Uganda

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KABALE DIOCESE.

By

Fr. Andrew K.K. Karwemera.

August 1985
I. KABALE DIOCESE HAS 4828 INCREASE PER YEAR

The Anuario Pontificio of 20th May 1962 puts the total Population of Kabale Diocese at 800,000 while the number of Catholics is 277,078. This gives the percentage of Catholics at roughly 35%. The Government census of 1969 put the population at 642,000 and recorded an increase of 30%. It also recorded that 177,401 had moved from Kigezi (co-extensive with Kabale Diocese) to other parts of Uganda. If these had remained, the 35% of them would be Catholics by 1969. This would be 42090. Taking the rate of increase at 30%, this would have put the number of Catholics at 12627 plus 277,078 and therefore 259,705 by 1963. This is a considerable number to be achieved in sixty (60) years of Catholicism in Kabale Diocese—taking into account there are also deaths. Statistically this gives us an average growth of at least 4828 catholics per year.

For academic and intellectual purposes, the following are the censuses since Kigezi was demarcated and incorporated into the then Uganda Protectorate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>226,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>306,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>493,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>642,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>751,976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1969 Kigezi had supplied the following Districts with its dear children:

- Mengo: 27237
- Masaka: 7937
- Mukono: 7114
- Teso: 125
- Bugisu: 192
- Bundibugyo: 259
- Busoga: 2026
- Karamoja: 55
- Ankole: 77641
- Toro: 52975
- Bunyoro: 1409
- West Nile: 57
- Acholi: 191
- Lango: 113

II. COMING OF CATHOLICISM TO KABALE DIOCESE

i) Because of the Geographical location and terrain of Kigezi Catholicism was first introduced by lay Evangelists or more commonly known as Catechists. The first lay Evangelist was Yoana Ssebalijja. He was an agent of Colonial administrators. As such he did not preach publicly, but his presence in Nyaruhangye was not sterile and without an impact. Way back in 1906 Ssebalijja had already sent some Catechumens to Kitabi and Mbarara. The reasons why Ssebalijja did not officially make converts can be well guessed. He still vividly remembered Lugard's nasty experience of dividing the political power in Buganda among the three denominational sects, as well as the 1900 Buganda Agreement. Among a handful of Ssebalijja's converts were Paulo Ngolojoza and Paulo Kangwagye. Ssebalijja though resident at Nyaruhangye, his influence spread over that sub-county to the next one, Nyakishenyi.
a Gombolola chief, was asking for a school at Nyakishenyi. Ssebalijja also fought against a goddess, Rwamukelgamira, who was a priestess of Nyabingi.


In 1910 Ssebalijja was to receive Yowana Kitegana as a catechist who was to be reinforced by other catechists such as Gaste Kapere, Muttayo Kayonza, Yozefu Lwanga, Rafael Kabukure and Antonio Bunwaza. Of all these Yohana Kitegana was to be the most influential person in establishing the Catholic faith in Kigezi. He was a man of much experience, kind, fascinating and wise. Before he came to Kigezi he had been a chief at Kitaka Maria and emerged as a man of considerable personality. He soon gave up the civil position and became a Catechist in Holma, among the Chope, at Mbarara, at Bunyaruguru and hence to Kabale the headquarters of Kabale Diocese. He was a man of wonderful qualities, saintly, a strong and attractive personality, sympathetic, generous and always going out of his way for other people's concern. From 1911 up to 1923 Yohana Kitegana worked untiringly and unsentishly with a circle of lay Evangelists being supervised by priests from either Kitabi or Mbarara (Nyamitanga), who came to administer the Sacraments every now and then.

iii) First Residential Priests 1923

By this time what is Kabale Diocese consisted of about one thousand (1000) baptised Catholics. The first missionaries were Fr. Lano, Fr. Nicolet and Bro. Theophile and they arrived at the end of November 1923 at Rushoroza. Early 1924 Yohana Kitegana and Gaste Kapere went to evangelize in Bufumbira. They established a centre at Kidwa before it moved to Mutilere Hill. It is worth noting that Rushoroza by then was the 30th Parish (Mission) in what was by then known as the Ugand Vicariate. The other distinguished influential Parish Priests and curates of Rushoroza Parish were Lacourciere, later Bishop, Fr. Leopold Belanger, Fr. Ubaldo Torelli, Fr. Verneersch who was to look after a Kiswahili school - which soon aborted. Some kind of a catechetical school, by then known as Norma - Normal school was opened. This was to cater for lay catechists. By the year 1926 it had already produced one hundred and sixty-nine (169) catechists. Another school was a technical school of Kasto-Kiheeka. It taught brick-laying and carpentry. Another school known as the central school was built, the teaching was in English and we find Fr. Paul Van Spanok teaching there in 1931. Its aim was to produce Catholic elites who would replace the pagan chiefs (cf. K.D.A.R. 1933). The government collaborated and gave grants-in: 1930/31, 1931/32, 1932/33 these were £150, £180 and £162.10 respectively.

iv) Nyakibale Parish.

This was for a long time served from Kitabi. By 1929 the whole of Rujumbura comprised of 40 catechists, 700 Catholics and 5000 Baronde. The Parish was formally opened when Fr. Binquuer and Fr. Etchecuri arrived to
Owing to cerebro-spinal meningitis, many Catechumens died. Fr. Bringuer did all he could to help check the epidemic. He was energetic and with sixty-one official catechists he was able to evangelize the whole of Rujumbura, Kinkizi and some parts of Ankole such as Nyakishoja and Kisharo. His assistant Pastor Fr. Vorner was given the work of building and looking after schools. Schools in semi-permanent materials were built at Nyakibale, Nakiro, Nyakanyinya, Nyakishoja and Kisharo. In 1932 the Bannabikira from Rwanda arrived and eased the work of Evangelization quite tremendously.

