

Islam: An Instrument Of Family Pastoral In The West Nile Region

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Abstract: In the past Islam was a religion that everybody admired in the West Nile Region of Uganda. Muslims were deeply prayerful people. They used to concretize humbly their prayer with practical hospitality and simplicity in the region. Practically every Muslim was concerned with welfare of his/her family and the families of non-Muslims. The Islamic way of living, treating everybody as equal human being and creatures of God, made a lot of impact on the family members (both Muslim and non-Muslim) in the region understudy. Practically everybody in the region wanted to be a Muslim. Islam indeed served as an instrument of family pastoral care in the West Nile Region of Uganda those days. It was mostly through interpersonal communication, and the Qur'an was rarely shared with non-Muslims at that time. Today, the situation has changed because of misunderstanding of Islam (by both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region).

Muslims are accused of imposing their faith on non-Muslims, siding with their children in school violence, causing strikes in institutions of learning, and so forth. Consequently, this has led to suspicions between Muslims and non-Muslims, accusations and fighting. This is a qualitative research paper on Islam as an instrument of family pastoral care in the West Nile Region. Being a native of the region understudy some information comes from my personal encounter with both groups (Muslims and non-Muslims) in the region and others come from various literatures. Factors that have caused Islam not to function as an instrument of family pastoral care today include the following: egoistic politics/politicizing religion; Media side-lining cultural and Islamic values; scant education/training. However, Islam has a greater potential to serve as a family pastoral care instrument in the region: through correct understanding of Religion (especially Islam); Media promoting human and Islamic dignity; Politics centred on promoting the common good; Business centred on advancing moral values; and Education/training centred on promoting socio-human and moral values.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on Islam as a family pastoral care instrument in the West Nile Region of Uganda. It perceives Islam as a religion of total submission to God, concretized by its practitioners with the acts of humility, simplicity, hospitality of alms giving, protection of the poor and needy, and concern for one another regardless of religion, age, gender, race, tribe and clan. But currently Islam is not functioning as a family pastoral care instrument because of misunderstandings by both Muslims and non-Muslim in the region.

In the West Nile Region of Uganda, many Muslims perceive Islam as a religion that everybody must belong to. The majority of non-Muslims understand Islam as a religion that promotes violence and division between people; and its

promoters must be resisted at all cost. It is total misunderstanding of Islam. Both groups seem to care less about the means they use to achieve their aims or objectives. Similarly they seem not to care about the effects of their action on others especially the young generation and their future.

The key causes of this failure of Islam as a family pastoral care instrument include: 1) egoistic politics – using religion for political ends (politicizing religion), 2) Media side-lining cultural and Islam values – focus on trade centred to profit maximization on expenses of neglecting human dignity and values, 3) Scant education/training

These are issues that can easily be tackled by all Muslims through collaboration with non-Muslims. That is promoting: 1) Better and correct understanding of Islam; 2. Media focusing on human and Islamic dignity; 3. Politics promoting common good; 4. Business concentrating on advancing moral

values; and 5. Education/training focusing on promoting moral socio-human values.

II. BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Earlier on Islam was perceived in the West Nile Region as a religion that everybody admired because Muslims were deeply prayerful people who showed practical hospitality and simplicity of heart. Every Muslim was perceived by non-Muslims as a person concerned for the welfare of others. Muslim ways of living and treating everybody as equal human being, and as equal creatures of God, made a great impact on non-Muslims in the entire region under study. Practically every non-Muslim in the region wanted to be counted as a Muslim. Indeed Islam played quite well the role of being an instrument of family pastoral care in the Region of Uganda.

But today, this situation has changed because of misunderstanding of Islam by both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region. Questionnaire sent to 8 adults aged 56 years above, consisting of 4 Muslims and 4 non-Muslims. In response to: how do you see Islam as family pastoral care instrument today compared to past times in this region? Amazingly all 4 Muslims responded that 'today Islam is worse than before', and out of 4 non-Muslims 3 agreed with the response of the four Muslims. It means 1 perceives today's Islam is better than before in the West Nile Region of Uganda, thus implying that 87.5% observed that Islam is related to the imposition and violence.

