Gulu Peace Accord, brokered by Museveni's brother, the then Army Commander of NRA Caleb Akandwanaho (Salim Saleh), ended the first phase of the anti-Museveni war. The Accord provided for: 1) amnesty to the combatants 2) integration of 2,000 of ex rebels into the NRA, 3) political appointments of their civilian leaders⁷ (who include the Minister for International Affairs) and attempted to address political and economic issues by calling for the discussion of a new constitution and a northern reconstruction programme.⁸ Meanwhile, another rebellion began to capitalise on the anti-government sentiments of many northerners: the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Auma "Lakwena". According to one study, Lakwena "offered hope for worldly as well as spiritual redemption in a dark hour of despair", since the Acholi had been ousted from power and were facing what many of them at the time believed to be persecution and possible extinction.⁹ Lakwena energised and disciplined her soldiers with cleansing rituals and strict rules of moral behaviour, and received numerous civilian donations as a result of her popularity.¹⁰ She led the movement all the way south to Jinja, allegedly because NRA soldiers feared her spiritual powers and therefore allowed her to pass through much of the country, but was eventually defeated by a revitalized NRA military force in November 1987.¹¹

⁷ Onyango Odongo, *The Rebel War in Northern Uganda, 1998*. (Odongo was one of the negotiators of UPDM).

⁸ C C M Lamwaka, 1998, p. 155.

⁹ Vlassenroot Doom, *Kony's Message: A New Koine? The Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda*, *African Affairs* 1999, pp 16-7.

¹⁰ Doom & Vlassenroot, *op cit*, pp 16-8.

¹¹ Gersony, R. (1997). *The Anguish of Northern Uganda: Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflicts in Northern Uganda*, U.S. Agency for International Development, Kampala, p. 45-48

In retrospect, the UPDA and HSM were similar in that they tried to mobilise popular grievances in a struggle against the new government. Although the former was more about capturing political power and the latter more about rejuvenating Acholi society, they both articulated reasons for rebellion with which most Acholi sympathized at the time. These popular causes can be summarized as follows: they feared reprisals for what many perceived to be Acholi-led massacres in the Luwero Triangle during the early 1980s; they were upset at their loss of political and economic power as a result of Museveni's violation of a 1985 power-sharing agreement, and destructive cattle raids that they believed were sponsored by the NRM; they were afraid the new government believed to be controlled exclusively by western Ugandans would marginalize them after their dominance in the national army¹²; they were defending themselves against atrocities committed by certain NRA units in 1986-7; and they saw violence as the only means to address these grievances after witnessing Uganda's successive violent power struggles since independence.¹³ Since they were trying to gain popular support, neither the UPDA nor the HSM committed significant atrocities against their own civilians, although such a trend began during Severino Lukoya's brief rebellion in 1987. Severino, the father of Lakwena, tried to take over the movement following her defeat, but was unable to motivate the population and therefore turned to terror tactics, particularly against children, to sustain operations.¹⁴

¹² Karugire Rubaraza, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, Kampala :Fountain Publishers 1996.

¹³ R R Okumu, *Analytical proposal for peace in Northern Uganda*, unpublished paper, 2003

¹⁴ Doom & Vlassenroot, *Kony's Message: A New Koine? The Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda*, *African Affairs* 1999, pp 19.

With General Okello now in power, the Acholi were happy and viewed this as their chance and indeed opportunity to rule the country. Negotiations between NRM and the Military Junta were held in the Kenya's capital Nairobi in late 1985 and a power sharing agreement was reached on 17th December 1985.¹⁵ However, Acholis hopes for the high office were soon dashed aside as Museveni dishonoured the above agreement, kicking the Okello junta out of office on 25th Jan 1986. General Okello fled to exile in Sudan and the rest of the soldiers fled in an exodus northwards. The Acholis saw this as betrayal on the part of Museveni and as an orchestrated program of witch-hunt by NRA on northerners. This marked the beginning of mistrust between the fleeing soldiers of the previous government and the in-coming NRA, and continued to widen the already existing north-south fracture.¹⁶ Although it has made tremendous strides in political and economic liberalization throughout most of the rest of the country, the Ugandan government has not done enough to address the legitimate grievances felt by the Acholi in the north, which makes the job of destabilization much easier for the LRA and its Sudanese backers¹⁷.