v) Mutolere Parish 1929

Fr. Micollet was the first Parish Priest. He had visited the place from Rushorno forty-one times. His forerunners were the Catechists Vohana Kitegana and Guste Kapore. The Other Missionaries to take residence in Bumibiro together with Fr. Micollet on November 5, 1929 were Fr. Klep and Brother Simon. The Bannabikira arrived in 1932. In 1933 Bro. Bonaventura was appointed in Mutolere to plan and supervise the buildings which were being generously financed by Fr. Klep. The building of the beautiful Mutolere Church went on so fast that it was worthy of being consecrated on June 29, 1935. Fr. Micollet made his level best to reach all his people including the Bahunde and Batwa. The latter people refused to be baptized lest they be written in Baptism books along side with Bantu and lose their identity as pygmies. Fr. Micollet mixed with the indigenous freely, spoke the language well and left some writings on different types of customary marriages, as well as caring for the sick.

vi) Kitanga Parish 1935

The first Parish Priest of Kitanga was Fr. Ubaldo Torelli. He and Fr. Hautmann and Brother Remy arrived on January 12, 1935. The well known influential catechists are: Andrew Kwehangana, Rafael Kabukuro and Crescensio Bububira. The Parish at that time covered six Gombololas of Kigezi: Nyakishenyi, Nyarushenyi, Kashambya, Rwamucu, Mpalo, Rushoka and Bukinda. With the opening of Kitanga Parish in 1935 nearly all the counties of Kigezi were being served comfortably and from close quarters, considering the scarcity of missionaries at the time, not forgetting the Second World War 1939 - 1944.

Makiro

In fact the next Parish to follow was in 1944 with Frs Desnoyer, Desbiens and Pouliot. Petro Kashaku was their right hand man. Five years later 1949, Rubanda was founded with Fr. Fontaine as Parish Priest and Amano Kamaura as Head Catechist. Next came Bukinda in 1959 with Fr. Pouliot as Parish Priest. The most influential Catechists here were Benedicto Birangwa and Magurukane. Nyakishenyi came next. It had been in a tough tug-of-war with Nyarushanje, but since a priest was due to be ordained there soon the then ordinary
scenes, the other influential people were Antonio Munwama and Cyprian Karyamurungi as catechists; and then Lazaro Rubungo and Andrew Bashasha as teachers and products of the norma school.

Since 1963 many other Parishes, namely, Rwanyena, Bahara, Kinyiruda, Makore, Muko, Rwengirisi, Nyanamugabira and Butogota have sprung up. Due to shortage of space, we will not enter details.

III. MISSIONARY METHODS: WHY RAPID GROWTH.

i) We have seen that numerically the growth of catholics in Kabale Diocese is rated at 4828 Catholics per year. But there are also other methods of assessing the success of a movement. We shall look at the indigenisation of Church Leadership. So far seventy-seven indigenous young men have dedicated themselves to God in the Ordained ministry in the last sixty years which gives 1.24 per year. Again the Annuario Pontificio as of 20th May 1963, gives 38 major Seminarians, 38 priests on Brothers of Christian Instruction; Sr. of Kyabirukwa, and other Convents have not yet come in. But all the same we know for sure that for example the President General of the S.C.I.C. is from Kigali, plus one of the Counsellors. Among the Nyanamugabira there are some Kigali Sisters who hold influential posts; and so among the Nyanamugabira, Nkonkonjeru and Christian Brothers. Twelve Parishes out of eighteen have indigenous Parish Priests. Surely with all these facts we can say that there has been a considerable amount of success.

Now was all this all by a miracle? We don't expect miracles from God everyday, yet some personages with tools, means and ways of approach may achieve things nothing short of a miracle.

ii) The means and methods used by the missionaries are as follows: The building of norms and the use of indigenous evangelists, establishing schools, making effort to learn the language; distribution of Rosaries and medals, safety pins and some times metres of cloth; constant and regular visits to village chapels, regular meetings - Olusoka avazi, the Catechumane syllabus, sermons, entertainments, establishment of dispensaries, cooperation with colonial administrators.

iii) The early missionaries right from the beginning realized they were few in number. In order to achieve their aim of Evangelisation, they had to have collaborators. Their sense of sharing responsibility was with them from the start. This was to be realized by building a "Normal School". The first one was at Busabanga. Young men were trained here for a year and sent out on probation as catechists to villages. If their performance was good, they returned for another year's training. Apart from training catechists this school gave free courses in reading and writing to any young man who was willing. In 1938 were 160 students.
The use of lay indigenous catechists was a great method and factor in the rapid growth of the Church in Kigezi. The missionaries were few and removed from the far off villages. They being expatriates and of different cultural backgrounds were somehow handicapped. Communication at the beginning must have been difficult. For these and several reasons, they needed intermediaries and interpreters. The Catechists lived among the people. They knew the religious and philosophical mentality of their relatives and clans-men, the would-be converts. They knew the persuasive language in teaching them the Christian message. They had and knew the protocol of approaching their would-be converts at what time and how to bring in religion in the daily conversation. It is the catechists who lived among his people, eating, drinking, and mixing with them freely, who would know an easy or a difficult victim of conversion. It is the Catechist who could know the village-mates outstanding moral behaviour and consequently who would make good Christians. Without Catechists the missionaries had countless obstacles in their way of evangelisation, and Catholicism would have taken much longer to penetrate Kigezi than it has. It needed men on the grass-roots to transform society from the old beliefs, practices and rituals; known as indigenous religion to new creeds of Christianity. In as far as Catholicism goes in Kabale Diocese, the Church owes the old Catechists a tremendous debt.

