

*The Contribution of the Christian Churches to the development of Western Uganda, 1894-1974*, Deogratias Byabazaire, European University Papers, Frankfurt, 1979

As we mentioned earlier, the second category of the communities in Western Uganda was stateless societies. Such societies included Rukiga and Bufumbira in the South-West of the region, and Bukonjo and Bwamba in the West. All these societies inhabited the valleys of mountainous areas. The dangers of unexpected and almost irresistible attacks by raiders in such places called for strong means of protection which were provided by local kinship solidarity. Therefore, each clan tended to have its own village, and society tended to be egalitarian. Law and order were maintained in these communities not by a hierarchy of chiefs but through councils of lineage and village elders.

Among the Bakiga, authority for settling disputes between various families fell on the lineage elders (*abakuru bemiryango*). They rose to prominence on account of certain qualities. As P Ngologoza has pointed out, the lineage elders had to be brave, truthful and free from jealousy, they had to be either priests possessing the power of legendary local divinity by the name of Nyabingi, or medicine men. Furthermore, lineage elders were neither hereditary nor institutionalised. They emerged especially in times of crisis, and were the unpaid servants of clans. To a lesser extent, traditional priests or mediums (*Bagirwa*) and rain makers commanded authority in society by virtue of their supposed knowledge and power over rain. In Bufumbira, lineage elders (*abahinza*) as rainmakers conducted sowing and first fruit ceremonies. They were also responsible for averting national calamities such as that brought by locusts. However, at the end of the century, the political role of lineage-elders declined when Rwanda kingdom imposed its control on Bufumbira. King Kigeri Rwabugiri IV of Rwanda (1854-1895) appointed his daughter, Berabose, to become the effective ruler of the area. She was succeeded by her half-brother Nyindo, who ruled Bufumbira up to the time of colonial rule in 1909 (*sic probably a typo for 1909*) and onwards...

#### Social Life

Traditional Western Uganda had no towns in the modern sense. People led an agrarian mode of life which necessitated some means of integrating people and promoting human solidarity. One of the most effective means were the clans with which everyone was associated. Clans date probably from the era of migrations around the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The precise number of clans in the region is uncertain. J Beattie has identified almost 150 clans in Bunyoro, M Mushanga has put the number of clans in Ankole at 23. In Kigezi, at least 100 clans have been identified among the Bakiga by H Ingrams while Z Randasya set the number at eight among the Bufumbira.

Each clan had its own name and a totem – often an animal – which served as a clan symbol. Clans segmented into lineages and subclans. A lineage consisted of a number of families which traced their descent to a common ancestor for four or five generations. Lineage members tended to live in the same neighbourhood. However, clan members generally lived widely dispersed. The unifying factor was the common totem. Hence social scientists such as J Beattie and M Mushanga have aptly observed that clans were principally reference categories. As such, one's clan defined one's social status (e.g. royal clan). One was identified with one's clan wherever one found oneself. One's actions were the actions of the clan and

what done to one was done to one's whole clan. In short, as informants put it, people's lives were ruled by the clan.

Furthermore, in contrast to modern times, marriage was generally regarded as an alliance between clans and not between individuals. This is why marriages were traditionally arranged between parents and relatives. Sometimes boys and girls were betrothed as infants.

As a custom, marriage was sealed with the giving of bridewealth by the boy's family and clan to the girl's family and clan. Bridewealth helped not only to strengthen the marriage as a permanent union but also to preserve the alliance between the clans. In such cases divorce was rendered difficult as it would involve many relations. But in the case of divorce the bridewealth had to be returned to the family of the husband.

Though, as old people and early Christian missionaries testified, monogamy was the prevalent form marriage, polygamy was practised, in many cases in order to meet the needs of the clan. If the first wife proved sterile, the husband married a second wife in order to perpetuate the clan. In some communities widows were inherited by their brother-in-law in order to give them security. There were also people who took on more wives as they became richer. For such people, polygamy was a sign of social prestige, but even in this case the needs of the extended family often lay in the background.