A. 'ISLAM – RELIGION OF IMPOSITION'

This understanding implies non-believers in Islam must be forced to believe in it. In the West Nile region, many Muslims strive to impose Islam on others. Islam enjoys more favourable conditions for expansion from colonial rule up today than in any other period of history as if only "one religion can be true and the others merely human projections" (John Hick, 1980: 131 - 149).

In oral interview with 10 Muslims and 10 non-Muslims teachers, graduates from University (aged 35-50), in response to the question: what are the problems facing Islam as a family pastoral care instrument in this region?

10% of Muslim teachers, highlighted Christian perceive Islam as a religion of oppression and of imposing Islamic faith on non-Muslims,

90% spoke of Muslims promoting violence not only in the West Nile Region of Uganda but worldwide in the name of Islam.

30% of non-Muslim teachers, reported Muslims use Islam to promote violence,

70% responded that Christians think that Muslims try to impose their religion on them by doing all sorts of things (inspecting cooking utensils, etc).

In complement to the above researched information, Mark Leopold, (2006: 184 – 186, 188) highlights, during the time of stability, Islam consolidated its theocratic conquests. It spread far beyond its former confinements. Muslims progresses in torturing Christians. Christians have been "beaten, flogged to death and poisoned". Chapels have been burnt, fields have

been destroyed, and cattle robbed. Included, Muslim girls were given no freedom to choose the partners they wanted to marry from the other religions. Christians learnt that Islam was making proselytes in Aringa through Muslims who were appointed chiefs by the English authorities as a reward of fidelity during the war in Uganda and Sudan (La-Salandra 2004:9 – 11).

About behaviour of Muslims in the West Nile Region, Laghu George on 15th April, 2008, highlighted, 'for religious reasons, Muslims strongly decline to eat meat slaughtered by non-believers.' It means, Islamic rituals have to be followed. That is:

'First of all, the Muslim must face Mecca and give thanks to Allah for the gift of life to the animal. He must also ask for Allah's permission to take away the animal's life and should use a sharp instrument to kill the animal to minimise pain... All animals brought for slaughter must be treated with decency and respect and must be slaughtered in a clean environment'

In September 2007, a parent's Day meeting at Obongi Secondary school ended in chaos when it was learnt that the school's Christian founders had slaughtered animals for the feast instead of asking Muslims to do it. Until today, the question of who should slaughter animals for both public and domestic consumption in the West Nile Region is raising questions. 'Why Muslims Take Charge of Animal Slaughter?'' (Womakuyu 2008); and 'Does it matter who slaughters the animal?' (Laghu 2008).

B. 'ISLAM - RELIGION OF VIOLENCE'

It means, believers in Islam must be fought because of promoting violence. La Sandra (2004: 9 – 11) notes 'the Christian missionaries considered the Muslim movement a threat'. Christianity came after Islam had taken root in the region today called West Nile Region of Uganda. He (2004) highlights Christianity as not a product of colonialism in West Nile, although the era of exploration helped the coming of the Faith in West Nile. It implies, non-Muslims in particular Christians perceive Islam as a product or another kind of colonialism in the Region.

Teddy Seezi Cheeye on 16 August 2005 describes what colonialism did in Uganda. It made things 'unpatriotic'. Its advocates are colonialists. When they met 'a well-developed kings armed force, the sophisticated and faster oral communications of the natives (forerunner of the modern media and communication) they were impressed but also scared. Consequently, they deliberately tended to ignore sound development of the army and the media. They made sure that there was one of them to gather and disseminate divisive information on the natives. They made the Baganda look like white collar thieves, the northerners as barbaric worriers, the Indians as coolies and the Westerners as Lazy. In summary the majority of non-Muslims see Islam as religion of violence and oppression.

C. EFFECTS OF MISUNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

Reports of conflicts existed between both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region. Dradenya, Amazia, (3 July 2007)

indicates losses of human lives and destruction of properties between the two groups. There were reports of unacceptable practices that could be interpreted as exploitation and oppression of other cultures.

