



# What the heck is **HUMANISM** about?

Find out more by visiting HALEA offices  
at Plot 41, Makerere Hill Road, Enterprise  
House, Room L3 OR send us an Email:  
[haleauganda@gmail.com](mailto:haleauganda@gmail.com)



# Open Talk Magazine

**Dare to think**

30 November 2014

Ushs 3,000/=, US\$1

## TEENAGE PREGNANCY!

**A BIG THREAT TO UGANDA'S GIRL CHILD:  
TIME TO TAKE SEX EDUCATION TO SCHOOLS**



Panelists at HALEA's Open Talk  
Debate at Fair Way Hotel, October 2014



Young Mothers back to School at  
Kampala Student's Centre



Teens performing at HALEA's  
Talent Search at Obligato, 2014



HALEA's Viola Namyalo playing a Piano  
at Obligato October, 2014



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE: THE TOP STORIES:

- Teens on the need to take Sex Education to Schools
- Teens speak out against oppressive and retrogressive cultural and religious practices
- Beti Kakulu on why teens need to keep their virginity.
- Teens take on president Musveni's view that science subjects be given priority over arts.
- Richy Thompson on Sex and Relationships Education in the United Kingdom - Views from the British Humanist Association.
- Harjit Singh on Liberationism: A guide to life after religion
- Denis Lugenwa on why the Anti Homosexuality Law was unnecessary.
- Leo Igwe on what should guide African against Ebola: Religion or Science?
- Kato Mukasa's Take on the Legalisation of Abortion in Uganda.



CONTENTS

Editorial.....3

Teens support Sex Education: .....4

Teens views on Retrogressive Cultural and Religious  
Pratctices .....8

Teens on Religion .....10

Teens on Retrogressive Cultural Practices .....13

Teens talk about Abortion .....16

Sex Education in the United Kingdom .....18

A Teacher's View on the Anti-pornogrphy Law .....20

Beti on keeping Virginity.....21

Leo Igwe on the Fight against Ebola .....24

Harjit Singh on Liberationism .....26

Denis Lugemwa analyzing the Anti-Homosexuality Law .....28

Kato Mukasa on a call to legalise abortion .....30

Kato's Poetic Corner ..... 32

Doubting Religious Leaders ..... 34

Open Talk Magazine

**Managing Editor:**  
Kato Mukasa

**Senior Editor:**  
Kisa Musa  
Kasonsole Kaggwa.

**Photo Director:**  
Julius Semukasa  
Kato John

**Projects Editor:**  
Lukyamuzi Joseph

**Editorial Assistant:**  
Susan Nambejja

**Research director:**  
Doreen Namagembe

**Circulation Director:**  
Denis Lugemwa

**Creative Director:**  
Edwin Suuna Ssemakokiro

**Production Manager:**  
Lwanga Obadiah  
Tel.: 0754 092026, 0703092026

**Setting &Cover Desisgn:**  
Esther Kalibbala (Nnalongo)  
Tel.: 0704 599907

**PUBLISHER**  
Humanist Association for  
Leadership, Equity and  
Accountability (HALEA).  
Plot 273/274 Gaddafi  
Road/ Makerere Hill Road,  
Next to LDC

Tel:+ 256-312-291-427/  
+256- 751- 420- 810 /  
+256-755-415-661

Email: haleauganda@gmail.  
com/ www.haleauganda.org

SUPPORT HALEA

Subscribe to Open Talk Magazine

One year	-	Ug. Shs.50,000	US \$22
Two years	-	Ug. Shs.90,000	US \$40
Three years	-	Ug. Shs.130,000	US \$59
Single issue	-	Ug. Shs.3,000	US \$1

Name -----

Address -----

Day time phone -----

City----- District-----

P. O. BOX----- or call-----

The open talk magazine is Uganda’s leading voice of dissent and discussion in fields ranging from civil rights, ethical living and free thought.

**Return to: Open talk magazine**

Support Halea’s Activities & Programs:

Yes, I want to support HALEA’s activities especially the Open Talk Debates, the Open Talk Magazine’s expanding operations and other HALEA activities including Slum Teens Empowerment, Community out reach, Young Mothers Empowerment, influencing public policy, promoting human rights and civil rights, research, and ethical living.