Relationships beyond the clans were created by the practice of exogamy and by the custom of blood-brotherhood or pact-of-friendship (*Omukago*). Exogamy created a closer alliance between the clans of husband and wife. The custom of blood-brotherhood carried such great importance in society that it should be described here at length. The custom was practised in all communities of the region and beyond. There was some variation regarding the persons who could constitute a blood-brotherhood. According to L Williams, among the pastoral Bahima in Nkore only men could contract blood-brotherhood and only with people outside one's clan. In Bunyoro, according to T Nyakatura the pact could be made between men, between women, between husband and wife and between strangers. Nevertheless, blood-brotherhood between people of the same clan must have been rare since among them some friendship already existed or was expected to exist.

The ceremony of making the pact of friendship had everywhere the same essential elements while differing in details. The essential part of the ceremony was the cutting slightly on each other's navel. Then each partner took a coffee-bean and dipped it in his blood. The two then exchanged the blood-stained beans and swallowed them. The pastoralists, instead of using coffee-beans, used milk and millet-flour.

The ceremony contained much symbolism. The cutting on the stomach was a visible sign of a new alliance between two persons. The segments of the coffee-bean which were closely united in the same husk symbolised a special close attachment between the two partners. In the same vein, the taking of each other's blood signified the sharing in each other's life. Important was the promise of brotherly love and faithfulness. Each partner was expected to love the other as he loved himself and to assist him in everything, at all times and in all circumstances. Gifts were regularly exchanged in order to keep the pact alive. The pact and its obligations bound not only the two partners but also their children, lineages and future descendants. And in order to protect the pact, people attached serious taboos or threats to the failure to abide by its obligations. For example, people believed that the food refused to a blood-brother could cause the stomach of the unfaithful partner to swell and possibly cause death.

Blood-brotherhood had several functions in the life of the region. In clan-based communities, where strangers were often suspected or at least only tolerated, the pact enabled aliens to live peacefully in new surroundings. In Nkore the pact helped to bridge the gap between the pastoralists and the peasants. According to old informants, a peasant Mwiru could make a pact of friendship with a pastoral Muhima. This, however, happened rarely. Also, by the end of the century, there was brisk long distance trade in Western Uganda. Caravans of people from the different parts of the region travelled regularly to the lakes (Lakes George and Edward) to fetch salt. Long distance travel was not without hazards. Caravans were often prey to 'highway robbers'. In order to forestall such dangers a network of blood pacts was established in almost all the strategic centres along the trade routes.

On the whole, blood-brotherhood was a much respected custom. Old informants believed that in many cases the ties created by blood pacts proved more reliable and valuable than the kinship-ties. In the traditional small-scale communities blood-brotherhood was an effective means for the promotion of inter-village cooperation.

Nevertheless, social life in Western Uganda had its weak points as well. One major feature of the kingdoms was the institutionalised social inequality. In the first place, the basic institutions, the clans were classified according to their social status. The royal clans (Babito in Bunyoro, Bahinda in Ankole, Bashambo in Mpororo and Baliisa in Buhweju) enjoyed the status of ruling groups and regarded themselves as special and superior to non-royal clans. They tended to shun manual work and to lead a parasitical life. On the lowest rung of the social ladder were a few clans which were socially 'tabooed' or looked down upon. Prominent among such clans was the Basingo clan. According to J Babiha, members of this clan were sometimes offered as sacrifices to the gods by the kings in Bunyoro and Toro. In Nkore those who had married in this same clan were barred from attending the religious rituals at the royal palace. The origin of this hostile attitude towards this clan, according to tradition, was traced back to an act of a clan-member, who was alleged to have caused the death of Mulindwa, one of the Bacwezi rulers. Between the two groups of clans there were clans which in the course of history gained popularity accompanied by privilege. A clear example was the priestly-clan of the Bayaga, whose members filled important civil positions in Bunyoro and Toro

Secondly, communities in the kingdoms were classified according to occupations and levels of wealth. Almost in the whole region wealth and status was measured primarily by the size of one's herds of cattle. Accordingly in Bunyoro and Toro, pastoral peoples (*Bahuma*) traditionally regarded themselves as superior to those engaged in agriculture and smithing (*Bairu*). Traditionally the pastoralists looked after the king's cattle and served at the royal courts. Members of the royal clans married wives from among the pastoralists. These factors gave the pastoralists a raised social status. However, the occasional marriages between the different classes, and the loss of cattle towards the end of the century did reduce the gap, especially between the pastoralists and the peasants in Bunyoro and Toro.