Poor leadership and organization, however, meant the group quickly dissolved. The UPDA peace deal, Lakwena's defeat and Severino's failure left a significant leadership vacuum among the anti Museveni forces in the north – a vacuum that was quickly filled by Joseph Kony. Kony, an independent UPDA commander who had also tried to take over Lakwena's HSM, had already been amassing a small contingent of

¹⁵ Barnes & Okello Barnes C. and Okello L., 2000. *Accord Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*. Retrieved on 25th September 2008 from <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/intro.shtml>

¹⁶ A strategy for ending Northern Uganda's Crisis, *Africa's Briefing* No 35, 1 Ch: 2006.

¹⁷ Miall H, Ramsbotham O & Woodhouse T: *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 2005.

fighters. He took over a UPDA division in February 1987, persuading a few soldiers to join and kidnapping the rest, and later incorporated a small number of UPDA fighters who refused to give up their arms following the 1988 Gulu peace accord.¹⁸ Initially Kony targeted mostly government fighters, but soon turned against civilians, particularly after government-sponsored “Bow and Arrow” civil defence militias in Gulu and Kitgum were raised against him in 1991-1992. At the same time, the government launched the brutal “Operation North”, which reportedly damaged LRA capacity considerably but also generated significant resentment after the arrest of several popular northern politicians.¹⁹

A critical examination of these groups reveals that after the collapse of the UPDA which was mainly a military outfit, the subsequent groups, invoked Divine inspiration and they received massive support to fight the invaders from the south. It is important to note that despite the blasphemy of calling these groups Divine names, the church in northern Uganda was conspicuously silent, contrary to biblical teaching.²⁰

The most successful peace initiative to date was launched in 1994, led by then-Minister for the Pacification of the North, Betty Bigombe. Despite achieving ceasefires and extensive face-to-face talks with Kony himself, the mission failed as a result of alleged vested interests of certain high-ranking officers and politicians, Kony’s fear of those whose people he had killed and maimed, Museveni’s strict deadline of seven days for negotiations and the LRA’s recourse to Sudan for rearmament.²¹ The war has dragged on for another ten years since the Bigombe negotiations without significant hope of

¹⁸ Behrend, pp 179–80.

¹⁹ Gersony, pp 31–32.

²⁰ Exodus Chapter 20.

²¹ B Afako Lessons from past peace initiatives, monograph commissioned by the Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, 2002.

resolution. According to one of the civil leaders in Gulu district, the elders and church leaders that had blessed Kony dissuaded him from giving up the war²². This revelation was confirmed by Joseph Kony himself who told the Acholi leaders (Political, Religious and cultural) “you blessed me to fight now I will follow your advice.”²³

Brief talks were held in Rome in 1997 with exiled businessmen claiming to be the LRA’s political wing with the facilitation of the community of San Egidio, but failure ensued after the principal negotiator was almost killed by Kony during their first meeting in the bush²⁴. After considerable lobbying by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), the government introduced the Amnesty Act in 2000, which gave a blanket amnesty to all LRA fighters.

By early 2003 optimism was growing that the years of fighting in northern Uganda may soon come to an end. Rebels of the LRA declared a cease-fire and say they wanted to hold talks with the government of Yoweri Museveni. The pledge by the LRA to cease all ambushes, abductions and attacks has been welcomed by the Uganda government.²⁵ The LRA was in a tight corner after its bases in southern Sudan, just over the border from northern Uganda, had been destroyed by Ugandan troops following an agreement with the Sudanese government. The rebels' main sources of food and military supplies were now back home in northern Uganda, which made them much more

²² Chairman Pabbo division.

²³ LRA Leader in a Meeting In Garamba National Park, July 4th, 2006.

²⁴ Okoth G, War in Acholi Land and its Ramification for Peace and Security in Uganda, 2003.

²⁵ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 1 on 25/05/08 at 13:20

vulnerable to attacks by government troops. Then in June 2003, Kony ordered his fighters to destroy Catholic missions, kill priests and missionaries, and beat up nuns.²⁶

In pursuit of Kony's order, the LRA, launched attacks on church properties and institutions, in response the Archbishop Ondama wrote an article in one of the papers and declared that God was under attack!²⁷ Christian teaching asserts that man was created in the image of God, and prior to 2003, the LRA had killed, maimed hundreds of people in addition to abduction to thousands of children, the Archbishop had never proclaimed how endangered God was! One may ask therefore, is God represented by property or his image in man? The church continuously blamed the government for the rebel attacks and mass killings but never blamed the rebels, how impartial has the church been therefore in this conflict?