iv) The establishment of Formal Schools has played an enormous role in the deepening of Catholicism in Kigezi. The early missionaries used it as a method of evangelisation and it worked wonders. The Schools were established not only to give intellectual enlightenment but with other aims and purposes. Among these were to change society and culture as well as to facilitate evangelisation. It is not too much of an assumption that the aim of the early missionaries was primarily religious, while school education was only a part of its general programme. Education was viewed as an instrument to obtaining the evangelistic objectives. The Missionary educator relied heavily on the Bible in order to convert a 'heathen' to Christianity and salvation. Evangelisation went hand in hand with the changing of culture, civilisation and the uplifting of society. The changing of society was unthinkable without the formation of Christian characters. All in all Missionary Education was used as a means of Evangelisation. In the minds of missionaries the African society could not be civilized without Christ. The missionaries were imbued with the idea that academic education, concerned with the physical world, was incomplete without the ethical world. Academic education would be passive, if it did not concern itself in the inculcation and transmission of ethical religious values of Christianity; and the society in Kigezi would not change with such acceleration as it has. Therefore the teaching of religion in schools was and became a must. In reality missionary schools became other Catechism classes. A child who joined a school had to belong to the religion and the denomination of the founders of that school. Religion became an important part of the school curriculum. As a matter
were eventually baptised before a certain stage of their Primary school life. The Catechists and school teachers cooperated to keep in touch with the non-baptised pupils. Apart from Sunday services a pupil had to go to a village Catechist on Saturday for instruction. At school there were hours set aside everyday for lessons on Religious Education. There were also the opening and closing prayers everyday. Lessons in reading consisted of portions of the Bible. Most of the singing comprised of religious Hymns: Kyrie, Missa de Angelis, Creed etc. School activities were largely devoted to Religion. School text books included the Bible and often than not nothing more. A lot of Religion was pumped into pupils who lived in Boarding Schools. In fact they (pupils) were monks in miniature. In short the ethos and moral tone of the school were judged by the Christian character of the C.B.S. Ecclesiastical authorities fought hard to have a decisive say in educational policy-making and administration. Priests paid salaries to teachers and they were inspectors.

Education in the early years of the evangelisation of Kigezi was seen as a novelty and as a positive sign of abandoning "primitivity" and acquiring a new civilisation. As the Priests multiplied schools in villages that meant more opportunities of getting converts among the young. Since the mission schools concentrated on character formation, this encouraged parents, in some cases, to send more of their children to Catholic schools.

v) Missionaries ability and effort at languages.

One of the most effective means of communication is the spoken language. The more effectively a person is able to communicate with another the more they both will relate to each other and interact. The early missionaries showed an extraordinary gift of learning the vernacular and dialects of the people of Kigezi. It must have been a tremendous effort on their part, as there were no grammars, no news papers or any other literature to read. The missionaries did not only learn the dialects but went on further to compile grammars and even write books in vernacular. The ability of the missionaries to learn and speak the language was not necessarily an in-born talent, but rather it came as a result of constant effort to acquire a medium and a channel through which the message of Christ was to be communicated. The missionaries applied themselves continuously by mixing with the indigenous people, listening to them and interacting with them. They listened to stories, riddles and puzzles. They showed a lot of interest and concern for their would-be converts and the latter took them as friends and regarded them no longer aliens and foreigners, but part and parcel of them. The missionaries' friendliness did not stop at the social level, but went further into the religious dimension.

vi) Distribution of token gifts:

A friendship that is genuine and lasting is usually manifested in the exchange of gifts. One of the methods
and various animal traps. At first sight and especially today these items may seem trivialities, but by the time of the advent of Catholicism in Kigezi they were highly valued for many reasons of worth. Safety pins at that time were a treasure of high value when jiggers were rampant and a great menace. As it was a gift from a foreigner given gratis, while the donor was of a superior culture then there was a sentimental value attached to the gift. This gesture of generosity later on motivated the recipient to pray the religion of his friend and donor. The possession of a rosary and a medal was a sign of novelty and modernity. The recipient identified himself with the civilized class. The recipient of a medal considered himself on the threshold of a new social and religious status. The rosary was received at Baptism and the indigenous people really understood that they had become new creatures with a new identity with rights accompanying it, namely, inheritance to the kingdom of God. An acquisition of a cloth meant prestige and conferred a rank comparable to that of a king. The recipient was different from the rest of his kins and neighbours in the village; and consequently he might be different in the religious outlook, values and worship.

These gifts, though external attractions, yet they elicited an internal religious conversion and an adhesion to a new way of life and serious commitment. The Missionaries were aware of the effects of these gifts and they gave plentifully. Fathers Laane, Nicolet, Bringer, Toyota and Klop are well remembered for their generosity; and inevitably for the high rates of conversions: the Lord uses small things to effect wonders;

vii) Regular visits to villages.

The people of Kigezi are social and hospitable. A visitor is always welcome. He is much more when it has come out of his own initiative to call on somebody who is not necessarily a relative. It shows a lot of concern, caring for and a lot of respect for the host, especially when the visitor is of a superior culture and social status. A missionary's visit to a village was highly appreciated and sowed a seed of friendship among the villagers. It triggered off the attitude and the thinking that a man who can cover long distances on foot to come and see us, then, such man must be good and a man of God. Given time this seed and thinking would bear fruits of a change of credence from the traditional religion to Christianity/Catholicism.

Regular visits to villages had many other side important results. If there was a Catechist this was an occasion for an advice, guidance as well as an encouragement for him in his work of evangelism. The visit gave him an impetus, and in case of doubts he was more embolded to preach more zealously and enthusiastically. The members of the village who were baptised got motivated to give more Christian witness to their relatives and neighbours who had not received the faith. The missionary asked them how seriously they were practising
A missionary’s visit gave him an opportunity to study the problems of evangelisation, learn new things, lay strategies for facilitating conversion; as well as assess the depth of the faith had reached. There could be no better method than meeting the people at the village level and studying the situation at grass-roots. Visits to villages by missionaries helped a lot the latter, the Catechist and the newly baptised in evaluating their efforts, failures as well as success.

viii) First Friday of the Month/Olusoka/Meetings.

This method in Kigezi like anywhere in Uganda was of immeasurable value and worth. All Catechists and several Catholics came to the Parish Church reaching there soon after one on Thursday. At around three there was an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for an hour/Holy Hour. The prayers’ during the Holy Hour were geared towards self examination and scrutiny in the Christian way of living. This was a time for both the Catechists and Christians when they were supposed to take their thermometers and take the temperatures of their fervour and devotion to their Christian commitment. Guided by a priest each one gazes at himself to see how hot, lukewarm or frigid he was spiritually. Resolutions were taken and individual confessions made. This was as it were a general Refresher course and people came out with new vigour and enthusiasm. In the evening of the Thursday the Head Catechist met the Miruka Catechists to prepare the Agenda for the following day - First Friday of the month. This was an occasion for the Head Catechists to be briefed on the progress, success and failures of the whole Parish. The Miruka Catechists had previously, in their own areas, held a meeting with their respective Miruka Catechists. In this way there was a chain of communication right from the village/Miruka level and grass-roots. The Agenda was not a Parish Priest’s agenda. It was an agenda for a meeting to solve relevant contextual and concrete problems. It was to be a meeting to answer questions arising from particular existing communities and not a meeting to scratch people where they do not itch, but a meeting to respond, and meet the real needs of God’s people. On Friday after Mass, about nine (9:00 a.m.) o’clock the meeting - a Mini Synod - was held with all the Catechists and the Parish Priest as Chairman. Problems were tackled one by one and resolutions were reached and decisions for action agreed upon by all. Strategies, methods and tactics for conversion and continued evangelisation were planned and well spelt out.