In contrast, society in Nkore remained stratified in two distinct ethnic groups: the minority aristocratic pastoral Bahima and the ruled-majority of agriculturalist Bairu. Dr S Karugire, a scholar of the area has aptly observed:

"Nkore society was a class society in which the possession of cattle counted for much. The class system was an open one, but it was a class system all the same, in which the Bairu were of lower social standing

than the Bahima. Nkore's governing class was drawn from the wealthy section of the Bahima, and the criterion for belonging to that class was wealth in cattle".

As if to support the thesis that the class system was an open one, Bahima informants insist on the fact that social changes in Nkore were not based on race but on wealth. They argue that, if a Mwiru peasant became wealthy (had cows), he was considered a pastoralist Muhima and could move in the company of pastoralist Bahima. If on the other hand, a Muhima lost his cattle, he was considered a Mwiru peasant. Nevertheless, this statement should be taken with reservation. In the first place, the possession of cattle remained the decisive factor in the class system. Secondly, if a pastoralist lost his cattle, he often got replacements from relatives.

Thirdly in Nkore as well as in Bunyoro and Toro, the myths alleged that the social classes were ordained by the Creator (*Ruhanga*), thus giving the system a divine justification. This created a psychological barrier among the classes.

Below the class of peasants there was a class of slaves. Such people were caught during inter-tribal raids and were kept mainly by local rulers. The treatment accorded to slaves was ambivalent. On the one hand some were treated well and incorporated in the families and clans of their masters. J Roscoe, one of the pioneer missionaries in Uganda, observed that in Bunyoro "When a man married one of his slaves and she became a mother, she was no longer considered a slave. Should her husband die before her, the heir recognised her as a free woman", On the other hand, some slaves who remained at the level of servants were sold to foreign traders in exchange for guns or cloth.

Finally mention should be made here of the role of the family and clan in socialising the young. There were no formal schools in the modern sense. Reference has already been made to the educational role of the courts of kings and chiefs. On a wider level, the education of the young fell on the parents, grandparents and other relatives. As in other African societies, traditional education consisted in the transmission of the spiritual and material heritage of the clan and tribe. Children learnt legendary history and committed to memory genealogies which inculcated into the young a sense of clan and tribal community, past achievements, and pride in the clan and tribe. They learnt also folktales, proverbs and riddles. Each folktale contained a moral teaching which was expressed at the end of it. Proverbs transmitted practical wisdom and moral behaviour. Some proverbs praised certain behaviour, while others condemned diversion from the accepted line of conduct. Riddles were memory and intelligence tests which at the same time trained children in the correct use of the language. Generally all these sources and the direct instruction from parents stressed the social values of generosity, hospitality and respect for elders.

Children also acquired practical skills needed to enable them to be productive members of the community. Boys were taught the traditional male occupations of building, making bark-cloths or leather garments, smithing and pottery. Girls were instructed in domestic duties of cultivation, cooking, weaving mats and baskets and the general care of the home.

This traditional education met the requirements of the society at the time. But on account of its static character and its heavily clan and tribal orientation, traditional education had its limitations.

Religion

The remaining vital aspect of society to which reference has already been made in passing is religion. Like other people, society in Western Uganda reflected on the problems of the origin of man and the world, the sustenance and destiny of human life and the origin of evil. These problems found an answer in religious belief and practice. In common with the traditional religions in other African societies, religion in Western Uganda was the affair of clan and tribe.

Generally people believed in the existence of a Supreme Power or the Supreme God. This Supreme God was recognised as the Maker of the world (*Nyamuhanga*), as the great Benefactor (*Rugaba*) and as the sustainer of everything (*Kazooba*). These threefold attributes of the Supreme God were so prominent in traditional belief that some pioneer Christian missionaries were inclined to think that people already possessed the Christian concept of three Persons in one God.