Both Muslims and non-Muslims especially Christians have been able to side-line Islam as a family pastoral care instrument in the West Nile Region of Uganda. On July 1, 2007 Muslim and Christian students clashed in Itula senior secondary school. After this clash, a meeting was held to discuss the matter. Instead the crisis hit a snag after the different religious leaders disagreed in front of over 500 people, who included parents, students, security, district and religious leaders. A person could also easily read the conflict between Christians with Muslims affected the whole district (of Moyo) in the West Nile Region of Uganda. It means the tension had gone far. On the one hand, Christians were determined to begin retaliations by destroying a mosque, which according to Muslims could lead to the destruction of all the Churches and Mosques in Uganda. On the other hand, Muslims were insulting Christians by calling them “dirty” people, and the Christian leaders asked them to apologise (The New Vision newspaper of Tuesday 10th July, 2007).

Muslims’ wellbeing has not improved in the region. On January 19, 2006, Muslims complained in *IslamOnline.net*. They were able to report as Muslim Council of Uganda from Muslim-populated areas of Arua and Koboko, for the good of Muslims, complained to the Government, to allow Muslims ‘more freedom in practicing their religion as well as the recognition of Islamic Sheridans Courts’. This court only considered Muslim cases related to marriage, divorce and inheritance and other family-related affairs. In political representation, one of the main demands of Muslims was to improve their political status in the West Nile region without forgetting other African countries. ‘Muslims should be fairly represented in the new line-up and have their share of high government posts as they are an integral part of the society.’ The Muslim community also pressed for improving the social and economic conditions. This included ‘equipping hospitals in the Muslim-populated areas with necessary medical equipment, medicines, physicians and nurses.’ The complaint further called for allocation of scholarships for orphaned Muslims as well as establishing of trade and investment ventures in the Muslim-populated areas to help create jobs for the Community members.

On 24 August 2009, the Monitor, Uganda’s leading private newspaper, highlighted ‘Uganda: Muslim Teachers Unhappy With MoE.’ Under this highlight, the media, reported, Uganda Muslim Teachers Association (UMTA)’s complain that many Muslim head teachers in primary schools have of late been transferred and replaced with non-Muslims in unclear circumstances. According to the ‘*All Africa Online*’, it is very rare to find a Muslim heading a school founded by other religious denominations. But Muslims in the West Nile Region of Uganda have been very much challenged to ask ‘why is it that non-Muslims are imposed on us in our schools? This ongoing trend is suspicious and it might affect our interests and values as Muslims.’

It is therefore, urgently necessary that Islam must be given its due of serving as family pastoral care instrument in the region by digging out key root causes.

III. KEY QUESTION AND SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS GUIDING THE STUDY

The key question is: How can Islam become a family pastoral care instrument in the West Nile Region of Uganda? Supplementary questions: what are the problem(s) affecting Islam as a family pastoral care instrument? What is the root causes of this/these problem(s)? How can this/these problem(s) affecting Islam be resolved?

A. APPROACHES ADDRESSING QUESTIONS

This researched paper uses one questionnaire, oral interviews, observations, and literature reviews. Questionnaire is offered to target groups, to offer the researcher a chance to collect views from various respondents living in diverse locations. These views are analysed according to the different objectives of the study, using numbers and percentages. Deductive and inductive reasoning is used to interpret the data.

In an oral interview, the researcher conducted discussions with focused groups – adult Muslims and non-Muslims. Observation becomes an important instrument to describe the settings, activities, people, and the meanings of what is observed from the perspective of the participants (Patton 1990:169-183). Recording data rely heavily on the use of field notes (description of settings, people, activities, and sounds). Acknowledging the difficulty of writing extensive field notes during an observation, the researcher jots down notes that serve as a memory aid. This happen as soon as possible after observation (Loftland & Loftland 1984:25).

Involved, is reflective reading of various relevant transcripts such as official records, letters, newspapers, accounts, diaries, reports, as well as the published data are used in reviews of literature, journal articles (Hansen 1995:34-45), electronic information, and other sources of information about family pastoral care in the Region and so forth.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are several theories shaping this paper. Islam is perceived as ‘a religion based on belief in one God’ and, in Arabic, on ‘submission’ (Soanes 2006:477). Related concepts involve, family, pastoral, care, and device. The reader should perceive each as the writer’s own understanding.

‘Family’ is a ‘household under one roof’ and a group of people sharing a common ancestry and origin. This is in agreement with the anthropologists and sociologists who profess rightly that the family is a universal social institution – vital for the well-being of society (Feigelman 1991:227). Pastoral is relating to grazing of livestock, to giving of spiritual guidance, to a teacher’s responsibility for the general well-being of learners/students (Soanes 2006:652). The term ‘care’ signifies ‘concern’ or ‘to be troubled about’ or ‘to heed’; while ‘instrument’ is ‘a tool or implement for precise work’ (Soanes 2006:467).

