

## **CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD**

Christian involvement means the following:

- The active participation of Christians in the affairs of their own community.
- The role, activities or work of the Christians aimed at developing the society.
- It is the services that Christians render or offer in the society in which they live.

In their involvement, Christians tend to follow their faith as they search for the true meaning of life and in fulfilling the requirement of the scripture.

In Uganda today, Christians are involved in human affairs in the following ways:

1. Helping the needy such as the poor, orphans and the disabled among others. This is what described as alms giving or charity work. A number of church founded organizations like Watoto Children and Sanyu Babies Home at Namirembe take the responsibility of providing for the needs of such disadvantaged people giving them food, shelter, education and medical care among others.
2. The Christians have always been in the fore front calling for peaceful means of solving conflict or disagreement among people. As they strive to reconcile the aggrieved parties, they encourage the members to sit at a round table to settle their misunderstanding and forgive one another. For example, from the late 1990s, retired bishop reverend Mark Baker Ochola and bishop reverend Onono Onweny – both of the Anglican church played important roles in calling upon the Ugandan government and the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), under the leadership of Joseph Kony, to settle the northern war through dialogue. Their effort also led to the formation of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPS).
3. Some Christians are involved in the fight against dictatorship. They condemn the violation of human rights. For example, the Uganda Joint Christian Council advocates for the observation of human rights.
4. There are many Christian organizations that are serving the people in different ways. The Catholic Relief Service (CRS) played a tremendous role as people in northern Uganda were living in the Internally Displaced Camps (IDC). It provided people with basic needs like food and clothes among others.
5. Christians are also translating the gospel into various languages. This is an effort to cater for all categories of people such that they can read and understand the good news.
6. Christians are involved in offering guidance and counseling services to people around them. The serenity centre in Ggaba in Kampala has been helping to counsel people whose conditions or problems seem chronic including the alcoholic. This has helped to give a ray of hope to those who seemingly have given up in life.
7. Christians are actively offering medical services to people. This is being done through church managed hospitals like St. Mary's hospital Lacor in Gulu district and Nsambya hospital in Kampala. The improved the health of the people enables

- them to engage in productive activities for the development of their families and the country.
8. There are media centres belonging to the church. They include radio and television stations like Light House Television and Radio Maria and power FM respectively all located in Kampala. Such centres have benefits including employment, sources of entertainment and information among others.
  9. Christians provide education services to the people they serve. This is through religious founded schools like St. Mary's college Kisubi and Our Lady Queen of African Rubaga Girls' secondary school. In such schools, religious activities like prayers are compulsory. Besides, the church offers scholarships to children from the disadvantaged committed families.
  10. Christians are involved in creating and managing income generating projects or corporations. Among others, centenary Bank is under the direct management of the Catholic church. This is contributing to the development and offering employment opportunities.
  11. The church is preaching the gospel in various communities. This is an effort to strengthen the faith of the people they are serving.

### **HOW CHRISTIANS CAN CREAT UNITY TODAY**

1. Being exemplary in the community, which they live. This can influence the behavior of other people to live in the same way.
2. Christians can organize fellowship. This can bring different people together as they share the word of God.
3. Encouraging the spirit of sharing among the people. By sharing their belonging, those who have and those without or with less are brought nearer to each other. This helps to fight social evils like selfishness and greediness, which tends be divisive.
4. Treating all people equally and associating with everyone irrespective of the social, economic and political background.
5. Christians need to accept that they are also seekers of God. This can help to attract even the people who think they are sinful and thus leading them back to God through repentance.
6. Christians need to campaign for the observation of human rights. This can help people to recognize and honour the value of one another.
7. Being non -partisan in politics. They should treat and take all political parties as important and equal to each other in the government of the country.
8. By giving support to the needy group of people like orphans, poor and disabled. This can be in the form of clothes, shelter and food. This may help to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich.
9. By acting as agents of forgiveness and reconciliation in the event of conflict. They should convince such aggrieved parties to sort out their differences in peaceful way.
10. Christians should pay attention to state duties and functions instead of keeping a distance. This is by paying taxes and celebrating important days such as

- Independence Day, Heroes' day and women's day. This can make people to rally behind the government in place.
11. Christians can create unity by participating in decision – making process regarding the governance of the society. This puts Christians in a better position to advocate for friendly policies that in effect can bring the people together.
  12. Christians can also create unity by preaching the good news of love to everyone. Love is important because it can create a situation where people are able to live as brothers and sisters.
  13. Organizing public meetings and discussions can help in creating unity among people. This is because it becomes an avenue of coming together and sharing their ideas.
  14. Giving full support to ecumenical movements can also act as a tool for Christians to forge unity among the people. Ecumenism is a movement that aims at bringing unity between the various divisions of the Christian faith. This is very important since some religious denominations preach against each other.
  15. Christians can bring unity among people by empowering the youth and the under privileged. This can raise the status of such people to meaningful level.