Of all the attributes of the Supreme God, that of Creator was the most prominent. This attribute was contained in creation tales, Ruth Fisher recorded one creation myth which in many respects resembles the Biblical account of creation. Regarding the creation of man, the creation myth is not clear. It speaks of the Creator having a brother by the name Nkya and that it was at the request of Nkya and in order to meet his needs that he created the material world. Dr J Beattie tried to identify this Nkya with Adam, the first man and progenitor of the human race as found in the Bible. This, however, seems to be mere speculation since Nkya was used also as another name for the Supreme God. The same creation story narrates how the Creator divided society into three classes, namely the rulers, cattle keepers and cultivators. As we have already remarked, divinity was employed here to legitimise and justify an existing social system. Clear is the narration of how the Creator commanded various things into existence, beginning with the earth, followed by the moon, tall grass and trees, rain, shrubs, flowers, birds, insects and wild beasts, goats and sheep, and so on,

Outside the creation myths, traditional concepts of the Supreme God were contained in people's names. According to Dr A Nyabongo, a native scholar of Toro, it was a custom to give the child three names: "the first was selected from the twelve praise names; the second from God's action; and the third from God's will". Some names expressed the Supreme Being as the conqueror, helper, provider and the source of all fortune. Other names expressed the people's obligation of praise, gratitude to and trust in the Supreme God. And yet other made reference to God's presence among His creatures.

Nevertheless, and paradoxically, there was a popular belief that the Supreme God had withdrawn from the world of men. This creation tale recorded by R Fisher tells that at the beginning, the Creator and man lived together on earth. But later on the Creator, being displeased with men, withdrew from the world. He now lived in the heavens (*Iguru*) and had no further contacts with ordinary people. The intensity of this belief in the minds of people is, however, difficult to measure. People could still communicate and did so by occasional prayers. Some of them expressed the recognition of the power and providence of God. However, most prayers, which individuals and families offered to God, were mainly petitions for material welfare such as health, good harvest and other necessities of life.

Apart from occasional prayers, there were no other means of communication with God. The Supreme God had no priests and no place of public worship. No sacrifices were made to Him. As we shall see, sacrifices were traditionally offered to placate divinities and ancestors. It was believed that since the Supreme God was entirely good and did not cause evil, sacrifices could not be made to him.

The idea of the withdrawal of the Supreme God from the earth is corroborated by the prominence of the popular belief and trust in the power of deified former national heroes or divinities and ancestors. One big problem that confronts us here is to ascertain whether such a belief was a genuine part of religion. In other words, did such a belief provide an access to the Supreme Being? Old informants answer in the affirmative that the deified former rulers and ancestors were believed to be intermediaries between the distant Supreme God and man. They also say that the material sacrifices which mediums or traditional priests made to the divinities and ancestors were somehow associated with the Supreme God, for they were usually offered “in the name of and with the power of the Creator”.

Prominent among the divinities in Western Uganda were the Bacwezi and Nyabingi to which passing reference has already been made. On account of the ‘wonderful things’ which they are said to have performed during their reign, the Bacwezi were deified after death. The cult of the Bacwezi was promoted especially by the Babito and Bahindo royal clans in order to supply continuity between them (the invaders) and the legendary rulers, and in this way legitimise their rule over the indigenous inhabitants of the area. In this case religion could be said to have been a political ideology and also a means of preserving the memory of renowned leaders of the past.

Generally people believed that the Bacwezi were capable of assisting them in adverse circumstances. The Bacwezi were believed to provide fertility, health and general well-being of families and clans. For example, in Bunyoro each clan had one of the nine ‘white’ Bacwezi as patron, and one of the clan members was chosen to serve as the medium of the patron of the clan. After undergoing an elaborate initiation ritual, the medium pretended to communicate (*okubandwa*) with the clan patron and to express...

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Christian Pioneers

CMS

... It is this same year (1912) that CMS work was started in Kigezi, the only non-evangelised part of Western Uganda. The Rev H B Lewin and a Muganda evangelist Zakalia Balaba opened a mission station in Rugarama, near the modern town of Kabale. A church was built in the following year. Some Baganda catechists worked at the court of Makobore, the ruler of Rujumbura in North Kigezi. However, Makobore, although he showed some interest in the new faith, accepted baptism only shortly before he died in 1926. His son, Edward Solomon Karegyesa accepted Christianity earlier, and after succeeding his father, he worked to promote the Church in Rujumbura.