- \* I want to become a member ☐
- \* I want to make a donation ☐
- \* I want to support specific activities ☐

**I would like to support HALEA as:**

- Annual Supporter (Ug. Shs.100,000 - US \$45)
- Life Supporter (one-off Ug. Shs. 1,000,000 - US \$450)
- Life Supporter (Age over 65, one-off Ug. Shs.800,000 - US \$363)
- Donation for securing HALEA’S future
- Donation to Halea’s campaigns (Teens Empowerment, Young Mothers Projects, Human Rights Programme, Rights of Humanists, Religion-State, Separation Issues.

**To Support HALEA Please call**

Office: 031-2-291-427, mobile: 0772-576-635 / 0751- 420- 810.  
Email: haleauganda@gmail.com.

## From the Editor

**THE MAGAZINE** you hold in your hands is dedicated to you and the young people in your life. The publication of the Open Talk magazine and its continued distribution; free of charge in several schools fulfills the promise we made to you to put young people at the centre of national development efforts.

The magazine continues to put young people's views on the front page as a way of giving them a voice and a genuine platform to raise issues affecting them. The year 2014 was strictly dedicated to call on all stakeholders to join our efforts in devising means of controlling the escalating number of teenagers dropping out of school due to unwanted pregnancies. We also noted in our June 2014 issue that HIV -AIDS infection is on the increase among young people in Uganda and stressed the necessity for sex education to be introduced in schools such that young people are properly and factually informed about sex and sexuality to enable them make informed decisions and keep away from the existing clear and present danger.

Dear parents and all stakeholders, we have a cause to worry. Recent reports from the Ministry of Gender indicate that there is a sky rocketing number of teenage pregnancies in Uganda and it has now been reported that one in four girls aged 15 and 19 years is either pregnant or already with their first child. The new statistics do not defer from what was reported in the Uganda Demographic Health survey 2011. Its further reported that Central region has the highest pregnancy rates at 30.6%, Eastern Uganda with 30.3%, Karamoja region with 29.7%, West Nile is at 26.4% while Northern Uganda registered 25.6% teenage pregnancy rate. Over 300,000 girls in Uganda are getting pregnant before they are 19 years. Such teenage pregnancy rates are very much worrying.

Whereas the schools where HALEA directly extends its services are currently recording a decrease in dropout and teenage pregnancy rates, the challenge persists in many schools just with in Kampala district the capital city of Uganda. Thanks to our partner schools who have allowed us to organize regular

debates and trainings through which issues affecting young people have been critically discussed by young people themselves.

We cannot afford the luxury to sit back and lament as the future of our country which depends on the quality of young people we have today is ruined. We are the generation to make things happen. Sometimes its said, it falls upon a generation to be great. I am convinced we can be that generation that can empower the young ones to live a better life. We have the ability to empower them so lets do it NOW.

In this publication, we continue to give young people a platform to talk about sex matters and the need for sex education. We also deal with abortion, female genital mutilation and other retrogressive cultural practices such as women beating and arranged marriages e.t.c.

We have an educative article on sex and relationships education in the United Kingdom. Can we learn a thing from our partners in the United Kingdom. What is it that they are doing to keep young people in school and what kind

of sex education are young people in the UK getting? You will find out by reading this publication.

Our appreciation to our partners for enabling us continue serving our young people in Uganda. Thanks to HAMU and the people of Norway; we can afford daily operation and deliver to you your OTM(Open Talk Magazine) at no cost. Thanks to HAMU for firing us up and thanks to you the reader for giving us audience.

As a humanist organization, we continue to emphasize the need to use science, reason and rationale as the best approach to handle the numerous challenges in our midst. This publication brings to you articles that will tickle your mind and promote more critical thinking.

To all the writers, photographers and editorial team that put this together, thank you. You are an excellent bunch of people I have enjoyed working with. Our dear reader, send us your views and responses because that is one way of knowing that you enjoyed the OTM. Nice Reading.





## TEENS IN SUPPORT OF SEX EDUCATION TO BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS

**Nankunda. K. Faith**

*Grace Fellowship High School. S.6*



**YES I AGREE**, sex education should be taught because all of us know that we were born because our parents had sex and children are products obtained through sex anyway. So sex is a valuable thing but should not be misused. Today, many young people do not complete

school because along the way, they get unwanted pregnancies and drop out. As a young woman, I have seen many of my fellow teens dropping out of school due to unwanted pregnancies. To be exact, out of the 100 girls I started with in primary one, only 3 have managed to reach in senior six. Many of the girls I started school with dropped out due to unwanted pregnancies, others were forced into marriages through the so called arranged marriages while others went out of school to engage in other income generating activities yet others eloped with men. I have managed to stay in school because of the counseling, the trainings and advice I have got from several individuals, spiritual leaders and HALEA's trainings and debates. Without exposure to what sex is, why we should delay it, what can be done to avoid pregnancies and all that relates to sex, perhaps, I would not have reached this far. This is why I support the teaching of sex education in schools.