In February 2002, Sudan agreed to let troops from neighboring Uganda enter its territory to attack the LRA rebels who had been trying for years to overthrow the Ugandan government. The Ugandan army called on the LRA to surrender or be defeated. Ugandan officials said the agreement gave them what they had long been waiting for - the chance to eliminate the LRA. The agreement set the stage for a decisive blow against rebels.²⁸

The vicious rebel attacks in northern Uganda raised questions about planned peace talks between the LRA and Uganda's government. President Yoweri Museveni had agreed to peace talks brokered by Ugandan religious leaders. The Ugandan army had been trying to crush the LRA rebellion for over 18 years without success. President Museveni gave his backing to peace talks to be brokered by religious leaders. Ugandan

²⁶ Ibid pg 2

²⁷ The Daily Monitor, An Independent daily in Uganda.

²⁸ Museveni Yoweri in An Address on the Nations Military Day, 'Tarehe Sita' February 6th, 2002.

army spokesman Major Shaban Bantariza said he believed this was a waste of time because the rebel leader, Joseph Kony, did not have any real agenda to discuss.²⁹

By early 2003 optimism was growing that the years of fighting in northern Uganda may soon come to an end. Rebels of the LRA declared a cease-fire and said they wanted to hold talks with the government. The pledge by the LRA to cease all ambushes, abductions and attacks has been welcomed by the Uganda government. The LRA was in a tight corner after its bases in southern Sudan, just over the border from northern Uganda, had been destroyed by Ugandan troops following an agreement with the Sudanese government. The rebels' main sources of food and military supplies were now back home in northern Uganda, which made them much more vulnerable to attacks by government troops. Then in June 2003, Kony told his fighters to destroy Catholic missions, kill priests and missionaries, and beat up nuns.³⁰

In January 2004 Ugandan Defense Minister Amama Mbabazi said that the government had killed 928 LRA rebels between Jan. 1, 2003 and Jan. 16, 2004. Speaking at a monthly press briefing in Bombo, suburb of Kampala, Minister Mbabazi said 791 rebels were either captured by the army or surrendered during "Operation Iron Fist". He said the army rescued 7,299 people abducted by the rebels. He also said 88 army soldiers died in the combat, 141 others were injured and four went missing during the period.³¹

In May 2004 a report by the aid organization, Christian Aid, condemned what it described as a shirking of the government's responsibilities to protect the people of the north "borne out of a lack of will". It accused the government of herding civilians into

²⁹ The New Vision News Paper, Uganda's Leading Daily, September 23, 2004.

³⁰ Uganda: Joseph Kony (Lra) Orders, 'Kill All Clergy.' Religious Liberty Prayer List - No. 224 - Tue 17 Jun 2003.

³¹ Amama Mbabazi, Defence Minister, Government of Uganda, 1992 to 2005.

camps ostensibly to protect them from the LRA without offering those living in camps the protection they needed³². The Ugandan government rejected the report, saying the report was "completely unfair". Rebels of the LRA attacked a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in war-ravaged northern Uganda on 16 May 2004, killing scores of people and abducting others. A group of rebels attacked Pagak displaced people's camp in three prongs: one attacked the camp, a second one attacked the soldiers guarding it and the third one concentrated on the patrol units. The group that attacked the camp set ablaze dozens of grass-thatched huts to create confusion, then looted food and abducted people whom they forced to carry their loot for a distance before they killed them along with their babies. By November 2003 the United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Humanitarian Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland stated that he considered the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda to be among the worst on the planet. Several UN agencies, including United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) and the Food and Agricultural Organization, are expected to increase their presence in northern Uganda, provided the government is able to provide adequate security³³.

In October 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) based in The Hague, announced arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and four of his top deputies. The charges ranged from the mutilation of civilians to the forced abduction of and sexual abuse of children. Some Ugandans voiced concern over whether the warrants would undermine the peace process by forcing the LRA leaders into a situation where they must either face

³² Christian Aid, A religious NGO, operating in Northern Uganda.