Kigezi remained without resident CMS missionaries until 1921 when Doctors Leonard Sharp and Stanley Smith of the so-called ‘Ruanda Medical Mission of the CMS’ arrived in Kigezi. Originally the two missionary doctors had planned to pioneer medical work in Rwanda. Yet, they settled at Kabale while waiting for permission to enter then then mandated territories of Rwanda and Burundi. In addition to their medical services the two doctors also did evangelical work in many parts of Kigezi. Indeed, during the first two years the emerging Church remained under their supervision until more missionaries were sent to Kigezi from Baganda, Toro and Ankole.

In August 1924 the Rev Azalia Mutazindwa from Toro joined the mission team in Kabale. He stayed for two years supervising the catechists. At the end of the year, two more European missionaries the Rev J E L Warren and Captain Holmes arrived and shortly after, Miss Hornby who initiated mission work among the women of Kigezi. The result of the enlarged personnel was that the number of village Churches or outstations increased to 150 by 1925. The mission staff was further reinforced by the Rev E C Barham who arrived in Kabale in 1928. In the following year the Rev Ezekiel Balaba also arrived in Kigezi from Koki in Buganda and worked especially to raise the standard of the catechists through the evangelists' training school in Kabale. In addition, Balaba served as Rural Dean in 1929 and in 1959 became Archdeacon of Ankole and Kigezi.

Further in the extreme South-West of Kigezi I Bufumbira, a station was established as Seseme in 1923. The first 25 people were baptised in the very same year. These included George Nyimbirana (cousin of the king of Rwanda), his wife and two sons.

The Church in Kigezi continued to grow fast, and by 1930 the Church had taken roots in Kigezi. It had a network of 40 Churches or stations in Rukiga and Bufumbira. Membership in the Church totalled about 5000. In addition, 300 catechists were caring for the young Church. The Church in Kigezi had by now also extended the work of evangelisation beyond the borders of Uganda into Rwanda.

#### White Fathers

Catholic work started in Kigezi in 1911 by catechists Johana Kitegana, sent there by Bishop Streicher from Bunyaruguru in Ankole. He started his work at the residence of a Muganda chief and colonial agent Johana Ssebalijja at Nyarushanje in Rukiga county of Kigezi. From there Kitegana travelled in many parts of Kigezi founding outstations. When in the same year (1911) Bishop Streicher accompanied by Fathers Le Tohic and Lafleur visited Kigezi to fix the sites of future mission stations, they could build on the work of Kitegana and his group of Baganda catechist-workers. Among these were the catechists Joseph Lwanga, Augustine Kapere, Rafairi Kawukumi.

Although the peoples' initial response to Catholicism in Rukiga was characterised by indifference and even rejection, Kitegana's piety, his generosity to the needy and his treatment of the sick won many converts to the catechumenate. European priests occasionally came to Kigezi either from Mbarara or Kitabi to baptise the catechumens. The scarcity of foreign missionaries during the first World War delayed the appointment of resident missionaries in Kigezi. Therefore for twelve years Kitegana and his co-workers directed the work of the Church in many parts of Kigezi. By the time Fathers J Laane and Nicolet and Brother Simon settled at Kabale in 1923, they found about 700 people already baptised. It was six years later that a second and third station were opened in other parts of Kigezi. One was established at Nyikibale in Rujumbura in 1929, Fathers P Bringuier and W van Ertryck were the first missionaries to settle there. The other station was founded at Mutolere in Bufumbira where mission work was introduced in 1924 by Father Nicolet together with catechists Kitegana and A Kapere. Kapere stayed on to start the catechumenate. But one major difficulty was the difference of language. The people of Bufumbira spoke a different tongue, similar to that spoken in neighbouring Rwanda. To ease the problem, a request for catechists was sent to Rwanda. The Catholic Mission at Kabgayi sent Raphael Mbaraga and Matia Karugarama to Bufumbira in 1924. Later o Kabgayi sent Mateyo Nyingabo. The work of evangelisation could advance, as people could now be instructed in their own language by local people. In addition, like Kitegana in Rukiga, Kapere won the confidence of many Bafumbira by means of his simple

medical services to the sick and his introduction of new methods of agriculture in the area. When Fathers Nicolet and Kiep and Brother Simon settled in Mutolere in 1929, they continued to build on the foundation already laid during the previous four years.

