

## BUGANDA OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURATION AND DISPENSATION

In Honor of the Birth of Prince Richard Ssemakookiro

By

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### Introduction

#### The News

It was about two months ago, conveniently at Kalibu Restaurant in Waltham Massachusetts that a friend from UK tipped me off about the birth of a prince for Obuganda. The impression I got was that the birth had taken place shortly before when the information was passed on to me. I was excited about the news and waited with great expectation for the official information. The information did not come. Still I kept my pose, caring not to be a *kusamwassamwa* person, that is, not to turn out into being a rumor-monger.

On January 16, 2012 a picture of the baby prince was posted by J. Matovu with a request to spread the picture further. I started asking myself why there was no, directly, official announcement of the birth of the prince. This reminded me of a little detail my friend had intimated, saying that, *ebintu bizibu*, literally translated as things are difficult.

Given the reactions which have so far transpired from different corners about the birth of the prince, one can realize that indeed things were not easy before the announcement was officially made given the circumstances of the birth of His Royal Highness Prince Richard Ssemakookiro. In between messages have come from a multitude of corners about the birth of the prince. Many are congratulatory, as the case ought to be. Others are ambivalent. Others are worrisome. Others are based on not-knowing what really Obuganda means.

#### Congratulations

As a beneficiary of interculturalization and dispensation, it gives me the grace, blessings and courage to write this article not only in honor of the birth of His Royal Highness Prince Richard Ssemakookiro but also, mainly, writing to congratulate His Majesty Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Kimera Mutebi II for the wisdom with which he has demonstrated in deigning to dispense the affairs of the Kingdom of Buganda. It is also to acknowledge the foresight with which the late Archbishop Joseph Nakabaale Kiwanuka urged me to pursue studies with the aim of being able to contribute towards the contextualization of Christianity in Uganda. The forty four years I have spent in researching and delivering in class on Christianity in Africa, give the confidence of coming forward to address the issue for God and my Country.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Obuganda on the occasion of the reception of the recently born prince. By Baganda Africism, that is “The system of African autochthonal religious beliefs, ritual practices and thought, concerning the Supreme Being, superhuman beings human beings, extrahuman beings and the world,”<sup>1</sup> one may opportunely note that “*Eryokanga n’etonnya: ne balaba ensiisira we zenkanya emyoyo*”,<sup>2</sup> translation being that, “it is opportune that it rained so that we can see the worth of the thatched buildings which compare with the worth of the minds like of those of the people who built them”.

We shall then proceed by clarifying what Obuganda is. We shall look at the concepts of the interculturalisation and dispensation vis-a-vis Obuganda. We shall take a look at the role of Kabaka relative to the kingdom of Buganda. We shall take a quick look at some representative expressions about the birth of the prince and by the duties of the Kabaka we shall express how His Majesty Ronald Muwenda Kimeru Mutebi II is connected to the concepts of Interculturalisation and Dispensation.

## Obuganda

**Obuganda** is a concept which indicates something visible like a sign that signifies an invisible dispensation. **Obuganda** is an idea which is imbued with Buganda patriotism which inspires reasons and feelings of awe and honor. At the base of it is **Ganda**<sup>3</sup>, the root source of the vital energy that makes anything of Obuganda tick. Consequently, try and look at the following, in order to discern the heights, the depths and the widths of the significance of the idea of **Obuganda**. Because of it we speak about Mu-ganda as a person; because of it we speak about Ba-ganda as people; because of it we speak about Ki-ganda, as something; because of it we speak about Bi-ganda, as things; because of it we speak about Lu-ganda, the language of the nationals of Buganda who are in the singular Mu-ganda and Ba-ganda in the plural, whose Kingdom is Buganda with His Majesty Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Kimeru Mutebi II as the King of the Kingdom of Buganda. Therefore Obuganda means Buganda with everything tied to it, particularly by confirmed relationships through the clans of Buganda. It is with the above background that one dares to express oneself about the joyous news of the introduction of the recently born mulangira of Buganda His Royal Highness Prince Richard Ssemakookiro.

Given the history and culture of Buganda, what is actually taking place, looks like there is something prophetic around. The combination of the names Wassajja, Jjunju and Ssemakookiro has in the history of Buganda been names of promise and hope. However, reactions shown in the extensive commentary about the birth of the prince, need to be reflected upon, by the way of interculturalisation and dispensation. What is interculturalisation? What is dispensation?.