#### **HOW CHRISTIANS CAN PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS**

1. Through voting for their desired candidates. This may include presidential, members of parliament and local council's candidates.
2. Campaigning to be voted for as representatives of people in the different political posts like president and members of parliament.
3. Sensitizing the public about their rights and the political affairs or development in the country. This helps to create awareness among the people especially when it comes to elections thus helping them to make the best and informed decisions for their country.
4. Participating in public political debate or talk shows. During such debates, topical issues like term limits which are important in the governance of the country are discussed. Such talk shows include "On the Spot" screened on NTV and "Capital Ganga" in 91.3 Capital radio among others.
5. Respecting and observing National days like independence and heroes' days. By doing so, the Christians identify themselves with important events that marked the political development of the country.
6. Holding peaceful demonstrations in cases where they feel dissatisfied with what is taking place or where ever and whenever they feel their rights have been violated. This can act as a wakeup call for political leaders to serve their people. For example the "Walk to Work protest" that characterized the year 2011 by the opposition leaders including Dr. Kiiza Besigye of Forum for Democratic Change and Mao Nobert of Democratic Party because of high fuel and food prices.
7. Attending public rallies especially where matter of public interest including good governance are discussed.

8. Expressing their views on matters relating to the governance of the country. This can be through writing articles in nationally recognized magazines like the independent under the stewardship of Andrew Mwenda and newspapers including the New Vision and the Daily Monitor. Such writings may help to bring to the attention of the government of what the public think.
9. Opposing the dictatorship of the government peacefully especially when its policies limit the freedom of the people.
10. Attending national conferences, workshops or seminars organized by the government. This enables the Christians to express their views for matters relating to the affairs of the country freely.
11. Giving advices to the pollical leaders like the members of parliament and local councils among others. This can help such political leaders to serve the people better.
12. Attending court sessions especially where the cases are about the political development of the country. This can help to ensure that there is fairness in judging cases.
13. Paying taxes effectively and regularly as may be required by the government. This is important in aiding government programmes like the provision of medical and educational services and constructing roads among others.
14. Promoting government policies like family planning and Universal Primary and Secondary Education.

### **REASONS FOR CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS**

1. Christians should participate in politics in order to subdue the world. God, in the beginning commanded man to bring the world under his control (Genesis 1:28). Therefore, participation in politics by the Christians is one way of bringing the world under their control.
2. It helps the Christians to promote the spirit of brotherhood. This can bring about unity in diversity.
3. It enables the Christians to encourage the political leaders to fulfill their promises. This makes it possible for the ordinary citizens to enjoy the fruits of elections.
4. Participation in politics by Christians can help to bring sinners back to God. This is possible if the Christians can encourage and promote values like love, humility and forgiveness. Jesus demonstrated this by associating closely with the outcasts like the prostitute woman and the tax collector.
5. It can help to minimize election malpractice like rigging. This can ensure that the most capable and acceptable leaders are elected.
6. Christians should participate in politics in order to show a good example to other leaders. Such a Christian becomes a pace setter or a role model for the rest of the political leaders to follow in order to serve the people better.
7. It ensures that there is fair play in the government especially during important times like the drafting of the constitution or while debating bills (proposed laws). The