These meetings served many purposes and were extremely useful. First: All Catechists took part in decision making and they had that satisfaction that the resolutions were theirs and not imposed on them. After the meeting they had that urge and joy of involvement and implementation of the decisions taken, since they were theirs and not anybody else’s. This psychologically gave them an impetus zeal and enthusiasm, as well as more commitment each one in his respective field of evangelisation. Second: it was a team work. The
These meetings had also another advantage. They gave the Parish Priest a concept of team ministry/work and not I am the Pastor! They had a lot to gain by working together and putting their strength in one unified effort. The duties and methods were adequately defined and the Catechists went out of these meetings with a team spirit. In this way the Parish had one plan and there was a unity in approach and methods of evangelisation.

9) The Angelus, morning/night Prayers and Munaana.

The constant and regular times of carrying out the spiritual devotions played an important role in attracting converts. The early Catechists had the habit of sounding a drum three times a day. At dawn a drum was sounded and both Catechumens and the baptized used to recite the Angelus followed by the Morning Prayers. Somehow these prayers were recited aloud. Those who were not yet intending to join the Church were listening. They could not help being impressed by hearing the words of say, an act of charity or an act of contrition. At one o'clock the Angelus drum was again sounded. Work whether at home or in the field was stopped for a while and the Angelus recited by the Catechumens and the Catholics. At times the co-workers in the field join in just to follow suit. But this soon turned into a genuine and sincere manifestation for conversion. A Catechist would soon be contacted to enrol the intending Catechumen. The night prayers was a conversion campaign on a wider scale. The Angelus drum was sounded about 8:00 p.m. At this time all the family members were by the fire side. If any member of the household was either a Catechumen or already a Catholic, silence was accorded him, and he begun to recite the Angelus and night prayers. All admired the devotion of these new converts. Even at beer parties in the evening when it was Angelus time, a Catholic requested for moments of silence to recite his prayers. The Munaana was held on Sundays, every day during the month of May and October. During lent a way of the Cross was also made on Fridays in village Chapels. At all these occasions the baptised as well as the non-baptised were welcome. All attended attentively and devotedly. After the formal prescribed prayers a sermon by the Catechist was given. It is these sermons which triggered off most of the intentions for conversion.

x) Sermons

Both the missionaries and early catechists' preachings were moving. They were sermons of fire and blimestone. They were so dramatic and vivid that anyone who listened to them could not help being touched and the ideas lingered on in the listeners' minds many days later. A sermon, say on hell, when described as a red-hot grill where the wicked burn for ever and ever, could have a long lasting effect on the listeners. Obviously nobody wants to burn always and always and to avoid that the listeners threw in their lot with Catholicism whose
xi) Entertainments

Such things as cinemas, accordians, harmonicas, gramophones and even footballs and tennis balls were means of attractions to the Church compound. All people, especially the young, flocked to a cinema show. They wondered as to how somebody could be on a film-screen. Gramophones were of equal puzzles. All wondered how a voice can be on a record. They thought the white man could kill a person squizz him into a record and it was the nziri spirit, which was talking. They admired the White man and this was enough motive to pray his religion. A game of football attracted young people. After the game the Missionary had an opportunity to talk on the Gospel and this was a sure bait.

xii) Parish Dispensaries and Clinics.

Nearly every parish had a clinic, Akaju kemibazi, and every missionary carried a medicine kit with him on his safaris. Many diseases were treated gratis. Some of the clients had been to indigenous medicine men without a cure. When the missionary's medicine effected a cure the people thought his God was more powerful than that of the indigenous herbalist and Mugirwa. The next logical step was to abandon the indigenous traditional gods and pray the God of the White man. This attitude was not new, but it had gone on for several generations. It was common for people to abandon their gods and adopt another Mbanda, which they thought was more powerful and benevolent. Another reason why so many people attended the Missionaries' clinics and dispensaries, and consequently prayed their religion, is that the indigenous medicine men had become exorbitant in their charges and they were not sure in their diagnosis. The role of the parish clinics and dispensaries in the rapid conversion of the people of Kigezi is a factor which cannot be underestimated. It was within line with the Biblical ministry of Healing. One has only to turn to the pages of the Bible to realize how many people came to Jesus for a cure and they eventually threw in lot with His preaching.

III. Factors for the rapid conversion in Kigezi.

The rapid conversion to Catholicism in Kabale Diocese may be attributed to ten or more external factors, namely, the religiosity which prevailed before the coming of Christianity, the people's syncretic attitude, the colonial policy towards African Traditional Religion, the indigenous priests Bagirwa who were arrested, imprisoned, deported and even converted; the disgust and lack of confidence in the Bagirwa (Priests), the failure of the Nyabingi predictions, the polygamous marriage system, the competitive spirit arising from polygamous family life, the knit ethical and moral code of the people, and the expectation of the fulfilment of Nyakairima's predictions.
i) The fact that the people of Kigezi concerned themselves very much with the cults of Ramukaiganira, Muhima, Mugasha, Biheko, Kasente, Rubanda Muteete, Mugororo, Kabukaluguru and Mahinda shows that they were highly religious. This religiosity helped a good deal in preparing a fertile ground for Catholicism to take root. There was also a symbiotic attitude among the people of Kigezi. The history of immigration shows that the Kigezi people came from places such as Zaïre, Rwanda, southern Ankole and Mpgoro. On their move to the present settlement they came into contact with other clans, and as they moved along, they got new beliefs about the gods of their hosts and even came to worship them while still clinging to their old gods. As they came to a new settlement on their march and they were told by their host that such and such god was strong and powerful, then the newcomers sought for the protection of those gods for as long as they stayed in that land. There was the duplication: Okurunya emandwa yobukaza na, nokwekongera emandwa yobukaza i.e. worshipping one's traditional clan god and dedicating oneself to the god on whose land one happens to be.