³³ Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Humanitarian Relief Coordinator, on a visit to Northern Uganda, November, 2003.

trail at The Hague or continue fighting.³⁴ In July 2006, LRA representatives were participating in a series of peace talks with the Ugandan government in neighboring Southern Sudan. The LRA representatives present did not include Joseph Kony who was believed to be hiding in the Democratic Republic of Congo to avoid prosecution for war crimes.³⁵ The Ugandan government seems to have little interest in the LRA's demands of reconstituting the Ugandan military under foreign control and a quota for Acholi in government jobs and instead seems focused on determining the LRA's terms of surrender.

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Some international observers thought a peace deal was going to be reached in October 2006. LRA leaders (though not Kony) met with the Government of Uganda (GOU) negotiators in the town of Juba in Southern Sudan. However, the talks broke down relatively quickly as LRA forces moved from their designated area along the Sudanese-Ugandan border. The talks were also at an impasse. The main discussion was about the charges brought on Kony and four LRA leaders by the ICC. The LRA claimed they would sign a peace deal after the charges were dropped, while GOU negotiators demanded that a peace deal be in place before they discussed dropping the charges.³⁷ Formal negotiations with a party (such as the LRA) that has no identifiable

³⁴ ICC, 'Warrants of Arrest unsealed against Five LRA Commanders', The Hague, 14 October 2005 at <http://www.icc-cpi.int/press/pressreleases/114.html> (visited on 15 October 2005).

³⁵ Cessation of Hostilities Agreement Between The Government of Uganda (GoU) and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed on August 26, 2006.

³⁶ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:20

³⁷ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:20

political platform and a messianic leader would be extremely challenging. In contrast to the Sudan case, the art of the deal will be in the substance of the offers concerning the disposition of the leadership rather than any sustained process of compromise on northern Uganda's future. The Ugandan Government has managed successfully past sources of opposition in this manner.³⁸

The ARLPI's intervention sought to break the institutional and leadership impasse over the conflict. Except for the abortive peace talks conducted by Betty Bigombe, the Museveni government had been committed to use force to end the rebellion.³⁹ In the absence of clear leadership, the ARLPI seemed ready to fill the vacuum as a locus of community leadership and a bridge-builder between the Acholi and central government.⁴⁰ In the broad mandate as a bridge-builders coalescing around a crisis that had resonance to the community, the ARLPI intervention focused on short -and long- term objectives. In the short-term, the initiative sought to mobilize local and national leaders, the Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international community to find a mediated solution to the rebellion.⁴¹ Through these collaborative efforts, the religious leaders would provide the leadership that would forge the community consensus to promote and coordinate efforts for reconciliation and help to foster a culture of dialogue.

The ARLPI saw the ending of the civil strife as the essential precondition for the long term of objectives that encompassed the comprehensive mobilization of resources to

³⁸ Miall H, Ramsbotham O & Woodhouse T; Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 2005.

³⁹ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:2. Pg 3

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp 3

⁴¹ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:2. Pg 3

deal with the multiple problems of post-conflict reconstruction, social justice, and economic development to redress the marginalization of the north. Preliminary discussions to foster common approaches to peace began in Kitgum between June and August 1997 organized by Anglican and Catholic leaders.⁴² These efforts culminated in joint prayer for peace by Christians and Muslims on August 15 under a new organization, the Joint Justice and Peace. This organization issued a message that proposed peaceful approaches to the war and condemned the government's policy of establishing protected camps. By January 1998, these initiatives spread to Gulu, resulting in a joint meeting of religious leaders from both districts. To provide organizational framework to the initiative, the religious leaders appointed Bishop Onon-Onweng as the coordinator who would liaise with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other donors for funding of peace initiatives.