Before answering the two questions, immediately here above, it might be helpful to summarize the expressions transmitted by a spectrum of people both in Uganda and abroad. The Kabaka appeared in a

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<sup>1</sup>See Lugira, Aloysius M. 2009. “Africism” in Encyclopedia of African Religion pp.11-14. Also in “Religion and Theology”. In *A Journal of Contemporary Religious Discourse. Religion and Identity in Africa*. Vol. 8,1-2(2001). Brill: Leiden, Boston, Koln pp.42-60.

<sup>2</sup> See Walser, Ferdinand. 1984. *Luganda Proverbs*. Kampala: Mill Hill Missionaries, p. 1794.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lugira, A.M.M. 1970. *Ganda Art: A Study of the Ganda Mentality with Respect to Possibilities of Acculturation in Christian Art*. Kampala: Osasa Publication. pp. 3-6. See also Ssempebwa, Joshua Wantate. 1978. *The Ontological and Normative Structure in Social Reality of Bantu Society: A Systematic Study of Ganda ontology and ethics*. Heidelberg: Ruprecht-Karl Universität.

picture paternally, confidently and proudly showing to the kingdom and to the rest of the world, the cute, recently born prince,<sup>4</sup> both to himself and to Obuganda. The Buganda Prime Minister made the official announcement. The clergy spoke. Official representatives of the Buganda Heritage congratulated and promised, in an orderly manner to do what they are expected to do. Given today's media facilities people in Uganda and those based abroad commented with comments that were carried by a variety of communication media. Conspicuous among the careers of reports and comments about the birth of the prince were the New Vision newspapers on whose communication activity we intend to base our stock taking concerning reactions made about the birth of the prince, by the people in general.

### Official Announcement by the Prime Minister of Buganda

Around about mid-January 2012 Engineer John Baptist Walusimbi, the Premier of the Kingdom of Buganda, made the following announcement:

"I have the pleasure to inform the entire Kingdom of Buganda that Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II was blessed with a baby boy in July 2011. The baby prince was named Ssemakookiro, Richard. His mother belongs to Enseenene clan".<sup>5</sup>

Eng. J.B. Walusimbi.

#### Messages and Comments

After the above mentioned announcement was made, messages and comments from near and far, started pouring in from all corners of the world. In the order of the sequence of reporting among those who welcomed the news of the birth of the prince, included were, Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, Prince David Namuggala Mawanda, Haji Nsereko Mutumba, Omutaka Kalibbala George Nsozi the head of the Nseenene Clan to which the mother of the prince belongs, retired Archbishop Mpalanyi Nkooyooyo, retired Mityana Diocese Bishop Wilson Mutebi and many others from a large spectrum of the Buganda community.

Messages made by leaders contacted, given the religious and theological accentuation of the situation, include those recorded from the following remarks about the birth of the prince.

Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala stated as follows: "Any baby born a royal or a commoner is a gift from God. I thank the Almighty God for this gift and pray for its good life and growth."<sup>6</sup>

The following reporting says: "Retired Archbishop (Livingstone) Mpalanyi Nkooyooyo declined to comment on the birth of the baby, saying that he was the one that anointed the Kabaka and the Nnaabagereka Sylvia Nnagginda Luswata."<sup>7</sup>

Next it is reported that "The Retired Mityana Diocese Bishop, Wilson Mutebi said the birth of the prince is good news. He urged the Baganda to receive the news of the prince's birth in a way just like the Katikkiro announced the news".

Comments have been made from the public, at large. New ones still continue to flow in. Here I intend to confine the sampling to the comments that have appeared in the *New Vision* as of January 19, 2012. I look at comments by grouping them in titles of consideration; the title that carries the highest number of frequency is number one etc.:

<sup>4</sup>NewVision, front cover <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/628436-Buganda-Kingdom-gets-new-Prince.html>

<sup>5</sup><http://256news.com/4978/katikkiro-announces-new-born-prince-ofbuganda/>

<sup>6</sup><<http://www.newvision.co.ug/mobile/Detail.aspx?NewsID=628464&CatID=1>>

<sup>7</sup>Ib.

TITLE	HOW MANY TIMES
1. Congratulations	63
2. Concern for Nnaabagereka	37
3. Cultural Appreciation	30
4. Questions	19
5. Disappointed	12
6. Patriotic Feelings	11
7. Realism	3
8. Disrespectful	2
9. Antagonizing the Almighty	
10. Out-of-wedlock	1
11. Confused	1
12. Suggestion	1
13. Selfishness	1
14. Acts of Immorality	1
15. Ethnic Animosity	1

Impressions acquired from these simple samples of comments that appeared soon after the announcement of the birth of the prince may appear to present a picture of positivity. But there are many comments which go unreported that are heard expressing elements of negativity that it becomes important for Christian leaders who are pastorally and directly involved to come up with committed statements about what I have here suggested as being Buganda Opportunity in light of interculturalism and dispensation.