In their concept of the spirit world the people of Kigezi recognized a hierarchy of deities. If one god was said to be stronger - amandwa enhariizi - they asked a priest who looked after it to initiate one of the desiring clan people into its mysteries. Henceforth they worshipped the newly acquired god over and above their traditional clan god. In this way Nyabingi and Kasente had gained recognition among the Kigezi people, because their priests, Bagirwa, claimed that these gods were stronger than any of the mandwas hitherto worshipped in Kigezi.

So the people of Kigezi, on the advent of Christianity, had been used to changing from one belief to another; and more often than not, mixing beliefs and worshipping two gods simultaneously. How this came about and the factors behind it are fascinating. The possession of more than one god could come about through intermarriage. Rwamukaiganira, the goddess of Basiigi around Kijiji, had been acquired in this manner. Mukaiganira was a muzigaaba virgin. On her marriage among the Basiigi she was followed by her god. As time went on this goddess grew powerful and even eclipsed those of the Basiigi, and the latter grew to be used to considering it as their own clan god. Other ways of getting a new god were through blood-brotherhood, lodging a visitor who left a horn in his host’s house or committing adultery.

Those who were held for a long time captives of war usually acquired and worshipped the god of their captors. This is understood, for as prisoners they had no choice in their religious practice, and since they were in a desperate situation, they had to commend themselves to a god somehow and the one who qualified was the god on whose land they were. Even when these prisoners were released, it was not uncommon that these freed men made offerings to both their clan god and the god of those who had held them captives, especially if they had been well treated. The idea behind this was that that god had stood behind them since their lives had been spared.
that the God of Christianity was stronger than their clan
gods; and even their tribal ones such as Kasente and
Nyabingi.

ii) Colonial Policy and the arrests of Bagirwa.

The colonial policy towards African Traditional
Religion in Kigezi was one of the factors which con-
tributed to the rapid conversion to Catholicism. Between
1920s and 1940s there was a general hunt for those who
possessed mandwas throughout the whole of Kigezi. The
District Commissioner, Philips, had sent out a decree by
which all the shrines, horns, drums, calabashes and
many other religious objects had to be destroyed and the
owners arrested, if they objected and resisted. The
resisters, such as, Muhumuza, Ntokibiri, Nkualiga and
Kanziga, had been arrested, imprisoned and deported
either to Butobere or to Mbarara and Kampala. The
Priestess Kanziga's drums, three of them, had been
spotted by Ephraim Babuvesheko and had been taken away
by the chiefs and donated to the church. Henceforth they
were sounded, not to call people to the Nyabingi ceremony
and rituals, but to summon the converts and the candidates
for Baptism to the Christian church. This decree had been
seriously taken by the chiefs. They used to go round
to the Bagirwa mandwa priests inflicting fear, terror
and even arresting them. In the face of this situation
the people had to abandon their old traditional beliefs,
not that they were necessarily convinced of the new
faith, but because they had no alternative.

The fact that some of the mandwa priests, Bagirwa,
converted, perhaps out of conviction or out of fear to
be imprisoned, was a factor in the rapid conversion to
Catholicism in Kigezi. Nkualiga, the care-taker of
the goddess Rwamukaiganira, having spent two years of
imprisonment at Butobere, was at last sent to Rujumba.
During the carceration she had accepted a medal and
wore it daily. While still in Rujumba she took ill
and knowing that her life was coming to an end, she asked
for a priest to come and baptise her, and she died a
Catholic. She was buried in Nyakihale Parish cemetery.
This gave a push to her supporters in the Nyabingi cult
to embrace Catholicism. The Hunt-down of Muhumuza through-
out Kigezi, her capture at Rwentobo, at the border of
Kabale Diocese and her eventual long imprisonment in
Kampala discouraged the believers of Nyabingi cult, who
one by one turned to Christianity to satisfy their
spiritual hunger. In any case to side with the stronger
party was the order of the day as the people had a
syncretic attitude.

iii) Another factor for the rapid conversion to
Catholicism was because the bagirwa of the various
mandwa cults had become selfish and had become exorbitant
in their charges for consultations. This had made the
people to be disgusted with the Nyabingi and Kasente
demands. Most of the Bagirwa's predictions, diagnosis
and divinations were never fulfilled and people had
began to withdraw their trust and confidence in the
iv) On the advent of Catholicism into Kigezi, the predictions and prophecies of Nyakairima, Muzoora's son, were still vivid in the people's mind and they looked forward expectantly for their fulfilment. According to Mr. P. Ngoloogoza Nyakairima lived from 1838 to 1893, and foretold many things. Most of his predictions were relevant and meaningful during the period between 1920 and 1945—a time of Religious Renewal (Balokole) Movement in Kigezi. Nyakairima had prophesied that the drums which used to be sounded where the Mugabe alone was living would also sound on the gate ways of every poor people who scratch themselves with potsherd. That the Bagabe for whom the drums are sounded would be as many as the grains of millet and would be found on every ridge. That Nyabingi and other spirits would never speak again on the ridges.

Now only three decades had past since the predictions were made. Nyakairima had travelled a good deal throughout Kigezi and Ankole and was popular. Fulensio Matore, the grandson of Nyakairima, lived in Muruka Kacence in Nyakishenyi; and the people all around Kigezi were still reminiscient of the relevant predictions. Despite the predictions not in favour of Nyabingi, Nyakairima was very much believed. His prophecy regarding the death of Kigandaire had come true. He had foretold his own death, and had gone round saying good-bye to his friends; and 'all had been fulfilled to the last dot. So it was in line with the peoples' expectations, when the missionaries came asking Kigezi people to denounce Nyabingi and Mwanda spirits.

When either Missionaries or Catechists went around escorted by sounding drums or when drums were sounded calling people to assemble for prayer, people saw nothing, but only the fulfilment of what Nyakairima had foretold.