Hence, Islam as an instrument of family pastoral care, implies a religion that is made purposely by God for all householders under one roof and a group of people sharing a common ancestry (Abraham) or origin (God the creator of

universe), by relating to a Muslim's responsibility for the general well-being of all people (Muslims and non-Muslims), s/he is concerned of, or troubled about and so forth.

IV. THE ROOT CAUSE TO THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING ISLAM

From my observation there are three major root causes hindering Islam from being a family pastoral care instrument in the region understudy: 1. Egoistic politics; 2. Negative influence of media; 3. Scant education/training. However, Islam has a greater potential to serve as a family pastoral care instrument: 1. Correct understanding of Islam; 2. Responsible leadership (aim at promoting common good), 3. Media - promoting human and Islamic dignity not trade; Business centred on advancing moral values; and 4. Responsible child nurture - Education/training centred on promoting socio-human and moral values.

A. EGOISTIC POLITICS

During British political administration La Salandra Toni (2004:33-34) highlights, English authorities divided the West Nile Region according to the three religious denominations: the Madi to Catholics, the Lugbara to Islam and the Alur to the Anglican Church. In acceptance of this between the years 1918 – 1923, twenty different missionaries decided to stay in one place, Mvara, to educate the Alur (Cadri 2006:60). Idi Amin Dada declared Uganda to be an Islamic State. This was another act of political egoism and it revived religious tension which led to the martyrdom of 24 Ugandans.

According to Sudan, (2000: 1 - 4)'s *Day of Devastation, Evangelization in the West Nile Region has also been greatly affected by the Islamic political influence of 1983*. On September 8, 1983, President Numeiri of Sudan (neighbouring the West Nile Region) announced the imposition of the new *sharia* provision in the criminal code. This *sharia* law imposed floggings and discrimination against non-Muslims. Faith McDonnell, (1983: 7) commented: for the president of Sudan, the "testimony of a non-Muslim man is worth only half that of a Muslim" man. "Christians protested against the imposition of Islamic laws on non-Muslims." Sudan, (2000) added, Church leaders in Sudan [and West Nile, Uganda] protested against the cruelty of many of the punishments—which they said degraded the victims" and "dulled the moral and human feelings of the nation". Such religious conflicts from the Voice of Life FM 100.9, (2009: 1) revealed tribal conflicts. The tribe or group that embraced Islam and where Islam first made its proselytes were approached by other tribes and Christians not only in the West Nile Region but also in the whole of Uganda and South Sudan with suspicion and fear.

According to Warom Felix Okello, (17 September 2010: 3) from Arua town (capital of West Nile Region), such groups of people sought to assert their presence amidst the majority - against those who refused their way of life and the ideologies they promoted. Those who refused to promote their beliefs were called "sectarian", and people who wanted to deny the freedom of religious practice. Consequences have been many, such as threats to mobilize parents to write a

protest letter to the district education officers to take action against the school administration. African religious heritage offered little challenge to the competing forces of Islam and Christianity.

Within the framework of this competitive view of religious encounter a person cannot fail to agree with many scholars such as Lamin Sanneh (1980: 1 - 12), who ascribed to Islam in Africa (the continent of West Nile Region) a capacity for tolerance and adaptation which they deny to Christianity. This approach not only belittled the role of African Religions and propagates old religious rivalries but also distorted the process of religious change and adaptation in which the ancient African heritage continued to play a formative role.

B. MEDIA SIDE-LINING CULTURAL AND ISLAMIC VALUES

In the West Nile Region, one of the weaknesses of media is that they do not attempt to explain complex matters carefully and truthfully. It is common for foreign media to fail to give due consideration to the priorities and problems of family members in the region, including respect for good cultural values. However, Islamic family members must also understand that like any other adult family member in the region they too are very often ambiguous in their attitude to such offerings. Very often, adults themselves do not want explanation in the media, and they themselves prefer entertainment of the very sort that disturbs them when they see Islam as a pastoral care instrument exposed to it. Practical examples: Arua One 88.7 FM (Islamic established media) before New Vision took it over. Monday – Friday Line up of Arua One 88.7 FM journalists used to spend more time on a programme known as the 'Romantic Zone'. It was one of the important programs in Islamic established media in the region. 'Romantic Zone' takes three hours daily from 11.00 A.M to 2.00 P.M and from 9.00 P.M to 12.00 A.M (Arua One 2002-2009:1).