The opportunity referred to here is connected with the religious situation. In the course of the history of religion in Africa Buganda has been one of those African corners of the world in which evidence of the presence of autochthonous religion was clear. Regardless of the misnomers with which the religion of the people of Buganda was connected, still during the colonialist era the Baganda were not exempted from the description that Geoffrey Parrinder has perpetuated on record saying: "This incurably religious people" as "a phrase often on the lips of many old African (colonialist) administrators."<sup>8</sup>

In 1875 the Baganda religious base was soon to have something more built on it. This is what appeared with "The Stanley Missionary Appeal" that in history will continue to be identified as a landmark contribution of religious development in and from Buganda. Buganda accepted to take the opportunity. The acceptance has resulted in undeniably conspicuous history.

### Stanley's Missionary Appeal in Light of the Great Commission

Talk about the phrase "Missionary Appeal" attention quickly goes to the Great Commission. The Great Commission as many would be aware is as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20, saying:

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<sup>8</sup> See Parrinder, Geoffrey. 1976. *African Traditional Religion*.p.9

“ The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him they worshipped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always, until the end of the age.”<sup>9</sup>

In the spirit of the Great Commission the Portuguese navigating the African Atlantic coast stopped at a variety of spots on the West African shores in general and in the Kingdom of Kongo in particular. Not until the nineteenth century did Christians venture to enter the interior of Equatorial Africa. It was the Anglo-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley, who after he had discovered the whereabouts of Dr. David Livingstone in southern Africa proceeded on to Buganda where he met Captain John Hanning Speke, another explorer, who was there in search of the source of the River Nile. Stanley was not a missionary but the effectiveness of his missionary appeal can as well characterize him as a missionary pioneer. His appeal opened the way for missionary activities on the continent of Africa witnessed by the speed of how fast the growth of Christian development is on the African continent today. The intention here is to avail a portion of his letter which carries the missionary appeal which has proved to be an accessory of the Great Commission in the interior of Africa. To introduce the making of African Christianity, attention is given to the relevance of Stanley’s Missionary Appeal.

Stanley arrived at the court of King Mutesa I of Buganda in April 1875. The King became interested in Stanley’s conversation about Christianity. Stanley agreed to appeal for missionaries to come to Buganda because of the interest King Mutesa had expressed. The Appeal was made in a letter which was published in the Daily Telegraph (London) of 15 November 1875. The letter can be visualized in two parts.

Part one identifies the fact that the Islamic presence in Eastern Africa was there long before Christianity appeared on the scene. So Stanley opens his letter in the following manner:

“ I have indeed undermined Islamism so much here that Mtesa has determined henceforth, until he is better informed, to observe the Christian Sabbath as well as the Muslim Sabbath, and the great captains have unanimously consented to this. He has further caused the Ten Commandments of Moses to be written on a board for his daily perusal-for Mtesa can read Arabic- as well as the Lord’s Prayer and the golden commandment of our Saviour. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This is great progress for the few days that I have remained with him, and though I am no missionary, I shall begin to think I might become one if such success is feasible.

But oh! That some pious, practical missionary would come here! What a field and harvest ripe for the sickle for civilization! Mtesa would give anything he desired, houses, cattle, ivory, etc.! He might call a province his own in one day. It is not the mere preacher, however, that is wanted here. The bishops of Great Britain collected, with all the classic youth of Oxford and Cambridge, would effect nothing by mere talk with the intelligent people of Uganda. It is the practical Christian tutor, who can teach people how to become Christians, cure their disease, construct dwellings, understand and exemplify agriculture and turn his hand to anything, like a sailor- this is the man who is wanted. Such a one, if he can be found, would become the savior of Africa. He must be tied to no church or sect, but profess God and His Son and the moral law, and live a blameless Christian, inspired by liberal principles, charity to all men, and devout faith in Heaven. He must belong to no nation in particular, but the entire white race. Such a man or men, Mtesa, Emperor of Uganda, Usoga, Unyoro, and Karagwe- an empire 360 geographical miles in length by 50 in breadth—invites to repair to him. He has begged me to tell the white men that, if they will only come to him, he will give them all they want.”<sup>10</sup>

In part two of the letter Stanley pinpoints his identification of the region as a “promising field for a mission” saying:

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *The African Bible*. 1999. Pauline Publications Africa

<sup>10</sup> See Faupel, J.F. 1962. *African Holocaust: The Story of the Uganda Martyrs*. London: Chapman p.11.