The Catechists on their rounds called at every house escorted by converts sounding drums. Drums were up to now sounded for only the kings—abagabe. Now they were sounded for all people to come and pray—surely all that Nyakairima had said had come to pass.

When the Colonial Administrators, chiefs and catechists went around pulling down shrines, confiscating calabashes, horns, pots and drums, in which Nyabingi, Kasente and other spirits were supposed to be enshrined, it meant nothing else, but the long waited for accomplishment of what Nyakairima had predicted.
V) The High Standard of Morality of the People of Kigezi.

Before the advent of Christianity the people of Kigezi were not promiscuous nor permissive. They knew what was right and good, and what was wrong and evil in human conduct. The moral sense had produced customs, taboos and totems, which were intended to keep peace harmony in society as well as to regulate man's duties and obligations towards his supreme creator - Kazooba, Rugaba, Nyamuhanga. There were many ways and means of teaching and inculcating morality. Children were constantly told that if they misbehaved Kazooba or the spirits would punish them, whereas, if they behaved properly they would be rewarded. Proverbs, myths, riddles, stories and rituals had ethical overtones and were morally instructive. Every adult person in a village was a teacher and custodian of morality. Any adult was expected and obliged to correct a child if found in the wrong, and if need be even punish. The family was the primary classroom for morals. The fire place was also a class room for classes conducted either by the fathers, uncles or big brothers to their kid brothers. Girls would get similar lessons while cooking with their mothers or big sisters. Emphasis on morality had also a social overtone - there was always a don't do that to besmear us - catushwaza; and consequently there was a social guilt in case of misconduct - Omuhara kwatara aterereza boona. There was a communal moral concern for all members of the family and the clan. Morals were emphasized upon in order to avoid chaos and confusion. These morals eventually produced virtues such as friendship, compassion, love, honesty, frankness, openness, honesty, justice, courage, self control, helpfulness and truthfulness and many others of which the people of Kigezi are very well known. The opposite vices such as cheating, cunning, double dealing, being a sycophant, telling lies and reporting untruthfully, self-seeking, revenge, dishonesty etc. were hated and considered unreligious and anti-social. In Kigezi a person is supposed to be sincere and genuine, to be hospitable and kind; and not to be arrogant and self aggrandising. He is supposed to say yes for yes, and no for no. If a person made a promise, he was supposed to keep his word; and when he rendered a service it was for the good of the community and not with an alterior motive. These moral qualities, values and virtues found in most people of Kigezi prepared a fertile ground for the planting of Catholicism. When missionaries preached christian virtues it was not news to the people of Kigezi. When they preached about purity and virginity it was not adding a new thread to the moral fabric of the indigenous people. There had been a more vivid and dramatic lesson of throwing expectant unmarried mothers over the precipice - Eibanga. When it was a sermon on cheating and stealing the people said that goes to confirm our proverb that Omushuma ariha orugongo. Indeed the indigenous well knit moral code helped a great deal the planting of Catholicism in Kigezi.

VI) Polygamous families in Kigezi.
helped the growth of Catholicism. When a member of the polygamous family converted to Catholicism in most cases the rest of the family would follow him. As we have already seen the newly converted members became unofficial evangelists because of the daily devotions they carried out in the presence of the non-baptized. Apart from this passive evangelism, the neophyte did actively and aggressively preach to their half-brothers and sisters. A newly converted person who had spent six intensive months of Catechumenate far away from home came back a changed new person. He had a rosary and a medal. He knew several hymns, including Latin ones. He was jealous, enthusiastic and energetic. He knew and indeed he was admired. He had many stories to tell either from the Bible, Katisimu, amakuru mahango or Mutebya. He had millions of opportunities to hold audiences, and indeed, in most cases he was invited to. The time around the fire place became a period of instruction, questions and answers. Many half brothers and sisters imbibed in lots of Catholic doctrines, and practices. They soon felt the desire to know more than what they could get haphazardly and they were soon attending Catechism classes at the village Chapel.

Polygamous families do generate a competitive spirit close to jealousy, a newly baptised person was admired in a family and a village as a civilized person with a special status. Any half-brother or sister competed to be seen as modern and with a christian name. So one conversion in a polygamous home meant the rest of the children would sooner or later become catholics.


One factor which helped Catholicism to take root in Kigezi so easily is the fact that for the most part both Christianity and indigenous Traditional religion are compatible. Whether in doctrine or in morals there are not many differences between indigenous Religion and the Revealed Religion of Christ. Both of them agree on the meaning and purpose of prayer, making of sacrifices and offerings, the use of intermediaries, both stress on morality and the family life, and the sacredness of human life.

VIII) Mission Rivalry and Revival Movement.

Since the Reformation there has been denominational rivalry. In Uganda this had been started by Loudel nad McKay, and had been accentuated by Lugard's division of Power among the Protestants, Catholics and Muslims in Buganda. This extended its tentacles into Kigezi later on and it has been a big cancer since then. It expressed itself mainly in the form of a struggle for both space and converts. This bitter contention did even affect the politics of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The good side effect and advantage is that it indicated commitment to Western Christianity to the extent of overshadowing brotherhood and ethnic
that their many children had to pray the religion which their father favoured. This competition also resulted in what came to be known as the mile-rate policy, whereby no mission was to be permitted to build a church or school within less than a mile of the buildings of another mission. The "Norma School" had produced both numerous Catechists and Teachers and the Catholics were at a more advantage than the Protestants. This rivalry was also due to a rumour in 1928 to the effect that the Provincial Commissioner had become a Catholic and that in this event Catholics would thereafter occupy the principal chieftainships and that letters could and in fact would be written to him to this end by the Catholics. On the other hand rumours that gained equal credence were circulated to the effect that those who did not become Christians would be considered sympathizers and collaborators of the Nyabingi cult, and would be summarily imprisoned, and that safety lay in endorsing the religion of the government, namely, Protestantism. The competition that took place can only be exemplified by the wholesale baptisms of the early 1960s of which we are all reminiscent.