The area that was opened up by the mission at the beginning of the 1930s was the dry and mountainous county of Buhweju in Ankole. In 1932 a station was founded at Butare. The opening of this station marks the end of the pioneer period and the beginning of the Church as a separate Vicariate and later as diocese and several dioceses.

### The Hereafter in a new Perspective

The impact of the enlarged conception of God is also seen in the changes that have taken place in the traditional view of man's final destiny, namely the continuation of his existence after death.

The belief in 'immortality' is no foreign to the people of Western Uganda. The traditional cult of divinities and the fears of retaliation of ancestors (*mizimu*) reflect this belief. However the nature or circumstances of the next life are vague in traditional religion. As mentioned earlier, what is intimated in traditional religion is that the next world is situated in the dark underworld (*okuzima*).

The result of this limited and rather negative conception is the traditional general fear of the dead. This fear is reflected in the many taboos and elaborate rituals that surround death. For example among most communities in Western Uganda, a dead person is hurriedly buried and any article connected with the dead person is either destroyed or purified; for dealing with the dead person's body and property is regarded as pollution.

Although there is already a kind of hope for the continuation of life after death in the traditional view, still this hope has been widened and given a new quality through the Christian concepts of the life after death.

Both Anglicanism and Catholicism, like nineteenth century Christianity generally, reached Uganda with a very heavy stress on heavenly values in contrast to the insistence of traditional religion on earthly favours. Preaching and instruction in both Christian traditions and more especially in Evangelical Anglicanism stressed the eschatological hope, namely the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the advent of God's judgement. This hope called for personal conversion through the repentance of sins and personal faith in Jesus Christ as a means to personal salvation. Salvation was conceived in spiritual terms as the attainment of eternal life in heaven.

On the one hand, an unbalanced spiritual outlook and life heavily oriented to a world beyond, ran the danger of making people denigrate temporal activities. On the other hand, the vague and unimpressive concept of the underworld of traditional religion has been transformed into a more positive view of an existence in heaven. The Catholic catechism written as early as 1903 defines heaven as the "place of happiness where good people see the Creator, love him intensely and remain with him forever". The new concepts which are here introduced and which traditional religion lacked or at least did not clearly expressed are twofold: first the next life is depicted in terms of happiness, and secondly, the departed are brought into closer relationship with the Creator.

Besides offering a more positive view of the next life, the Christian Churches have presented the reality of saints as examples of the departed who lived upright lives on earth and are now living in that close

relationship with the Creator. The veneration and communication of saints especially Mary the Mother of Jesus and the holy martyrs in Uganda as interceders for man in the sight of God has become a popular practice especially in the Catholic Church, and has accorded with traditional religious values as found in the role of divinities and ancestors, some of whom modern theology could well regard as uncanonised saints. Above all, as 'heroes of the faith' saints are looked upon as guarantees that the next life certainly exists.

Lastly, there is in traditional African society the popular anxiety of being for ever physical separated from ones' relatives and friends after death. The local saying that "those who die never come back to life" reflects the absence of a traditional belief in the resurrection. This traditional anxiety has been attenuated by the Christian teaching of the corporate and 'bodily' resurrection at the end of time. Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, his resurrection serves as an example and guarantee of the continuity of individual identity and of eventual reunion with their dear ones.

The impact of the above-mentioned concepts on the minds of the people is significant. Those interviewed affirm that the Christian promise of a happy life after death in the presence of the Creator, his saints and angels is one of the most meaningful and consoling elements of Christianity. Two testimonies highlight this feeling:

"A new hope in a life of happiness in heaven removed despair and suffering. Instead of discouraging me; the calamities of life gave me more determination and strength to become a more committed Christian. After all, I had learnt and believed that if one died a Christian one would go straight to heaven; hope in heaven made me victorious."

"The Christian religion, in contrast to pre-Christian religion, pointed where one would go after death; at God's side."

Thus the Christian view of heaven as a place of everlasting happiness with God has not only brought optimism and strength to people, it has also transformed their traditional attitude to death and the departed. Death has come to be regarded more as a 'gate' to heavenly beatitude, rather than as an irreparable calamity. The testimony of an elderly Catholic Woman in Bunyoro illustrates the new attitude.