“Now, where is there in all the pagan world a more promising field for a mission than in Uganda? Colonel Linant de Bellefonds is my witness that I speak the truth, and I know he will corroborate all I say. The Colonel, though, a Frenchman, is a Calvinist, and has become as ardent well-wisher for the Waganda as I am. Then why further spend needlessly vast sums upon black pagans of Africa who have no example of their own people becoming Christians before them? I speak to the Universities Mission to Zanzibar and to the Free Methodists of at Mombasa, to the leading philanthropists, and the pious people of England. Here, gentlemen, is your opportunity—embrace it! The people on the shores of the Nyanza call upon you. Obey your own generous instincts, and listen to them; and I assure you that you in one year you will have more converts to Christianity than all other missionaries united can number. The population of Mtesa’s kingdom is very dense; I estimate the number of his subjects at 2,000,000. You need not fear to spend money upon such a mission, as Mtesa is a sole ruler, and will repay its cost tenfold with ivory, coffee, otter skins of a very fine quality, or even in cattle, for the wealth of this country in all these products is immense. The road here is by the Nile, or via Zanzibar, Ugogo and Unanyembe. The former route so long as Colonel Gordon governs the countries of the Upper Nile, seems most feasible.”<sup>11</sup>

### Christian Missionaries Arrive in Uganda

On June 30, 1877 missionaries Lieutenant Shergold-Smith and Rev. C.T. Wilson of the Church Missionary Society, representing the Anglican Christianity, arrived at the palace of Kabaka Muteesa I, which was situated at Lubaga Hill. On February 18, 1879 Pere Simeon Lourdel and Brother Amans of the White Fathers Missionaries of Africa, representing the Catholic Christianity, arrived in Buganda. The Kabaka allowed both missionary groups to pass on Christianity to his people in the Kingdom of Buganda.

During the first decade of Christian evangelization in Buganda challenges arose relative to suspicions generated because of increased animosities concerning politics, religion and colonialism. Kabaka Mwangwa who had just succeeded the late Kabaka Muteesa I, his father, decided to weed out the presumed danger suspected to have been caused by adherents of Christianity, mainly those who were considered to be associated with the royal service. The suspects, both Catholics and Protestants were rounded up and executed for refusing to deny their Christian faith. Those martyred by known executions between December 1885 and May 1886 numbered 45 of which 23 were Anglican and 22 were Catholic. The unintended consequence of the martyrdoms was the effecting of history to repeat itself.

What happened in Buganda, following the martyrdoms was what the great African writer Tertullian had expressed himself about some 1800 years before. As Christianity was being planted in North Africa for the first time, conflicts arose between Christians and Romans. Since the political powers-that-be at that time was in the hands of the Romans in the Northern African region, Christians, politically became targets of persecution. A lot of Christian blood was spilled, which had the effect of what Tertullian described as: “The blood of martyrs is seed of Christians,”<sup>12</sup> for the more Christians were executed the greater numbers of people came forward to become Christians. It is the same thing that happened in Buganda in face of martyrdoms. Hence the thinking about Christian history, as it were, having repeated itself in Buganda.

Many of the worries that contributed to political challenges that were primarily caused by Western presence in the region were alleviated by the events of the 1900 Uganda Agreement-Buganda. In spite of having deprived Buganda of its independence the document contributed some *modus operandi* between Buganda and the British government that lasted from 1900 to 1962. Under this condition prominent was the religious situation. For Great Britain Anglican Christianity is the state religion, which became a quasi-extension to the Uganda Protectorate in where the majority of the population was not Anglican. The Kabaka of Buganda became a *de facto* member of the Anglican Church, the situation which continues even after Buganda was returned its independence on October 8, 1962. Because of such a situation people begin to talk

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp.11-12.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Apology*, 50:13

about the birth of prince Ssemakookiro. The cute baby prince Ssemakookiro should not be bothered. He is a gift of God, gift of God to the King and gift of God to Obuganda. The Kabaka for Buganda is the awesome and majestic glue that binds all the Baganda together.

#### The Kabaka, Religion and Christianity

Human beings have from high above been endowed with innate capacities understood in descriptive classifications that include *homo sapiens*, *homo rationalis*, *homo religiosus*, *homo politicus* and *homo economicus*. In respective order *homo* meaning human being, the meaning of the italicized phrases stand for that a human being is by nature wise, rational, religious, political and economical. Particular to the interests of this article is the *homo religiosus*. This means that a human being naturally endowed with the capacity of the triad of believing, believing in something and doing something because of what has been believed, a human being is by nature religious. The Kabaka and his people are human beings. They are by nature religious.