Apart from the good examples of the first generation of Catholics, there was more than mere enthusiasm. They went further and dedicated themselves to the religious life. The following tables show how early the people of Kigezi expressed their intentions to take positions in Church-leadership:

A) First Seminarians and Year of entry

- Xaverio Kigorojoro 1937
- Arcadio Bandece 1930
- Marko Banya 1930
- Narcisius Kangakaizi 1932
- Antonio Tibamanya 1934
- Telesforo Tibalyebwa 1934

B) First Nannakalori: and Year of entry

- Augustino Kataliha 1942
- Patrick Katamena(Bro. Leonidas) 1943
- Fortunato Tisattegriza 1943
- Paskali Bamanyisa 1944
- Barth Baxaire (Bro. Nazario) 1944
- Natayo Kacholi 1944
- Boniface Nyakairuka 1944
- Savirio Malasanyi 1944
- Canisio Kanyamashoka 1945

C) First Bannabikira Religious Names Year of entry

- Evangalistah Aihimisibwe Sr. Dominic 1962
- Credonia Tisilwina Sr. Adella 1963
- Leonida Mkeahomera Sr. Lucia 1963
- Imelda Moneksiira Sr. Margaret 1964
- Veneranda Basigaireho Sr. Bernardine 1964
- Teonista Tisikomunyarwa Sr. Kanie 1964
D) The author regrets to say there have been no reply from the Sisters of Kyabiruka. However, he is happy to inform the reader that there are at least one hundred and eleven (III) holy nuns in the Congregation who are the daughters of Kigezi. Likewise replies have been slow to come from Brothers of Christian Instruction, Gogonya, Mokonjeru, Bannateresa and the Asilian Congregation, Gowa and Katigondo, for reasons best known to themselves, perhaps Secretum Pontificum, have written to say they will not disclose numbers of students from Kabale who have passed in their institutions.

E) Fruits of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catechists</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Chiefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Mburahoona</td>
<td>Fr. Pio</td>
<td>Fr. Mugurura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Bagamuunda</td>
<td>Fr. Kahinda</td>
<td>Fr. Januario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Banyenzaki</td>
<td>Fr. Mirungi</td>
<td>Fr. Bakandusya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. B. Bazirake</td>
<td>Fr. Ruzindana</td>
<td>Fr. Bkaline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Karwemera</td>
<td>Fr. Angelo</td>
<td>Sr. Jacentha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Kaheeru</td>
<td>Fr. Tumwine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bro. Clement</td>
<td>Sr. Dominic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. Leonidas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. Adella</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X) Lay Apostolate Movements.

The oldest lay Apostolate movement was the Legion of Mary to be followed by the Eucharistic Crusaders, Xaverians, Association for the souls in Purgatory, the Pioneers, the Women's clubs and the Home Movement. Since the inception of these movements there has been a steady flow both to the Seminaries and into the Religious Life. The Eucharistic Crusade and the Xaverian movements have prepared the youth to take part in Church Leadership as priests, brothers and sisters. Despite the lessening of vocations as the aftermath of Vatican II Kigezi has been experiencing a steady increase in vocations. The Bafatima and Hamutima have grown slowly but steadily. Aspirants either to the nunhood or brotherhood have more than doubled their number. The Apostles of Jesus at Bukinda and the Asilian Sisters at Kitenga are living signs of the fertile soil for vocations in Kigezi. Most of the aspirants to these and other Congregations are the fruits of the mentioned Lay Apostolate movements.

VI. AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL OF KABALE DIOCESE

Kigezi, especially, South-Kigezi, experiences a cool wet climate most of the year, with two mild but very cold dry seasons in June-July and January-February.

This cool, wet climate of the temperate type allows the cultivation of many temperate crops especially the Horticultural ones. In this respect there is a possibility of importing some temperate crops materials and then introduce them into the agricultural systems of Kigezi. Some of the crops are listed below.
Temperate Crops with a Potential in Kigezi.


These are not new in Uganda. They are cultivated and produced around Moroto, Kitgum and Moyo Missions, by Catholic Missionaries. So if some materials can be collected from these Missions and tried at various parishes in Kigezi, the most suitable areas can be selected and production will follow.

2. Temperate and Meditteranean Fruit Trees.

A number of temperate and meditteranean fruit trees can be introduced into Kigezi and cultivated for fruit production. Among the many that can be considered, those listed below are considered as most appropriate, basing our assessment on the Kenyan Horticultural experience:

- Peaches, Pears, Plums, Appricots, Citrus fruits, (e.g. Sweet orange, sweet lime, Tangerines etc.)
- Custard apples, Mountain Paw, Tree Tomatoes, Passion Fruits and Apples.

The many types of tropical and subtropical fruits can be introduced into Kigezi, especially Nakiro, Nyakibale and Mubale areas for trial where they do not exist. Most of these fruits will be selective in soil types and require specialized techniques during propagation. So an agricultural professional will be required for guidance. During the time of collecting materials, Kenya would be the most likely and easiest sources of these materials.

3. Vegetable Crops.

Kigezi is well known for its vegetable production potential and especially south Kigezi utilizing its swamp soils. So all that is required is to produce these vegetables on a large scale and utilize the Horticultural society of Uganda opportunities for export markets.


Kigezi has got a potential for cash crops by turning some traditional subsitence crops into cash crops as long as land permits. Also some new cash crops can be introduced to boost up the incomes of the people.

(a) Traditional Crops with a potential for Cash Crops.

- Sorghum - to supply the Breweries at Portbell,
  Peas, Beans, Irish (Kigezi) Potatoes, Maize,
  Castor Oil, Wheat.

(b) New Crops With a Cash Crop Potential
Barley and Pyrethrum are more suitable for production in South Kigezi while soyabean is more suitable in North Kigezi. Sun Flower can be grown anywhere although North Kigezi and Kisoro areas have more potential.

(c) Traditional Cash Crops.

Some traditional cash crops have a potential for expansion if the economic situation is thoroughly understood.

(i) Tea is already grown in Kigezi around Kayonza and Karambi in Makiro Parish, with an out-growers scheme that feeds the factory at Kayonza. So Parishes like Makiro and Rubanda can try and establish their own outgrower shambas within reach of the factory if they can acquire transport. The Ruhija and Kinaba areas are the places that I have in mind.