A decisive breakthrough for the ARLPI was a meeting with President Museveni on March 8, 1998, in which the leaders presented a memorandum, *A Call for Peace and an End to Bloodshed in Acholiland* that marked the formal inauguration of the intervention. Its immediate objective was to contribute to the process of establishing peace and stability in Acholiland through effective mediation, consensus building, participatory involvement of all the parties, and cessation of hostilities. In engaging the Museveni government, the ARLPI's point of departure was forgiveness and reconciliation, the centerpiece of the campaign for peaceful approach to the conflict.⁴³

⁴² Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:2 pg 4

⁴³ Uganda Civil War, retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda.htm> pg 4 on 25/05/08 at 13:2 pg 4

Key actors in the ARLPI claim that a reluctant Museveni was forced to concede the message of reconciliation when they reminded him that even God forgives sinners. They also credit Museveni for acknowledging the concerns of the ARLPI, marking a significant departure from the past practice of militarism. Presidential imprimatur to the intervention was a critical first step in building confidence and acknowledgement of the centrality of alternative institutional avenues for engagement.⁴⁴ More important, national recognition bolstered the ARLPI's position in the eyes of local government actors, in particular the Local Councils and military authorities, which were to become partners in the peace initiatives. Legitimized at both the national and local levels, the ARLPI through funding from the UNDP embarked on a series of activities to promote peace. These funds were targeted specifically to holding workshops, meetings, and travel to establish contacts with the LRA and its allies. In June 1998, the ARLPI organized a three-day consultative meeting, **Bedo Piny**, in Gulu under the theme of Active Community Participation in Healing, Restoration, and Development.⁴⁵ This meeting brings to the fore the fact that track two initiatives bring all stake holders to the round table, more so when convener is believed to be impartial, indeed the church commands a lot of respect in the region. .

Building on the momentum generated by the meeting with the president, the meeting sought to commit the government and Acholi leadership to a sustained peace initiative that would depart from the previous erratic efforts. This meeting was innovative because it constituted a soul-searching reflection on the diagnosis and prescriptions of the

⁴⁴ Ibid,pp 4

⁴⁵ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001,pp 5

civil conflict. The ARLPI structured the discussions around four central themes: the causes of the insurgency; the causes of its persistence; impact on Acholiland; and measures all parties needed to take to address its end.⁴⁶ On the genesis of the conflict, the meeting gave participants the opportunity for an open debate on the NRM's role in alienating the Acholi through its initial policy of impunity, destruction of civilian property, and the vilification of the Acholi. There was, however, acknowledgement to the fact that the animosity stemmed from a leadership vacuum among the Acholi, a vacuum that had been filled inadvertently by the rebels.⁴⁷ On the continuation of the war, discussion focused on the linkage between the government's support of the SPLA and Sudan's continued destabilization of Acholiland through reciprocal support for the LRA.

Most participants among other issues criticized the government for its failure to listen to local community's view about ways to resolve the conflict.⁴⁸ The *Bedo Piny* proposed a number of recommendations: there was no military solution to the insurgency; efforts should be made to bring the LRA and the government to the negotiating table; an olive branch should be extended to the Joseph Kony and his combatants; parliament should enact an Amnesty Law to pave the way for dialogue and reconciliation; efforts should be made to win the hearts and minds of people in the areas of insurgency; Uganda and Sudan should begin negotiations to resume diplomatic relations; religious leaders, Acholi Members of Parliament (MPs), NGOs and all other social forces should continue to exert pressure on the government and rebels to listen to the concerns of the people; and

⁴⁶ Rodriguez C The role of Religious Leaders, Gulu Northern Uganda, 2002

⁴⁷ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda March, 2001, pp 5

⁴⁸ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda March, 2001, pg 5

religious leaders should begin a massive program of sensitization to promote awareness of the benefits of peace.⁴⁹

The consultative meeting also gave a mandate to the ARLPI to engage the United Nations system and other foreign donors in the quest for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the northern insurgency. The June consultative forum established the legitimacy of the ARLPI as an essential interlocutor in the conflict, solidifying the gains accruing from Museveni's recognition of its role. In addition, the forum mandated the ARLPI to work with the Acholi in the Diaspora for the restoration of peace and stability. Comprising a motley of actors with different political persuasions, most of the Acholi in exile have had strained relations with the Museveni government.⁵⁰ The history of mistrust between most of the exiles and the NRM had for long precluded meaningful dialogue on northern issues. The emergence of religious leaders as a force for peace and reconciliation presented an opportunity to reach out to the exiles constituted since 1997 as the *Kacoke Madit* (KM), the convention of Acholi Diaspora.⁵¹