- Christians can guide the discussion basing on values like fairness, tolerance and love.
8. It encourages the spirit of togetherness in the community. The fruit of this may be peace and harmony among the community members.
  9. It can help a Christian to implement and establish justice in matters relating to the affairs of the country. This enables everyone enjoy the fruits of good politics which may include better roads and improved medical facilities.
  10. Christians should participate in politics to help ensure peaceful change of government. This may be possible if the Christians can sensitize the public that authority is God given and thus impart values of sharing and humility among others.
  11. Participating in politics gives the Christians the opportunity to render support ti their own people especially those disadvantaged like the poor and the orphans. This is important in improving standards of living of such persons.
  12. Christian’s participation in politics can help to resolve conflict among people. In such a case, the Christians become bridge builders in bringing people having misunderstanding together and thus settling their differences.
  13. Participating in politics by Christians can help in extending the kingdom of God. Before going back to heaven, Jesus instructed his apostles to make everybody a believer before his second coming.
  14. Participation in politics by Christians can create unity in diversity. This becomes important in the pluralistic society where misunderstanding is always caused by differences in the political, religious and social beliefs. Therefore, it is the duty for the Christians to help the people understand that they are all one and are children of God.
  15. It is a duty for a Christian to obey civil authority for the authority is God – given. In this teaching, Jesus said “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God”. By saying so, Jesus was encouraging His disciples to pay the tax required (Matthew 22:15-22).
  16. Participating in politics by the Christians is an act of showing obedience to the state. Saint Peter advised the believers to submit to every human authority for the sake of the Lord (1 Peter 2:13).
  17. It provides Christians with the opportunity to offer guidance and counselling to the political leaders and the members they serve.

## **REASONS AGAINST CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS**

1. Politics tends to divide the population basing on the political parties. This is against the oneness in Jesus Christ and the God they serve.
2. It can easily make Christian to be liars. This is especially as they look for votes. This means that the incapable leaders may be the ones chosen.
3. Politics can make a Christian put himself or herself above the others. This contradicts Jesus' teaching on authority where the greatest in the heavenly kingdom is one who is a servant (Matthew 20:26).
4. Participating in politics can easily make Christians forget God's duties. This is because of the many engagements including carrying out rallies and debates.
5. Politics creates enmity among the people. This is because it leaves people in two or more rival blocks basing on the political parties.
6. Politics may make the Christians materialistic. This may become a blockage to the commitment Christians are meant to have towards their faith as they may be pre-occupied with the struggle for such material things.
7. Politics makes a Christian chaotic. By becoming chaotic, they fail to copy the life of Jesus characterized by humility, tolerance and love.
8. Politics is a cheap way of seeking popularity by the Christians. This may be as a result of being known for doing things in the world.
9. In politics, Christians are liable to search for prestige instead of God. They should copy the example of Jesus who lived a quiet and simple life.
10. Christians can easily become enemies because of different political ideologies and as they fight for votes. This may pose threat to the lives of Christians.
11. It is possible that the Christians can easily be over taken by the political issues rather than the spiritual lives of the people.
12. Christians are encouraged to work for the heavenly glory instead of concentrating on the earthly pleasures.
13. Politics takes a lot of time for the earthly matters. This means that Christians may be left with little time for serving God.
14. Politics is associated with dictatorships. This sets a bad example for Christians and portrays a bad image of them.
15. In many cases politicians violate the rights and freedom of the people they serve. However, Christians are required to live for and with others peacefully.
16. Most politicians are rulers and they want to be served. However, Christians are expected to follow Jesus' example who served the people instead of being served.

## **HOW CHRISTIANS CAN SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS TODAY**

1. Christians can spread the gospel by preaching. This can either be in the church or any other organized place or worshipping.
2. Christians can use charitable work in spreading the gospel. Through extending services to the needy, they can convey the message of love and care to the disadvantaged people.
3. The gospel is being spread through living exemplary life. This becomes important in influencing the lives of a non - believer.
4. Christian seminars or workshops can be organized with the aim of enlightening the community about their faith. This keeps the Christians firm.
5. Christians can use electronic media such as radio and television. Programmes in such media are Christian in nature including the songs and the preaching.
6. Christians can provide social services to the general public as one way of spreading the gospel. They can use this opportunity to teach the beneficiaries of the schools and hospital the gospel message.
7. Some Christians make pilgrimages in a bid to spread the gospel. Visitation to holy places such as Uganda Martyrs shrine at Namugongo, is used to remember historical events and even encourage the living with faith to behave in the same way.
8. The gospel message is being passed through composing and singing songs. Some of these songs contain biblical texts that already summarized. They are also used during praise and worship.
9. The gospel message is being passed on through drama. In the process of people being entertained, the spectators are also made aware of the gospel truth.
10. The Christians have always and can still continue to translate the scriptures into various languages in spreading the gospel. This helps the masses to read and understand the content of the scriptures.
11. Christians also contribute bibles to people such that they can have access to and read the message.
12. Some Christians go out for missionary journey in an effort to spread the gospel. They travel to distant places where they keep on conveying the gospel messages.
13. Christians can write and publish different literature as a way of spreading the good news. The gospel truth story is always conveyed in the form of stories already written down.
14. Christians can spread the good news by organizing praise and worship. In such a way, the gospel messages are passed to the people participating.
15. Some Christians may use personal testimonies to influence others. They share the Christian experiences mostly in the church.