I do not subscribe to the view that sex is sacred and therefore we should not talk about it because even when we avoid talking about it, being part of nature, teens somehow try to find out about it and because they are not guided, they end up misusing sex. In my view the teachers who teach about sex education should be precise, let them talk about what sex is all about - this does not necessarily mean that they should show us how to play sex as the opposers of sex education in schools argue- but rather they should help boys and girls understand their bodies thoroughly, know all about safe sex, family planning methods and the dangers of early sex among others. It is vital that young people know the merits and demerits of having sex. This is important because some of our parents are shy on teaching us about sex

and many young people end up guessing all about sex and make mistakes that they would have avoided had they been empowered with sex education. It is disturbing for a teenager to ask her parents about sex issues and then the parents instead refer such a child to the teachers. It is important that both teachers and parents should take the responsibility to teach sex education and empower the young ones. There is nothing satanic in knowing something about sex.

Sex is so important in schools when its taught to students, they will know more about sex and be able to avoid misusing sex. Once empowered, teens will be able to fight back against sex abuses such as forced marriages, early marriages, raping and defilement due to that technology got at school about sex. I encourage all schools to come and join Open Talk Debates as well as contributing articles in the Open Talk Magazine such that their views are shared and heard by several opinion leaders, parents and school authorities, this will gradually change the way people think about sex.

In my conclusion, I thank HALEA for organizing the Open Talk Debates and giving us a platform to bring out our views. Thanks to Grace Fellowship for enabling us link up with HALEA, I have benefited from their wonderful services over the years and I complete my secondary education with lots of empowering information that I would not have obtained without their working closely with us.

**Mutesi Zaitun**

*Grace Fellowship High School*

**WE HAVE HAD DEBATES ON SEX EDUCATION** and

I have always supported the side which argues for



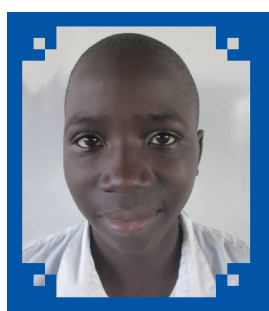
the inclusion of sex education on the school syllabus. This is because I have seen many of my peers getting pregnant because of the ignorance they had about sex. Many girls in secondary do not know when they can get pregnant; they even do not know what they can do to avoid pregnancies.

It is important that children in schools are taught

about sex education as well as sexuality so that they differentiate between sex and sex misuse. As teenagers, we should avoid misusing sex, sex is meant for procreation or enjoyment but it is not meant for young people. I now understand that having sex when one is below 18 years is dangerous since one's sexual organs can be destroyed. Below 18 years, a girl cannot hold a baby in her small womb properly so it is not advisable to get pregnant. I have also had about cases of fistula as young girls get post delivery problems because they played sex and delivered babies before they were ready for it.

This is what I have benefited from HALEA services, the debates have enabled me know the need to abstain from sex, the dangers of unsafe sex and early sex and the need to respect our bodies. Sex education is good because it teaches us all about our bodies and sex organs and this is important because many of our parents shy away from telling us about sex. Sex education does not mean that teens should be taught how to play sex but rather they should be helped to know more about their sex organs and avoid misusing sex. That is why I support the teaching of sex education because it is such knowledge that can save lives and prevent young people from getting unwanted pregnancies as well as getting infected with HIV/ AIDS.

**Abagonza Collins, P.7**  
**Bat Valley Primary School**



**I SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF SEX EDUCATION**

because it is part of humanity. Children are products of sex and as children we also dream of having children of our own in future. Besides, as we grow, our bodies undergo changes and we cannot explain how

to manage such changes, therefore we need to be taught about sex in line with our body changes.