To provide continuity to the initiative and with the objective of creating new relationships, the ARLPI organized a high-level meeting with the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), Local Council chairs, and MPs from both districts in September 1998 under the theme of "Come Let's Rebuild." The meeting dealt at length with approaches to meeting human rights abuses and atrocities in conflict. It also gave the government, through the Minister in Charge on Northern Rehabilitation, a chance to

⁴⁹ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001, pg 6

⁵⁰ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001, pg 6

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp 6

reiterate the commitment to upholding the ongoing comprehensive dialogue on the civil war. This meeting formally requested the ARLPI, as an impartial body, to spearhead the broad-based campaign of peace education and sensitization under the framework of Community Peace-Building Program. Its centerpiece was the conscious process of actively involving the community to effectively participate in healing, restoration, reconciliation, peace, and development.⁵²

Independently, leaders of the ARLPI have initiated negotiations with some of the rebels. This has been important in creating confidence and opening alternative avenues of negotiations. In April 2000, for instance, a breakaway faction of the LRA asked for pardon and requested ARLPI to reconcile them with the government.⁵³ Independent initiatives toward the rebels are still new, and while the government has indicated that the ARLPI has a blanket authorization to enter into dialogue with the rebels, some of the local government leaders, particularly in Kitgum, seem uncomfortable with such initiatives.

Acholi institutions such as the KJPF and DRPT constitute the fulcrum for the national Amnesty Commission, which was created by parliament to implement the Amnesty Act.⁵⁴ The functions of the Commission are: to implement the Amnesty Act; monitor the demobilization, reintegration, and resettlement of returnees; coordinate the sensitization process of the Amnesty; and promote appropriate reconciliation mechanisms. Since it took long for parliament to authorize funding for the Commission,

⁵² Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001, pp 7

⁵³ *Ibid* pp12

⁵⁴ *Ibid*,pp12

the Commissioners revealed that they would draw most of the implementation blueprint from lessons learnt in Acholiland. They also noted that they were contemplating replicating Acholi institutions in other parts of the country where the Amnesty Act applies.⁵⁵ In all these activities, the church seemed to be bent on securing the rebels and their external backers a soft landing.

There is a consensus about the need to revitalize cultures and traditions which gave elders and clan leaders authority in fostering strong family units, parental care, harmony and reconciliation in the community. The role of traditional leaders is also central in the Amnesty process, as the returning rebels need to be cleansed through traditional practices. The ARLPI has invoked the compatibility of Acholi traditional beliefs with biblical injunctions to dramatize the synergy of institutional roles.⁵⁶ Thus they have lobbied for the empowerment of traditional chiefs as complementary partners in building peace. In Gulu, for instance, the paramount chief, working alongside the ARLPI, played a role in the reconciliation between the Local Council leaders and members of parliament. The existence of traditional leaders in other parts of the country however is testimony to the recognition of the significance of these leaders by the government, so it couldn't have been a product of ARLPI.

The Acholi parliamentary group (APG) is absent from the emerging district institutions. This absence is tied fundamentally to growing conflicts over roles and

⁵⁵ Rodriguez Calros, *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*, "Toment of Northern Uganda: A legacy of Missed Opportunity" by D. Westbrook, www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr. Retrieved on September, 24th 2008.

⁵⁶ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001.pg 12

positions, which stem from the ARLPI's institutionalization.⁵⁷ The APG supported the ARLPI's initial objectives of finding ways to end the rebellion and promote reconciliation. From the perspective of the APG, these were manageable goals that coincided with the routine institutional mandate of religious leaders. Problems have arisen, however, because the APG is wary of the multiplication of the ARLPI's roles as it wades into the uncharted waters of development and reconstruction. This is the kind of conflict Mwagiru postulates.⁵⁸

The other challenge faced by the ARLPI, was lack of trust from the government side. There was no record of any condemnation of LRA for its atrocities from the association, prior to July 2005. Instead, when ever the rebels abducted and killed people, condemnation would be against government, including the abduction of 22 seminarians from Alokolum Seminary in Gulu in 2003. The involvement of the community of Siant'Egidio also attracted mixed reactions. Their direct funding of the LRA negotiating teams coupled with the fact that the Italian missionaries, who are very influential in this region, had never made their quiet dislike of Museveni's government loud.