(ii) Tobacco.

Tobacco is an old cash crop in Kigezi, especially in North Kigezi. So parishes like Nyakibale, Kitanga, Makiro, Nyamwagabira etc. can get involved in the production of the crop and benefit from the established market and the attractive prices which have been announced by the government.

In South Kigezi, Tobacco is also produced and especially around Rubanda and Ntalele Parishes, but the Agricultural staff in the area would assist to identify the right varieties although the nicotine type is more suitable.

(iii) Coffee.

Some parishes may be already in production of coffee. All I wish to indicate here is that coffee as a crop is very lucrative, so what Parishes situated in the productive zones can do is to expand their acreage if they have the land and then exploit the Department of agriculture services. Definitely the Parishes in North Kigezi can produce coffee profitably. A few Parishes in South Kigezi can try, but may not be all that successful; Bukinda, Kamwezi and Kitanga Parishes have the potential.

So what I wish to stress here is that certain parishes with a certain potential for production of a particular crop should try as much as possible to increase their production through increase of acreage and quality.

I have dwelt much on crop production potential, but this does not mean that animal production cannot be exploited. There is a lot of potential and a few areas are suggested below:

1. Dairy production
2. Poultry Production.

The market potential for poultry products is very high. So every parish in Kigezi should endeavour to set up a poultry unit on a commercial level as a priority. This is an easy venture as it does not require a lot of land.

3. Piggery.

Pig production is an economic venture. Like poultry it economises on land so it is appropriate for many Parishes in Kigezi.

4. Bee-Keeping.

This is self-explanatory and the example of Church of Uganda is enough to convince any doubting-Thomas.

5. Sheep for Wool

This would be a new venture for parishes like Rushoroza Rubanda, Muko, Mutolele, Rwanyena, Ruhinda etc. but worth trying out.

PROPHETICISM IN RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT.

Propheticism has become a threat to the Christian Faith in Rukungiri District, and it is undermining the first Commandment of God: "Thou shalt not adore false gods". I speak of a 'Christian Faith' because it is not only being practiced by some Catholics alone, but also some from other Christian denominations.

Origin of Propheticism.

It is believed to have come from Rubindi, the Northern part of Ankole and spread to the West. It has taken root especially in Nyakibare Parish. This cult is still spreading to the extreme west to Zaire.

Its Belief.

It is psychological other than religious. There are false prophets which are responsible for sickness, deaths, infertility of women to produce children, impotence of men etc. Because of all these miseries God speaks to the "Prophet through angels to heal people of these sicknesses which are caused by these "bad Prophets" (abarangi). The "angels" guide the prophet when he is prophesying and tell him what to do, what medicine he should give and the objects he should use. He has a direct communication with these angels and he should not deride them. They believe that when these objects for "barangi" are installed in the house, the members of that house will not fall sick. There is an assurance of health if one accepts them when they come, and gives them a place to
How one becomes a Prophet (Omurangi)

At first he is possessed by "false prophets". He feels headaches and chest-pains. He becomes unconscious. This is a sign that the "bad prophets" have entered him. He begins to utter some words in an understandable way. The "bad prophets" are the ones speaking through the sick person. So the relatives have to go to consult the Prophet who will interpret what the bad prophets want. After they have given him a lot of money, he gives medicine to the sick person, which he sometimes first puts in the Bible, a sign that it is God speaking to him through angels.

Then slowly by slowly, as the sick person begins to recover, during that time of unconsciousness, he claims to have seen angels, the Bl. Virgin Mary, the Saints etc. These angels or Mary command him to buy a white rosary, and a Bible. This is a sign that he is chosen to be a prophet (omurangi). The expert Prophet initiates him into prophetism. He shows him how to make an altar (orugyegeye) and which objects he should put on the altar, and how to appease these bad prophets. There and then he claims to be "a Prophet (omurangi) and he begins to practice it. Mostly they are women, married and unmarried.

Objects Used.

The objects used vary from individual to individual depending on how capable, devotional and deep belief he has. The most common ones are: bibles and rosaries.

- Bottles of any sort for putting in beer, milk, Porridge - Glasses for drinking.
- Musical instruments: Shakers (akacence), a drum, a harp (enanga). Musical instruments must be there, especially a drum and shakers (obucence).
- Other objects are: sea-shells (esimbi) beads, small baskets (ebilbo) "akatemere" for putting in money (offering) by those who will be coming to consult him, calabashes, enyabya, ekyanzi etc.

Inferior Prophets (abarangi)

These are the followers of the cult. They don't prophesy, but they accept prophetism as something that brings health and cure sicknesses. When they are sick they call the "prophet" (omurangi) to come and remove the "bad prophets" from the sick person, and they accept the "expert prophet" to instal an altar (orugyegeye) in their houses. They must abide by the laws given to them by the "prophet". They must follow them strictly or else the "bad prophets" will enter them and make them sick.

The duty of the Prophet (omurangi)

The duty of the Prophet is twofold. He is a
1. As a Physician:

He has to interpret those who might have "bad prophets" in them and gives them medicine - cures sickness, gives fertility to barren women, he initiates the followers, he installs objects in the houses of his initiates, he makes visitations and gives advice to his followers. He explains the cause of sickness if there is any.

2. As a Commercializer:

Being a "Prophet" is a way of earning his livelihood. Everything is done for economic gain. To give you medicine or interpret for you what the "bad prophets" want, you have to give him money. To install the "bad prophets and build them an altar (orugyeegye) you have to pay a sum of money. The charge varies from how rich he considers you to be. Averagely it is between two thousand to four thousand (2000/- - 4000/-). When he makes his visits, a party is thrown to him. When he goes home, he carries with him a leg of a goat or sheep or he is given a hen to take home. Once in a blue moon they carry baskets of millet and beer to him. If these things are not done, then the "baranga" will continue to harass the family by bringing sickness and death.

Due Respect towards the Prophet.

The prophet must be respected and feared by the society especially his followers. He is powerful. He has authority over one's life. He can send you the "bad prophets" and they harm you. He can make you run mad. Wherever he goes, he must be entertained well by his followers, or else he sends then the "bad prophets". He is looked at as a dangerous person.