"I do not fear death,

Can the Creator, my Father, refuse to open

the door for me when he hears his child

knocking on the door? No, I cannot be afraid.

My guardian angel will at least beat the drum,

so that those who are inside will tell Him;

Hear, your child has come."

Equally important, the new vision of the next life has also created a new attitude to the departed. Since now the departed are with God they cannot be malevolent. This positive attitude has liberated people from much of the traditional fears towards the dead a source of misfortune.

In conclusion, our general observation is that there is an essential continuity between pre-Christian and the Christian religious conceptions. This has been possible because the Christian message has been planted on fertile soil, which was already divinely disposed to receive it. On the whole, the contribution of the Christian perceptions has been purifying, complementing and emphasizing the religious values which already existed in embryo in Africa traditional religion and society.

### Medical Missions

*(He describes that this was solely a CMS contribution as the White Fathers had no missionary doctors, unlike the Mill Hill male and Franciscan female missionaries in their territory from Kampala to the east)*

*After Kabarole:* The next two medical institutions, a hospital and leprosarium were opened in Kabale in Kigezi. Drs S Smith and L Sharp started a hospital at Kabale shortly after their arrival in the area. The hospital opened with 50 beds in 1923 and consisted of four blocks built with sun-dried bricks, papyrus roofs and brick floors. However, such building materials proved to be vulnerable, for in 1925 the hospital was burnt down by lightning. Out of this disaster emerged new hospital buildings of corrugated iron roofs and cemented floors. By this time government medical work consisted of only a dispensary in Kabale. Until the arrival of a government doctor, the CMS doctors helped to supervise the government dispensary. In order to reinforce the mission hospital two British nurses arrived in Kabale from Mengo and gradually indigenous nurses trained in Mengo joined the hospital staff. Under such personnel, the hospital progressed and, like Kabarole hospital, extended its services to different parts of Kigezi through medical journeys, Dr Smith concentrating on Rujumbura and Kinkizi counties while Dr Sharp worked in Bufumbira.

As was mentioned in the first chapter, some of the most serious diseases in Kigezi were yaws and tropical ulcers and leprosy. An eye-witness described the nature of yaws:

“The disease appeared as a little sore on the arm or leg or any part of the body, and eventually produced a big sore. Next the body would be covered by small growth and then proper yaws would emerge. They (yaws) started as big sores, full of puss, and attacked the face and lips, feet and fingers and would then cover the whole body. The person would really enter into agony, would not approach other people, he would sleep, eat and drink alone. Yaws sometimes deteriorated into a more mutilating form. The person suffering from it would look as if he had been eaten by red ants. The disease would eat up the nose completely and would ultimately leave the victim deformed and unable to help himself.”

The mission hospital gradually checked the disease by giving patients strong injections which dried the sores.

Leprosy, the other serious disease, causes gnawing pains, strong bouts of lepra fever and appalling ugliness of the human body. People tended to accept the disease fatalistically.

In the campaign to eradicate it, Dr L Sharp made journeys around Kigezi persuading lepers to come forward for treatment. At first the lepers were treated in the mission hospital at Kabale where a separate block of twenty-four beds had been set aside for the victims. However since there were about 2000 lepers in Kigezi alone, the hospital facilities were quite inadequate. Accordingly in 1929 the work of establishing a leprosy settlement was started on Bwama Island in Lake Bunyonyi outside the town of

Kabale. Financial help for the scheme came from the British Leprosy Relief Association, Uganda government and several benefactors abroad.

The leprosy settlement was opened in February under the direction of Dr Sharp who was assisted by two British nurses, Miss Horton and Miss Langley, and African medical assistants recruited from the CMS hospital at Kabale. In addition, a school for the children of lepers was opened. In the course of time, the leprosy centre became a big establishment accommodating as many as a thousand people at a time.

The result of the work of the settlement has been important for the improved health in Kigezi. During the first thirty years of its service, the leper centre treated nearly 2500 people. By 1960 the number of resident leper had come down to 300, and in 1965 the number fell to 170. The disease has now been brought under control and it is no longer a threat to human life in the area as it had been the case forty years ago.

Author's map with dates of arrival and spread of Christian Missions