## **PROBLEMS CHRISTIANS FACE IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL**

1. Language barrier is almost the biggest problem in the spread of the gospel. In this, it becomes difficult for the gospel truth to be passed across to other people because of the inability to communicate.
2. Christians also face opposition from different groups of people. This may either be non-believers or believers having different doctrine.
3. Inadequate or limited funds delay the smooth spread of the gospel. This slows down activities such as missionary journey and writing Christian literature.
4. Lack of commitment on the side of believers themselves is a problem in the spread of the gospel. Such people lack seriousness and may not allow the church summons.
5. Christians are faced with the problem of competition among the different denominations. Some even preach against the others with a lot of criticism. This tends to confuse the followers who may eventually fall out.
6. Rigid and conservative cultures held by some Africans block the spread of the gospel. Such people may look at Christianity as foreign religion and are therefore, not ready to follow its teachings.
7. Political instability or insecurity has been a problem in the spread of the gospel. In such places, people cannot freely go to spread the gospel. Some are even killed in the process of moving up and down.
8. Christians face the problem of temptation in spreading the good news. They are easily taken up by the pleasures of the world at the expense of the gospel truth.
9. There is also the problem of over expectation from the general public. In such cases, the society expects the believers to be perfect in each and everything. A small mistake becomes a way of undermining such believers.
10. The spread of the gospel is also hampered by transport hazards including accidents and impenetrable roads. This tends to limit the movement of Christians.
11. Some Christians are always mocked, abused, provoked or insulted by the general public because of their faith. In some places, Christian believers are even isolated. This may prevent the spread of the gospel because of the hostile attitude of the would-be audience.
12. Some Christians are disturbed by inferiority complex or fear in the spread of the gospel. This makes them unable to carry out their duties effectively.
13. Some Christians suffer from isolation because of the faith. The strict life they live is seen as difficult to copy and at times regarded as being boring.



## **CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY**

Christian involvement in African Traditional Society deals with the integration of African cultures into Christianity. When Christianity had just been introduced, both the Africans and the missionaries came to realise that certain customs and practices combined the two seemingly contrasting beliefs. Every effort possible was, therefore, made to get the best out of each including the following:

1. The church accepted the extended family system in traditional Africa. This was in line with the teaching of Christ where the family must be outward looking to a wider human community.
2. The traditional Africans just as the church had a common belief of God being the creator and the supreme being. This was the most important belief that brought the traditional Africans and the church as one.
3. Both the traditional Africans and the Christians believed in the existence of the evil spirits. These spirits are believed to be the obstacles to man's faith in God and are a source of instability. Above all, they all believed in the casting out of these evil spirits by performing rituals and prayers.
4. Just as the traditional Africans, the church especially, the Roman Catholic church recognized the use of intermediaries in accessing God. The Africans believed in divinities (lesser gods) to link them with the supreme God and the Catholic believes in saints.
5. The traditional Africans had always encouraged communal living to promote the spirit of togetherness. This was and is not different from the Christian idea of sharing everything in common.
6. Christianity had to recognize African names relating to the existence of God. Such names were seen to glorify God's name because of having religious meaning attached to them.
7. The church adopted the African practical way of offering sacrifices with the intention of living a holy life. They, however, had to change some of the aspect or the way it was it was being conducted like human sacrifice.
8. The church involved Africans into Christianity by translating the bible, prayer books and hymn books in the native languages. This made Christianity to penetrate deeply among the Africans.
9. The church also adopted African songs having religious meaning. They also translated their hymns into African languages so as to ease praise and worship.
10. Both the traditional Africans and the church accepted the idea of the blood bond. To the Africans, a blood relationship was not to be broken. This was the same with the Christian doctrine of Christ shading his blood to cement the relationship between man and God and man and man.
11. The church also encouraged the making of beautiful art pieces such as paintings and sculptures. Several art pieces were later used to beautify the church buildings.