I have seen girls failing to come to school because they are having their menstruation period and because they are not empowered to handle such body changes, they miss out on school and some even perform poorly because they are not aware of what to do. I am saddened to note that many of our

parents keep on telling us that sex is a bad thing and do not even explain what makes sex bad. Meanwhile even at primary level, I have seen young boys and girls having boyfriends and girl friends, they may not be having sex but they are already coupling, meaning that they can misuse sex if they are not properly guided.

We should have sex education in school because our parents are shy to talk about sex with us yet teachers have the opportunity to teach us about sex. Through sex education debate at our school, I got to know how sex is misused and why it is important to report any sex abuse to the authorities. We also heard about condom use, and other contraceptives to use to avoid pregnancies and to help in family planning. Such information is good to us since we can also take it to our parents who also need it.

Children are having sex even when we are told that having sex is bad manners. I have seen some girls who are twelve or thirteen years getting pregnant and dropping out of school, many have not reached in Primary seven as I have because they got pregnant and had to drop out. Sex education can enable us to avoid misusing sex and to know safe ways of avoiding unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS. So, let us have sex education be taught in schools, it will enable many young people stay in school. To parents, I still request you to open up and talk to us about sex, I do not think you enjoy seeing your children getting pregnant or getting young girls pregnant, children in primary five to seven are ready to be taught about sex.

**Aloyo Sarah. P.7-**  
**Bat Valley Primary School**



**I HAVE REALIZED** that many teenagers do not know the needed information about sex and can never understand their bodies sexually. Parents are very shy when it comes to talking about sex. Whereas my guardians have talked about how I can handle my

menstruation days, they have never talked to me about sex in general apart from telling me that I should avoid having sex with boys because I can get

pregnant.

Sex education is taboo and many people chose to avoid it yet even when they do not want to talk about it, teenagers get involved in sex and end up getting unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/ AIDS. I have studied with several girls who dropped out of school because they got pregnant, were forced into marriages or eloped with men – mature enough to be their fathers- and went into what they want to call marriage or rather into cohabitation and I now find them, children having children.

Through sex education debates, I have learnt the need to report such sex abuses and I now know my rights as a girl child. Sex education is not about playing sex, it is about knowing all about sex, knowing about one's body and being able to protect yourself to avoid getting diseases and unwanted pregnancies. There is no harm in letting young people know something about sex and this can be obtained through sex education.

**Kamakune Elizabeth:**

**Grace Fellowship High School; Form 4**

**SEX INTERCOURSE** is part of human nature and children need to know about sex through sex education. My observation is that parents do not talk to us about sex and my parents for example have never talked to me about sex. It is through sex education debates organized by HALEA that I have come to know about sex and sexuality and I am now more empowered than ever before.



In our debate, I realized the need for parents to talk about sex with their children. Children noted that because their parents do not openly talk about sex with them, they make bad decisions and end up in trouble since they are not properly informed. I also noted that children who reported having good conversation with their parents about sex are the teens whose teachers and parents talk to them about sex are more likely to delay sexual activity and have fewer partners and use condoms and other contraceptives when they do have sex and therefore avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Whereas I support the teaching of sex education in school, I am putting my emphasis on the parents because they should be at the fore front of promoting sex education. Parents can really make a difference, they can talk with their children about sex matters and they build strong relationships with them above all, if parents dared to talk with their children about sex, they would achieve good results since they are capable of setting clear expectations and boundaries for them as regards sex and the parents should not rely on the school system to teach sex education because sex education may not even be available in their children's schools. The fact is that many schools do not want children to learn about sex and sexuality.

Sex education is important since it exposes the teens to sex knowledge and this also helps them to prevent pregnancy since they are advised to use condoms when they are to have sex because the fact is that many teenagers cannot control their feelings and using condoms reduces their children's chances of getting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV/ AIDS and Gonorrhea, among others and help them to ensure that they live healthier.

Through sex education, we are advised to abstain from sex, because un safe sex and premarital sex can lead to unwanted pregnancy yet teenage girls can not be able to take care of the baby and themselves. In conclusion, I call upon parents to talk about sex openly with their children and sex education should be encouraged in school. I am happy that the four years HALEA has been coming to my school, I have benefited a lot and I know more about sex and sexuality and I have been able to complete the Ordinary level without major problems.