Instead of giving a detailed explanation of complex matters, they tend to oversimplify them (The Media and Muslims - Dr. Zakir Naik part 2-3-13). Take sex education, for example, in the Region, traditionally sex education takes the form of an arcane discipline. Sex education progresses gradually, stage by stage, according to age and understanding, throughout the natural development of the children. Sex education is important because of the role it plays in both marriage and family life. This includes the responsibility Muslim parents have in raising their children.

However, the media oversimplify this by exposing everything to children especially of Muslims at a tender age (Pontifical Council for Social Communications - PCSC 1989:9). The results are irresponsible sexual promiscuity, unwanted pregnancies, and gonorrhoea. It means that nobody can consider him-/herself immune to the negative effects of the media such as pornography. In the face of violence, or/and injury at the hands of those acting under their influence, the young and the immature are especially vulnerable and most likely to be victimised. Pornography and sadistic violence debase sexuality corrode human relationships. It undermines marriage and family life, fosters anti-social behaviour, and weakens the moral fabric of society (PCSC 1989:10).

With foreign media on the internet, a distorted vision of life and human beings is often imposed. The media flood communities such as the Region with pornography and violence. The internet does not only come with formative messages to young people especially young Muslims, but also provides them with pornography. It has been easy for the Muslim youth to access the internet through mobile phones and computers. Internet use can lead to addiction because of explicit images about sexual gratification. This use can trigger and leave an impression in the memory, where fantasies are created which can be easily recalled. The internet can easily ensnare the unsuspecting, including young Muslims.

The images of sexual gratification the internet brings also tempt young Muslims greatly. With repeated use, the viewer builds up tolerance to its effects, with a progressive need for more stimulating images, which can cause intense physical changes in the body and brain, and reinforce disordered thoughts and behaviour. With repeated use, the obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours associated with sexual images become increasingly difficult to interrupt or resist. These are indicators that young Muslims in the Region find themselves living in a culture that is increasingly dark and death-dealing. It can easily become more dangerous if the situation is not addressed pastorally with a combined effort by all believers in Islam as family pastoral care agents in the region.

C. SCANT EDUCATION/TRAINING

According to La Salandra, (2004: 30) amidst so called educated and civilized western colonial society, Muslim are unable to obtain the necessary skills for advancement; many only have Qur'anic school (garan in Arabic) for their children. How does such exclusion of Muslims from the educational system which is modernized western based, affect Islam as a family pastoral care instrument, apart from establishing two classes of people - Muslims and non-Muslims. Non-Muslims are brought into the modernized Western colonial system as clerks, messengers, etc. While Muslims are relegated to the role state of peasant farmers, working in sugar plantations or employing themselves as petty traders. Islam has often suffered from egoistic politicians and the media, and it continues to suffer because of scant education. When adult Muslims did not have adequate formal and moral education from their parents, young Muslims find it difficult to finish their studies and get employed. The majority get involved in causing strikes in secondary schools. Very few Muslims reach third level education. Many are forced to leave because of a lack of school fees.

Even the number and behaviour of Muslims teachers is also negatively affected. The teaching profession needs educated people, but only a few young Muslims are able to complete their studies up to the required qualification of being teachers. Free Universal Education (FUE) was supposed to improve the situation, but it has little impact on Muslims in the region.

On 1st July, 2007 Muslim and non-Muslims students clashed in Itula senior secondary school. After this clash, a meeting was held to discuss the matter. Instead the crisis hit a snag after the different religious leaders disagreed in front of

over 500 people, who included parents, students, security, district and religious leaders. Muslims are insulting non-Muslims by calling them 'dirty' people (the *New Vision* newspaper 2007). Warom Felix Okello, On 17 September, 2010:3, underscores tensions caused by Muslim girls in Muni Christian established secondary school in the Arua catholic diocese. Muslims went home on permission granted by the principle of the school. After reaching home they decided to give themselves some holidays. When coming back in their own time, the school decide to discipline them by sending them back home and each to come back with her parents. When the girls arrived with their parents, instead of remaining humble and prudent Muslims, they got involved in a tense situation with the school administration which nearly led to the burning of the school.