According to Baganda Africism, that is, geontologically, the system of the Baganda autochthonal religious beliefs, ritual practices and thought, concerning the Supreme Being, superhuman beings, human beings, extrahuman beings and the universe, the Kabaka is entrusted with a mission and a stewardship responsibility that is part and parcel of the Kabakaship. For the Kabaka to fulfill that responsibility the Kabakaship has to exist. That existence does not depend only on terrestrial circumstances. It is very much involved also in spiritual conditions. For the Kabaka to be true to his rights and duties the Kabaka has to see to it that the Kingdom of Buganda is not allowed to be disadvantaged.

According to universal order, Katonda Liisoddene is positioned at the apex position of the pyramid of the universe. According to the order of Obuganda the Kabaka is terrestrially positioned at the apex of the pyramid of Buganda. The Kabaka is a representative of God. As Ssaabataka the Kabaka according to Baganda Africism plays the role of a Patriarch as well as being the bridge between the people and the spiritual world.

On the occasion of the challenges of the *Kultur Kampf*, broadly translated as “Culture Conflict” in Germany of 1870s, Pope Leo XIII in an Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*, translated as “Imperishable Work of a Merciful God”, presented the Christian understanding of the power like that as vested in the Kabaka. *Inter alia*, the Encyclical Letter states that “..since no society can hold together unless some person is over all, impelling individuals by effectual and similar motives to pursue the common end, it results that an authority to rule is indispensable to a civilized community, which authority, no less than society itself, is based upon nature, and therefore has God himself for its author. And thence it follows that by its very nature there can be no public power except from God alone. For God alone is the most true and supreme Lord of the world to whom all things whatsoever must necessarily be subservient and obey, so that whoever possesses the right of governing can receive it from no other source than from the Supreme Governor of all, God.<sup>13</sup> “There is no power except from God”.<sup>14</sup> In other words the authority the Kabaka has over his subjects is from God. God as the Supreme Being who is so acknowledged both in Baganda Africism and Christianity.

In his book titled *Many Religions One Covenant*, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the current, Pope Benedict XVI, reflects on Abraham’s history to be the history of all.<sup>15</sup> This leads to the understanding of “Jesus as the promised shoot of Judah, who unites Israel and the nations of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.vii.iii.html>>

<sup>14</sup> Rom. 13:1-2.

<sup>15</sup> *Many Religions One Covenant* p.27.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger continues on: "What does all this mean?"<sup>17</sup> he asks. He gives the following as an answer, "The mission of Jesus consists in bringing together the histories of the nations in the community of the history of Abraham, the history of Israel. His mission is unification, reconciliation, as the Letter to the Ephesian (2:18-22) will then present it,"<sup>18</sup>

Philosophers and theologians like Thomas Aquinas have contributed the view that *omnis potestas a Deo, sed per populum*, meaning that : "all authority comes from God but by way of the people". The Kabaka is the Supreme authority of the kingdom of Buganda. His authority comes from God. However, the intricately hierarchical involvement of the ranking officials of the clans of Buganda is clear evidence that the authority of the Kabaka exists both by dint of spiritual forces and the cooperation of the people through clan officials.

## Kabaka is Hereditary Leader

### Prefatory Note

For the sake of guarding the decorum of the personality of the Kabaka, at this junction it is appropriate to take a quick look at the way the Kabakaship is conceptualized in some corners. The same conceptualization does affect many, unaware of its implication. The Kabaka is a king. But very often one hears people referring to the Kabaka as a traditional leader. People who still like to subject others to conditions of the "Less-Than-Syndrome"(LTS), meaning a complexity of symptoms which indicate the existence of undesirable situations. Because of the fullness of the hearts people would refer to Kabaka as "Traditional Leader". If on the contrary, it is not because of the fullness of heart, then it can easily be understood as being a state of not knowing. Would a Ugandan diplomat addressing a non-African king refer to the king as a traditional leader? What is traditional about our kings which is not traditional about European and other kings? Non – African kings will tend to be exempted from subjection of the Less-Than- Syndrome while African kings are turned to being easy prey. The Kabaka is King who is a hereditary leader according to the norms of Buganda effectively administered and applied by heads of the clans of the Baganda.