**Nakato Brenda:**

**Grace Fellowship High School- Form 4**



**SEX EDUCATION** is the type of information young people need to know about sex and sexuality and through such knowledge, we get a continuous discovery of our bodies and thereby making such education an empowering

tool. As a result of sex education and talking about sex in my school, the number of teens getting pregnant has reduced as well as the spread of diseases like STDs and AIDs among young people has reduced gradually. Let the schools be flexible and include sex education on our school calendar since it will save lives of many young people. School will teach us about sex because our parents and old people fear to talk about sex and above all some parents are equally not informed about sex and sexuality hence they have less meaningful information to share with young people.

It is unfortunate that many of our parents shy away from talking about sex and assume that our teachers will do the talking about sex yet it is not part of the school curricular. So parents should teach us about sex because they are the ones to blame if we get unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Sex education empowers us to keep our bodies clean, to know our body changes and ways to handle such changes without risking through unsafe sex. Let us have sex education as part of our school curriculum and let parents and teachers play a leading role in promoting the teaching of sex education.

**Namugerwa Hadijah:**

**Grace Fellowship Primary School: 11 Years, P.5**



**I AGREE THAT SEX** education should be taught in school because of the following reasons: It promotes self control as it helps children to have control of themselves most especially during adolescence stage. Sex education should be taught in schools because

it prevents HIV/AIDS. When you play sex with boys/men with HIV/AIDS, you will get infected with the disease and when you get pregnant at the same time, your baby also has the possibility of being born with HIV/AIDS.

Sex education should be taught in school because pupils should be taught about the nature and importance of marriage for family life and bringing

up children. This helps them to grow up loving and respecting each other for what they are. Teens that have been empowered through sex education can avoid the problems brought about by sex and therefore they know all the best ways of protecting themselves against HIV/AIDS.

Sex education should be taught in school because parents spend little time with their children whereby they take long to teach their children about sex and fill shy to tell their children things they refer to as vulgar and obscene. I am therefore happy that through debates, we have a chance to talk about sex and know the dangers of early sex and the need to abstain from sex.

**Tumusiime Lilian:**

**Grace Fellowship Primary School: 14 Years, P.5**



**SEX EDUCATION** is concerned with teaching about sex, sexuality, sexual health and the risks involved with sex. Sex education should be taught in schools because of the following reasons or advantages; Sex education helps students abstain from

sex. Effective sex education is essential if young people are to make responsible and well informed decisions about their lives. The bad thing is that most schools concentrate on academics geared towards passing exams but not the future of the students.

Sex education should be taught in schools because sex is part of life and therefore students should be taught why, how and when to practice this act so that in case they are making decisions of having sex, they are considerate with the time at which they are having the act and with whom and above all, teens need to think about their safety before they go in for sex.

Sex education should be taught in schools so that the teenagers are aware of the tactics to avoid pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other STDs. This will help to control population increase since teens will be aware of the best ways to avoid pregnancy.



# GIRLS OPPOSE FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) AND WANT IT ABOLISHED

**Namutebi Joan**

**Form 6 Exodus College School – Wakiso**



## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

(FGM) is also referred to as female genital cutting or female circumcision. The World Health Organization defined FGM as all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or clitoris (the folds just within the vulva of a

woman) or other injury to the female genital organs for non medical reasons.

Over million women and girls in Africa have undergone FGM. It is carried out using a knife or razor blade. Sometimes, children as young as two weeks after birth can also be circumcised, although according to the 2013 statistics, many of the groups where this practice is done, children at the age of 5 years are circumcised and among some tribes in Uganda and Kenya, young women are equally circumcised. A woman's vulva is opened and the clitoris is mutilated in a very barbaric and painful manner.

Despite the pain involved and having a law in place against this backward cultural practice, female circumcision is still ongoing especially at the will of the woman in some cultures and this is due to the following reasons.

It is done to control women's sexuality. The men have found it as an effective method of controlling their wives' sexual desires especially in their absence and this is mostly seen among the Sebei in Uganda. Many have wrongly and selfishly argued that circumcised women are very faithful to their husbands and therefore the practice helps to strengthen marriages. As a result, FGM is done to control women's unfaithfulness so many men will argue and because the society is male dominated, many women have come to accept such a practice that is meant to please men and keep women in pain.

Among many tribes it is looked at as an ethnic identity,

very many tribes consider female circumcision as their identity, as a definition of who they are; as what distinguished one tribe from another. It is no wonder therefore that stopping female circumcision is looked at as eradicating their identity and many are heard complaining that the practice is good since it preserves their identity.