12. The traditional Africans easily understood the Christian rituals and ceremonies including baptism, confirmation and others. This was not different from the African cultural practices of child naming and circumcision.

## **CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH HISTORY**

### **The Early Church**

The body of the church Christ left behind got involved in a number of activities. The disciples were following the example and instruction of Christ of converting all the people into Christianity before His second coming. Their involvement in human affairs is reflected in how much they cared and loved others including the following:

1. The Christians preached the gospel. Their preaching was about the messiah (Acts 8:4-8).
2. The Christians gave testimonies as they proclaimed the message of the Lord. These testimonies helped to make the people believe more in the gospel truth (Acts 8:25).
3. The disciples converted people into believers thus the church was strengthened and it grew in number as they carried out water baptism (Acts 9:31).
4. They wrote epistles to various communities such as Corinth, Galatia and Rome. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians on several occasions on puzzling questions including marriage and food offered to idols among others.
5. The Christians carried out charitable work. They distributed relief items and donations to the needy in the form of food (Acts 6:1-4).
6. They continued to make miracles. For example, Peter and John healed a lame man (Acts 3:1-10).
7. The Christians engaged in prayers. This became one way through, which they could communicate with God.
8. The believers shared their belongings. The rich in particular sold their property and shared the money with everyone (Acts 4:32-37).
9. They encouraged reconciliation among the believers. For example, they helped to reconcile the native Jews and the Greek speaking Jews over the disagreement concerning finances (Acts 6:1-6).
10. There was fellowship among the believers. They continued coming together and sharing the word of God (Acts 2:44-47).
11. The Christians founded churches in various communities. Saint Paul took the leading role in establishing the church in the communities he travelled like in Rome on his several visits.
12. The believers were involved in fasting as they copied the example of Jesus Christ. During such times, they dedicated themselves to the service of God (Acts 13:1-3).
13. The early Christians were occupied with laying hands on the people as Jesus had done before.
14. They also trained others to help them with the work of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, St. Paul trained Timothy and Titus.

15. The Christians shared Holy Communion with the people. This was done in memory of the Lord's last supper and the bloodshed through crucifixion.

### **CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICAN CHURCH (THE MISSIONANARIES)**

Consideration should be given to the following already covered under the sub-themes of work and service.

- Introduction of formal education by building schools like Mengo SS, Namilyango SS.
- Set up medical centres.
- Founded churches.
- Introduced good news of salvation.
- Trained African religious leaders including Adrian Atiman, Apollo Kivebulaya.
- Campaigned for the abolition of slave trade.
- Introduced new skills in life like carpentry.
- Carried out baptism.
- Translated the Bible into local languages.
- Helped in reconciling hostile tribes e.g. tribes Buganda and Bunyoro.
- Set up mission station such as at Bagamoyo.
- Set up catechical centres.
- Introduced legitimate trade.

### **CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

1. God is acknowledged as the only creator and the Lord of everything concerned with the welfare of man (Isaiah 44:9-20).
2. God made the human beings both male and female in his own image. This opened up ways for man to respond to God in faith. (Genesis 1:27-30).
3. However, the good relationship between man and God was brought to an abrupt halt. They disobeyed the simple command God had given them and ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1ff).
4. To bring man nearer to him, God called Abraham who responded with absolute faith, obedience and trust (Genesis 12:1ff).
5. God also called Moses to fulfill his promise of setting his chosen people free from their slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3:1ff).
6. When the Israelites were finally liberated from their slavery, God expected them to respond to him with obedience (Exodus 6:1ff).
7. At the foot of Mount Sinai, God initiated a new relationship between him and his chosen people – the Israelites. He made a covenant with the Israelites and this later became the basis of their relationship (Exodus 19:1-9).
8. As part of the covenant, God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. The first three laws were concerned with the vertical relation between God and the

Israelites and the remaining seven dealt with the horizontal relationship among the Israelites.

9. The Israelites were urged to worship only God (monotheism) as their ancestor Abraham had started when he was called.
10. God called for love and respect among the Israelites. Being the chosen people, God expected the Israelites to show good examples to other nations. (Exodus 22:21-22).
11. However, when the Israelites turned to and worshiped other gods, they disobeyed and rebelled against their own God. But, in spite of their disobedience and rebellion, God was still willing to continue with them, but the warnings against such acts.