### The Concept of Traditional Leader

Here a word on what is traditional leader and its evolutionist connection may be useful. The concept traditional in its relationship with illiteracy is logically associated to the anthropologists like Edward Burnett Tylor whose supposed to be *opus magnum* are his two voluminous work titled *Primitive Culture*. The work turns out to be the basis of the adoption by the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology of the term "primitive". The term "primitive" in its relation with religion like in the phrase "Primitive Religion" evokes the concept of Animism, which according to Tylor simply means the Religion of Lower Races.<sup>19</sup> Obviously this works for the maintenance of the *status quo* relative to the "less-than-syndrome" which exists as a result of what Adam Kuper, in his book, *The Invention of Primitive Society*, is identified as being "Evolutionism". Out of "Evolutionism", develops a relationship among the terms:"traditional, tribe, primitive and barbarian in respect to civilized. The result of the relationship of the terms I have enumerated here above is what Adam Kuper<sup>20</sup> depicts in terms of:

"Evolutionism (c.1861) in *Anthropology* developed within Social Anthropology by British jurist Sir Henry Sumner Maine (1822-88) and others. The idea that society gradually advances, often explained in terms of stages from 'primitive' to 'barbarian' to 'civilized'. Some societies are slower to advance than others, and these slower. 'primitive societies are held to remain at lower stages of evolution'.<sup>21</sup> And they continue to be characterized as traditional and tribal often to the degree as if they are not as human as other human being, in spite of the often quoted line that God created us all equal, leaving a trend that William Shakespeare has perpetuated in the line:

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Tylor, Edward B. *Primitive Religion*. Vol. I, p.424.

<sup>20</sup> *The Invention of Primitive Society*. Passim.

<sup>21</sup> Bothamley, Jennifer, *Dictionary of Theories* p. 168-169

“For the sufferance is the badge of all our tribe”.<sup>22</sup> Here, tribe as expounded by *Webster’s New International Dictionary*, tribe is “ a class of persons set apart from others as having a distinct racial origin or religion, or a common ancestry; now usually a group of persons having a common character or occupation; a kind of usage ( applied) often contemptuously.”<sup>23</sup> It is because of the implied smack element of contempt inherently existing in the concept of Traditional Leader that one recommends a paradigm shift from Traditional Leader to the realistic Hereditary Leader. As Ssaabataka the Kabaka is the focal and depository center of the Heritage of the Kingdom of Buganda. It is by sacral stewardship that the Kabaka is responsible for the wellness of Obuganda including preparation for orderly succession to the throne of the Kingdom of Buganda. For that reason Obuganda were happy in welcoming Prince Ssemakookiro.

## Prince Ssemakookiro in Light of Religious Understanding

The Prince was born, the Prime Minister of Buganda made an announcement of the birth some months after the birth of the prince. Some questioned as to why the announcement was made at that particular time were asked. The understanding could be that this was not a birth of an ordinary child. This was a birth of child about whom whatever was to be said should be done correctly for a variety of reasons. Time arrived the announcement was made. The announcement carried authentic points relative to the autochthonous elements of Baganda Africism as well as Christian elements of the recently born prince. Here the three factors helpful to get to the roots of things. First, the Name is Ssemakookiro; two, the Christian name is Richard; three, a vital element to the personality of the prince is the Nseenene clan. Therefore the prince is authentic.

But questions arise from different corners regarding the concept of wedlock. What is wedlock? Wedlock may be defined as a state of being married and/or a state of being legally married. In Uganda wedlock given the different situations, means a state of being legally married on the basis of either autochthonal and/or hereditary religion or heterochthonal religions and state law. A note to be taken is that since the establishment of written constitutional law, in Uganda, marriages entered into through religious arrangements are done on behalf of the state. But in the case of the King the king can be legally married by hereditary arrangements as well as the other ways. Given the expected requirements on the part of the Kabaka for the sake of orderliness in the kingdom, the birth like the one of Prince Ssemakookiro will not be considered as being a birth out-of-wedlock like the uninculturated Christian context would suggest. It is here that readiness for understanding the conditioning of religion is called for.

## Understanding the Case of Abraham, David and Solomon

Abraham is the great Patriarch of the Abrahamic religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Talking about religious situation understanding Abraham becomes one of the cases in point. It is interesting to note how we Ugandans were some how connected to an event related to Abraham in spite of the distance of years. During Abraham’s time Egypt was the bread basket of the then known world. And one should remember that Egypt having plenty of food was because of the fertility which existed due to the waters of the River Nile that originated in Uganda.

*Genesis12:10-20*, has the following for us: “There was famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, since the famine in the land was severe. When he was about to enter Egypt he said to his wife Sarah: ‘ I know well how beautiful a woman you are. When the Egyptians see you,they will say, ‘She is his wife’;; then they will kill me, but let you live. Please say therefore, that you are my sister, so that it may go well with me on your account and my life may be spared for your sake. When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw how beautiful the woman was; and when Pharaoh’s courtiers saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. So she was taken into Pharaoh’s palace. On her account it went very well with Abram, and he received flocks and herds male and female slaves, male and female asses, and camels. But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his

<sup>22</sup>Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice* Act I, Scene III:92. More on the intricacies of the term “tribe”, see Maurice Godelier, “The Concept of Tribe: Crisis of a Concept or Crisis of the Empirical Foundations of Anthropology, In *Diogenes* pp. 1-25.