People of tribes in which FMG is done have promoted the practice saying that a girl becomes a woman only after circumcision. Besides a circumcised woman is respected and therefore many women 'willingly' submit themselves to the knife with the aim of being respected in society.

In countries like Sudan, Mali, and Nigeria, FGM is looked at as a sign of purity. Malians call it "Bolakoli" meaning washing your hands which is a form of purification. It is considered as a yardstick for a girl's marriage ability. A girl was only able to get married if she was circumcised. No one would admit to marry a girl who is not circumcised as a wife among the Sebei. They have for example argued that their women are submissive and royal to their men. They say that in their society, adultery is unheard of and marriages are more stable. However, the truth behind such idle talk is yet to be established and if that is the reason why FGM should continue, then I would not support it since women would continue to be taken as sex tools and objects for men's sexual pleasures.

Furthermore, I oppose FGM especially because of its negative effects: The entire process is a torture and against women's rights from torture. One has to mentally prepare for the knife and many girls have painful sleepless nights as they think of the knife cutting away into their genitalia. Such a feeling is disgusting and leaves women in sleepless nights. During FGM, there is loss of blood, and immediately after, there is painful urination and infections where a woman will be in pain when she urinates and there are other viral infections obtained during the process.

It leads to genital malformation since organs are



## HERE IS WHY I AM AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

cut and are changed from their natural creation. It changes the actual appearance of female organs and no woman would honestly love to see her womanhood changed into something else in the name of culture.

It has been proven that FGM also leads to transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases where if the circumciser cuts him or herself accidentally and she has HIV/AIDS, it would be transmitted to the circumcised woman or girl immediately. Besides, it has been said that one knife can be used to cut a number of girls and this can only further the spread of diseases.

Conclusively female genital mutilation should not continue because most people are forced into it which is unfair, even if some women would say that they go for it willingly, we all know that they are manipulated and are made to think that it is good for them yet medically the practice is equally dangerous to human life and most of all, it's a painful practice that should completely be banished in all tribes. Above all, we now have laws against FGM and it should be our role to ensure that it is not practiced anymore.

**Namukasa Mariam**  
**Strive High School – Kawaala: Form 4**



**FEMALE GENITAL** mutilation refers to the removal of the clitoris from the genital parts of a woman or girl basing the act on cultural beliefs held by a given society. In East Africa, it is always practiced by various tribes especially the Sebei and Sabiny in Uganda and among

some tribes in Kenya.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 100 – 130 million women and girls around the world have experienced the unfair practice. FGM is usually performed without anesthesia by a traditional circumciser using a knife, razor blade or pair of scissors. Female genital mutilation is done by pricking, piercing and cutting the clitoris using sharp instruments. It is a form of circumcision and it is

done on girls and women.

To those who practice FGM, they argue that it is important as an initiation ceremony and they say that it ensures that there is pre-marital virginity and inhibits extra marital sex because it reduces a woman's libido. Of course I do not agree with the views promoted by the people who want such a practice to continue.

Whereas those who practice FGM sing its goodness, it has a lot of negative consequences especially on the person it is practiced on. Some of the negative results include:

It has adverse psychological torture or effect on the women and girls. For instance it causes extreme pain and the wounds can become septic and I have so many stories of girls rotting to death as a result of FMG.

In addition, I have read stories of teens that have died due to profuse bleeding and many others have contracted bacteria that cause sudden deaths or sometimes occurring a few weeks after the backward ritual. Health workers have also pointed out that FGM also leads to serious damage and distortion of the vagina and thereafter cause difficulties during child birth.

Female Genital Mutilation practices have got immediate and late complications, immediate complications normally arise when it is carried out in the traditional way and without access to medical resources. This procedure is extremely painful and bleeding complications can be fatal. Other immediate complications include acute urinary infection, wound infection, septicemia and tetanus in case of unsterile and reused instruments, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.

It has been medically proven that FGM spreads HIV/AIDS in a lightning speed that can also be equated to the spread of a bush fire. It systematically leads to many infections resulting from the knives used and even the unhygienic handling of the wound plus inadequate medical attention. I conclude by saying that let everyone understand that every barbaric cultural practice can no longer fit in this century where people are expected to freely reason and think critically about issues affecting them.