Can Islam as a family pastoral care instrument be of any help in the West Nile Region? My personal observation is that there is a common search by a substantial number of Muslims and Christians in the West Nile Region for 'co-citizenship' in their societies. The image of liberation of Islam as a family pastoral care instrument is seen as a unifying factor if it implies a rediscovery of a national bond in the region.

V. ISLAM: A FAMILY PASTORAL CARE INSTRUMENT

Blockages to Islam being a family pastoral care instrument can easily be tackled through cooperation between Muslims and with others (non-Muslims, organization, and institutions) and by taking seriously (1) practical/pastoral understanding of Islam, (2) focusing media on promoting universally human and moral values, (3) using politics for common good, and (4) taking seriously education/training for development.

A. CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM

Islam is meant to be a family pastoral care agent. It is about total submission to God. It is not limited to a particular ethnic group. It is a universal religion because it is ready to embrace everybody, on condition that a person is ready to make the total sacrifice of submission to God. Islam as a religion or way of life is life designed by God to serve humankind - the promotion of good human relationships, dignity, moral and social values.

This is to show that the difficult situations family members find themselves in the West Nile Region is not the problem of the religious vision of Islam. Many never understand well the deeper meaning of practical Islam. Perhaps that is why some decide to politicize religion to achieve their political views. Islam has become a scapegoat for both Muslims and non-Muslims to manipulate simple minds to hinder family pastoral care in the region because of their selfish interests.

Family members in the region understudy have participated in promoting criminal activities in the name of Islam. However, the writer is convinced that Islam itself is not 'criminal'; the problem lies in its abuse in evil/criminal ways. Islam is like dynamite, something powerful that demands proper handling: it can be used to assault humanity, and as a

result, Muslims and non-Muslims become not only frustrated, but also helpless.

Islam as family pastoral care device regards everybody as important creature of God. Included are the monotheistic communities, e.g., Jews and Christians, commonly known as 'the people of the Book (ahl al-kitāb in Arabic); their religion and their culture autonomy is recognized (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica [TNEB], 1983:925). This is to show that Islam, one of the great world religions, began in Arabia and spread to all parts of the world because of its emphasis on 'community' (TNEB 1983:927), which includes political, religious, social and economic aspects. The history of Islam relates the religious to other aspects of culture.

The moment Islam does not function as a family pastoral care instrument Muslims are threatened by non-Muslims. Christians also feel threatened by the Islamic resurgence and are afraid that they will become classified as protected but not represented in the Islamic dominated areas, especially in Aringa. Christians also fear the loss of control over their own education, church matters, as well as property, and the right to give witness to the Christian faith like the Muslims. Both must join hands to aid Islam as a family pastoral care instrument. Proper understanding of Islam means using religions for the common good of all humankind without force or aggression, suspicion and hatred of anybody.

B. THE USE OF MEDIA

From the above information, one realises the struggle of 'West Nilers' (people living in the West Nile Region), in trying to combine the role of Islam with the media and interpersonal communication. Currently the region has several media broadcasting stations, such as, Radio Pacis 94.5 and 94.5 FMs (2004) and Radio Maria (Alice 2007:1) - Roman Catholic and Voice of Life FM 100.9 (2010:1) - Anglican Protestant, Arua One 88.7 FM (Islamic established media) but taken over by the New Vision, Uganda's national broadcasting company (Arua One 2002-2009:1). These mass media play a major role in creating a climate of modernisation among villagers in the Region. However, these local mass media are less successful in utilizing technological innovation in the interests of promoting Islam as a family pastoral care instrument, although there is potential for doing so if religious established media and secular media could work together. Similarly the local media stations that have not taken seriously that the traditional media, such as village theatres and traveling storytellers need to do so because they have been very effective in incorporating the role of Islam as a family pastoral care instrument. Everett (1974:44-54) sheds light on this when he says: 'The traditional mass media...have an important potential for development purposes, especially when they are combined with the modern electronic and printing media'.