<sup>23</sup>*Webster’s New International English Dictionary* p. 2707

household with severe plagues because of Abram's wife Sarai. Then Pharaoh summons Abram and said to him: 'How could you do this to me! Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife? Here then is your wife. Take her and be gone! Then Pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and all that belonged to him.'

Here one is being faced with a case of two, apparent, evils. To lie is evil and to kill and/or allowing the possibility of being killed is evil. Abram was being exposed to a situation of choosing between two evils. Abram's case appears to have been an example of choosing the lesser of the two evils.<sup>24</sup> In hindsight this exemplifies the situation the Kabaka was in. He has the duty of seeing to it that the kingdom of Buganda has to exist. Availing princes for an orderly existence of Buganda, is paramount among the duties of the Kabaka. The Kabaka, with dignity, had to do whatever it would take to achieve the fulfillment of his duties. And one should not lose sight of the fact that it took about ten years of waiting before Prince Ssemakookiro came.

#### Kabaka a Personality of Dignity

As a matter of emphasis, one should not lose sight of the fact that His Majesty Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Kimeru Mutebi II is a personality of dignity; not dignity only by dint of his hereditary office and position. He is a personality of dignity mainly because he acts and lives with dignity. He recognizes the dignity of the people. As a result he inspires dignity, regardless of areas of action and activities. Right from the occasion of his magnificent installation at Sharing Hall, in Kampala the Kabaka made it clear that his era was not to be conducted on the basis of any discrimination. This is amplified by what, as a vision, he has continued to inculcate on the minds of Ugandans, in general, and on the minds of the Baganda, in particular. Many times he has proclaimed that: "What we need," to pursue human dignity, "is truth and justice". With this in mind one suggests to address issues raised about the birth of Prince Richard Ssemakookiro in terms of Buganda and the opportunity of Interculturation and Dispensation.

## Interculturation and Dispensation

#### Prefatory Note

Questions arising from the announcement about the birth of Prince Ssemakookiro of the Buganda Kingdom exist because of considerations based on culture and law as well as religion and cultural norms. Suggestions towards a better understanding of the situation on the issues are indispensable. Looking at the possibility of a way forward can be a good exercise towards some exercise which may be geared towards, meaningfully building for the future. While the concept of interculturation helps to develop some understanding of the effects of culture contacts in connection with the dynamics of religion, the concept of dispensation occasions the possibility of greater understanding of conditions between religion and law.

#### Interculturation

In 1969 as the first reigning pope to visit the continent of Africa, while in Kampala Uganda Pope Paul VI made the historic statement. Among other pronouncements, speaking to Africans, he emphasized that: "... you may and you must have an African Christianity".<sup>25</sup> Christianity in Africa will be African by having Christianity cast in the mold of African culture. The process for this is what for Christianity, is referred to by the Catholic Church as *Inculturation* and by the Evangelical Churches as *Contextualisation*. Interculturation combines the two. Following is an example of the process of localizing religious ideas by culture contact like in the case of Joseph Kyagambiddwa's suggestion in the composition of the Oratorio of the Martyrs of Uganda. He suggested singing the following:

Mu linnya lya Taata n'erya Mutabani, ne Mwoyo Mutuukirivu, Mugende musomes awanga gonna, Amawanga gonna Nga mubatiza abantu nga balokoka. Mubuulire abatonde Evanjiri eno

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<sup>24</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Acta Pauli PP. VI, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* pp.573-578

eyeddembe. Ngenda nsibula anti okudda gye nava. Ngenda edda mulindaba Ewa Ssebo. Mwoyo abagumyenga. Abajjukizenga; Muyagalanenga. Mutabaganenga.

For lack of intercultural appreciation Kyagambiddwa's composition of the above text was considered outrageous. They wanted him to say: Mu linnya Iya Patri n'erya Mwana... Why? Because that was the translation of our Fathers the missionaries. To maintain what is still maintained in the formula of the sign of the cross, like it continues to be said as: "Mu Linnya Iya Patri, nerya Mwana is an inculturational and intercultural failure.