⁵⁷ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda* March, 2001, pg 12

⁵⁸ Mwagiru M, *Conflict in Africa: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*, CCR Publication, Nairobi, 2006.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The study undertook to examine the role played by the church in conflict management, which comes under track two mediation mechanisms. Indeed the religious leaders, under the umbrella of ARLPI have been in contact with the LRA so many times, after all some natives of the region think the continuity of the conflict is connected to religion. It remains a puzzle that the rebels could use devine titles in a predominantly catholic region, commit satanic crimes and the church, neither denounces the blasphemy, nor condemns the acts. The conclusions therefore are meant for government policy and decision makers.

The Ugandan government's new policy of decentralization is an opportunity to create a social contract between the government and the local populace. Confidence that government can help improve food security, deliver services, and respond to citizens' needs may do more than anything else to create the "political infrastructure" necessary to support the implementation of a potential peace agreement, or, absent an agreement, even to lure out individual militia members from the LRA's control. The Ugandan government could actually benefit from the diverse experience of Ethiopia and Eritrea, where both governments have undertaken serious efforts at building the capacity of local and regional administration. Any diplomatic effort therefore should be tied directly to promoting better governance through the decentralization process in northern Uganda.¹

The 26 August cessation of hostilities agreement sets the stage for serious negotiations on outstanding issues. Yet, given the parties' divergent agendas, the relative

¹ John Prendergast, *Building for Peace in the Horn of Africa* : Special Reports for U_S_ Institute of Peace.htm

silence of the mediation on how it means to guide the process, and most importantly the uncertainty over ultimate LRA desires and differences between its leaders and the Juba delegation, matters may proceed in three ways. The first would see the Juba talks evolve into a forum to discuss the broad political issues of governance and structural inequity in Uganda. This has been the mediation team's tentative objective and has met with surprising acceptance thus far by the government. However, the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) priority is to get the LRA out of Sudan, not supervise a long and difficult Ugandan national reconciliation for which it lacks the capacity, resources and motivation. The outpouring of support for the talks from Acholi community leaders and civil society groups is more indicative of desperation for a credible forum to discuss political and economic marginalization than it is of acceptance of the LRA as the legitimate party to lead these discussions.

The second would focus on concrete terms for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the LRA into Ugandan society. Though dealing strictly with the LRA might be logical and satisfy the interests of the LRA leaders in the bush, it would fail to address the legitimate political grievances of northern Uganda and the root causes of the conflict.

The third and most promising direction, therefore, would involve a two-phased approach: Phase one would concentrate on the technical issues of bringing the LRA in from the bush and ending the immediate conflict. The parties would need to commit to a second phase, however, involving a broader, more inclusive political discussion on governance in Uganda, including underlying causes of the conflict and Acholi political grievances. The Juba talks are the best catalyst to spark such a discussion. The LRA military threat and GOSS and broader international pressure provide leverage to induce the government to

discuss these political issues, but the LRA alone is not sufficiently representative or legitimate to pursue this discussion.

The solution would be to use the Juba process to gain a binding commitment by the parties to phase two, including a continued role for the international community. This second phase could be held inside Uganda. Justice and accountability mechanisms might be agreed in principle in the first phase, given their importance for sustainable peace with international buy-in, but should be discussed in greater detail in the second phase. Such an approach would remove much of the ambiguity that plagues the Juba process and increase the likelihood of a comprehensive solution. The justice mechanism, must meet internationally acceptable standards, so as to satisfy the United Nations Security Council, to engage the International Criminal Court to suspend the arrest warrants against the rebel senior commanders.

Offers of amnesty, such as those made by the Ugandan Government to the LRA, should be tied to some form of inquiry so that at least a public record can be created of crimes against humanity. Given the Ugandan government's use of participatory mechanisms to address other national questions, perhaps it could initiate some kind of consultation with northern populations on how to deal with the gross abuses perpetrated by the LRA. Rule of law is also fundamental in conflict prevention and management. The United States and other donors should invest in justice and law enforcement capacity building in northern Uganda and engage the Ugandan government in making an institutional commitment to enhance the legal system in the north. This commitment includes reducing court delays, strengthening investigative capacity, and creating more

transparency and consistency in the prosecution of soldiers accused of crimes and rights violations.

Directing investment to underserved areas can reduce tensions and increase interest in defusing conflict. Promises of help in attracting investment to post-war pacified militarily and to micro-industries in northern Uganda could be part of broader packages of incentives for peace.

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