C. EDUCATION/TRAINING

Education/training is required. The situation calls for experts/educators in Islam to help in the region. They can promote 'features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and

cooperation for mutual benefits'. Experts can help Muslims realise that they are losing the glue that allows them to live and work together with/and non-Muslims.

The promotion of Islam as a family pastoral care instrument is important not only for Muslims but for other members of society so that all can live and work together well. Muslim and non-Muslims politicians on very rare occasion as political candidates talk about the larger picture (extended family), but do speak a lot of what goods we as individuals' citizens will get out of this or that proposed agenda (cf. subheading 4.1.).

This is dubious 'individualism in extended' family or 'community life' (Fleming L. David, 2000, pp. 5-7). Firstly, it makes a person be described as somebody having initiative, using imagination, possessing a sense of personal freedom, and taking responsibility. A person with a certain degree of individualism could be described as a true adult, having or approaching a certain level of maturity. Secondly, a person with whom individualism is thought of as self-centred, with a rugged independence and a 'me'-first attitude – that is pride.

Education is 'training in a particular subject' (Soanes 2008:280) that enables both groups, Christians and Muslims, become critical of the justice systems of Muslims, 'Islamic courts' and its prison system. With more education they discover that care for the poor, the elderly, and the physically challenged, all show the presence or absence of family pastoral care. Like some non-Muslims groups such as Catholics, the vitality of Muslims life within the region is reflected in its ability to promote Islam as a strong family pastoral care instrument, at least within its membership. Muslims are well aware that the vibrancy of their religious life rests on Islam as a family pastoral care instrument. Muslims are part of a much bigger family picture. So it is necessary for Muslims to pay attention to Islam as a family pastoral care instrument and to embrace non-Muslims because of the social context in which they try to live their lives.

D. POLITICS OF THE COMMON GOOD

Both Islam and the State must practice better co-operation according to the local and prevailing situations. For man's horizons are not only bound by the temporal order, but also by the integrity of his eternal destiny. A good politician is a good religious man or woman. S/he always stands to unite family members. His/her stand is always we – meaning everybody, not some people, not I, not you, but we did it, and we can. S/He remains a good family pastoral care giver, capable of nation building. Islam as a genuine family pastoral care instrument never divides. It is human beings, Muslims or non-Muslims, who make Islam misunderstood.

Family members need to know that Islam never divides people, kills people. It is people who do all these evils in the name of Islam. It is not only criminal but also sinful; and it is cowardice to face reality (the person who is doing all those criminal activities in the name of Islam). Islam as a family pastoral care instrument, having been founded in the love of the God, contributes towards the spread of justice and charity among all family members. Through its teaching and the witness of its members as family pastoral care agents, Islam respects and encourages the political freedom and

responsibility of every citizen. It is not proper for politicians to politicize religions because both are independent in their approach to nation building. Religion uses the family pastoral care approach, which aims at building unity, cooperation/collaboration.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on Islam as a family pastoral care instrument in the West Nile Region of Uganda. It highlights the major problem affecting Islam as a misunderstanding of Islamic religion both by Muslims and non-Muslims. This negative perception of Islam influences social relationships between both groups. The study perceives the understanding of Islam in the past as being very positive. The writer is convinced that the problem of oppression and violence associated with Islam is a human creation, not intrinsic to the faith of Islam. Muslims and non-Muslims sometimes try to misuse Islam for their selfish interests. This manipulation has hindered Islam from functioning as a family pastoral care instrument in the region.

It was noted that so call 'politicians', 'media personnel', and 'educators/trainers' contributed greatly in causing this problem - preventing Islam from being a family pastoral care instrument in the region. Instead of promoting unity, collaboration, peace, good human relations and moral society they are busy promoting egoistic politics, misdirecting media in side-lining cultural and Islamic values, and provide scant education/training. This focus promotes division, immorality, and ignorance that cannot build human society.

The writer is optimistic that promoting Islam as a family pastoral care instrument is the best solution to problems of ignorance and division. He calls for collaboration between individuals and institutions to promote a correct understanding of Islam as a religion of unity, peace and morality. Media must be used to promote Islam as a family pastoral care instrument. Education must promote togetherness and tolerance between people of different faiths. Politics must be for the common good of all people, not for the few.

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