Another case of Interculturation/Inculturation/Contextualisation which easily gained acceptance because of expatriate funds involved was the Uganda Martyrs Basilica at Nnamugongo. In early 1960s I was commissioned to escort the late Emmanuel Cardinal Nsubuga, as Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kampala to Switzerland and Germany regarding the project of designing and constructing the Uganda Martyrs Shrine at Nnamugongo. We had to have a meeting with Bishop Hassler of Sankt Gallen in Switzerland whose connection with Misereor, a German agency for Christian Help with its Missionary Architects had undertaken the responsibility to design and construct the Martyrs Shrine. Dr. Justus Dahinden assumed the leadership concerning the building of the Shrine. He was inspired by my book Ganda Art as well as the realist visit he made to Muzibwazaalampanga. One day when a meeting was held at the Archbishop's residence in Lubaga some attendants complained about what they saw on paper. Most vocal of them was the late Joseph Ssonko who clearly expressed himself that what he was seeing in the picture of the building to be constructed was not a church. To him it was a kiswa, that is an anti-hill. The idea is of a church building specified now as a Basilica, which was designed by the inspiration of Muzibwazaalampanga through an intercultural approach. Intercultural creativity is not confined to material culture it is involved also in the interculturalization of spiritually religious culture. In this falls consideration of a case like the one of the birth of Prince Richard Ssemakookiro. The recourse to take in this case is not only interculturalization. It is interculturalization together with dispensation.

## Dispensation

### Prefatory Note

To start with, it is important to have some idea as to what the meaning of the concept of "dispensation" is. Purely by way of finding out the meaning of the word dispensation, dispensation is a noun which is derived from the verb "to dispense", which bears the meaning of "to deal out in portions".<sup>26</sup>

Dispensation, as a noun, in theological context, dispensation has a particular meaning. The exact meaning of the concept is spelt out relative to the context within which the concept is being used. Dispensation is connected with divinity in terms of grace and mystery around and from God. It is also connected with personalities ordained to be office bearers as representatives of God's work on earth.

### Specific Meaning of Dispensation

According to observations made by John Walvoord relative to the New Testament let us also take a look at the meaning of the word "Dispensation". "The word which is translated as *dispensation* in the New Testament is *oikonomia*, from which the English word *economy* is derived. The New Testament word is a combination of two words –*oikos*, which means house and *nemo* which means to *dispense, manage or hold sway*. Thus the word literally means *house dispensing or house managing*."<sup>27</sup> "The word *oikonomia* appears nine times in the New Testament. In six of these appearances (Lk. 16:2-4; 1Cor.9:17;; Eph.3:2; Col.1:25) it is translated as

<sup>26</sup> Cf. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dispense>

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/dispensation.htm>

*stewardship or dispensation* and refers to a responsible office or ministry entrusted to one's care by a higher authority."<sup>28</sup> In the Kabakaship, the Kabaka holds the stewardship of the Kingdom of Buganda, which includes seeing to it, that to fulfill his responsibility he has to have issues of sons who are eligible to succeed to the throne of the Kingdom of Buganda

The types of stewardship that relate to the understanding of *dispensation* can hereby briefly be mentioned in three categories:

1. Dispensation meaning the act of distributing situations by God to humankind.
2. Dispensation meaning the three Devine orderings, including:
  - a. the Patriarchal order;
  - b. the Mosaic order;
  - c. the Christian order.
3. Dispensation meaning an exemption granted by the pertinent authority. It is this that has cogently and theologically been defined as "Dispensation is an act whereby in a particular case a lawful superior grants relaxation from an existing law."<sup>29</sup>

Can the case of Buganda Kingdom falls under the Christian dispensation. Given the extenuating circumstances related to the birth of Prince Ssemakookiro for the Kabaka to fulfill the responsibilities of stewardship entrusted to him deserves the dispensation according to the third category.

As Ssaabataka, the Kabaka like in the case of Patriarch Abraham, by heredity, bears the responsibilities, of being the Patriarch of Buganda. As the King of Buganda, the Kabaka carries the responsibility like that of King David and King Solomon. By the ordering of Buganda sacrosanctity, it is a given that the Kabaka weds a Kaddulubaale, a Kabejja, a Nnassaza and abazaana. This puts him in a state of its own kind in Uganda.

For the sake of establishing a peacefully humane understanding of the situation, Buganda pertinent authority and leadership should proactively put together a commission of representatives of stakeholders in this matter. Representatives of Baganda hereditary leaders beings brought together with Baganda Christian leaders in addition to proven representatives of experts in Baganda Africism, like Bishop Wilson Mutebi,<sup>30</sup> Professor John C. Ssekamwa<sup>31</sup> and others, being brought together to deliberate on the possibility of the acquisition of a dispensation relative to the case of the birth of Prince Richard Ssemakookiro, can theologically bear fruitful results.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. <<http://www.newadvent.org/catheren/05041a.htm>>

<sup>30</sup> *Towards an Indigenous Understanding and Practice of Baptism amongst the Baganda*.

<sup>31</sup> *Enkuluze y'Eddini y'Abaganda Ey'Ennonno*. passim

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