## TEENS ON RELIGION: CAN SOME ONE BE GOOD WITHOUT BEING RELIGIOUS?

**Ssali Joel**

*Grace Fellowship High School: Form 4*



**RELIGION** refers to an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems and world views that relate to humanity. In the current situation, many people have different religious belongings or beliefs raising a number of questions as to whether there are many gods

or there is no righteous religion? Today, we have a number of religions such as Catholicism, born again, Buddhism, Protestantism, Islam and many others.

Religion is a multifaceted entity consisting of but not limited to theology (study of God) and continues to impact almost every aspect of human civilization in both positive and negative ways. Religion can be good but at the extreme, it can be an agent of harm and not good to humanity. Religion generally teaches us to be good to people but many times, it has failed to do away with conservativeness and handle extremism. For example Muslim extremists such as Boko Haram, the Al -Shabaab and ISIS kill people of other beliefs and they ignorantly argue that they do so in the name of Allah saying that their religion does not consider it evil to kill them. Therefore, such a person cannot be rightful even when he prays to Allah ten times a day.

One can do right things and be a good person without having a religion because being good is attached to ones' conscious and mindset and not necessarily religion. Being religious cannot stop one from doing wrong since many people kill, cheat and steal in the name of God and Allah yet indeed I have also seen several none believers who do good in the community.

**Lugaba Peter**

*Grace Fellowship High School; Form 2*

**IN MY OPINION**, religion refers to a belief a person has in something usually spiritually basing on certain

factors which are physically evident and believes that it is good and usually influential to him/her both spiritually and physically. There are a lot of religions in this world including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism etc.

Religion has got a number of purposes to why it exists. These are got from the different religious books like the bible, Quran and religious leaders or prophets as they call themselves today. Religion

makes the world a safe place to live in because most religious people tend to largely advocate for peace, harmony, socialization and other good behavior through their religious beliefs or doctrines and hence instilling good manners in people making the world a harmonious place to live.

Religion gives hope in people, many people would be dangerous without hoping for a better day tomorrow and better times in heaven. This is usually done through reading empowering scriptures in religious books for example the story of Lazarus who could feed on leftovers but went to heaven due to the faith he had. There are several people who are said to have achieved greatness through the hope they got from religious books such as Quran, Job in the bible, Mohammed in Quran are people who achieved greatness through the hope they had in their God and religion therefore becomes an important tool to make people have big dreams and work hard to achieve them. A person who has hope is better off than a hopeless person hence one is good with religion.

Religion is good because it defines the origin of life. Religious books and religious teachings normally define the beginning of life, how we came to be and the things around us and this give meaning to life and its source, otherwise without believing in religion, we would find it hard to explain the beginning of life. So we become good because we know that God is the source of life and we therefore must be good to others because that is what a religious person is



## TEENS SPEAK OUT AGAINST RETROGRESSIVE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

other brothers and sisters no matter our races, sex and countries of origin and this is a sure way of creating harmony in society, without religion, I doubt that such harmony would be in existence.

Some religions tend to aim at changing people's standards of living both financially and socially. Our churches are at the forefront in encouraging us to be purpose driven, to do something productive to earn a living, many churches have entrepreneurship courses that provide skills, if one is not part of the religious team, he will therefore lose the good things religious people provide, so one may not gain much if he is not religious, he will miss out on such opportunities in life.

Whereas my main argument is that people cannot generally be good without being religious, in the Open Talk Debates of HALEA, we have been encouraged to think critically through all issues under discussion. I therefore want to provide an assessment of religion by looking at the other side when religion can be dangerous making it good to be without it.

I have observed that what religion does best in our minds is the creation of fear. Many religions promote fear in people, we fear going to hell and we fear the Day of Judgment and all its escorts such as punishment, everlasting fire and other fierce elements which makes one think that life is a one way trip with no return if you die unreligious. It is that fear that keeps most of us religious because without fearing the unknown, we would be none religious.

Going back to history, I think religion was a strategy laid by the missionaries to soften our hearts as Africans and I still blame religion for promoting slavery and brainwashing the minds of millions of people especially in Africa. Religion promoted colonialism and divided the once united people and kingdoms. Thus, the hearts of naturally rebellious and fighting Africans were softened through the teaching of love your neighbor as you love yourself, do not kill and in the end the colonialists had their way as many Africans refused to resist them calling them their allies since they now belonged to similar religions.

Religions are the same but present themselves as alternatives and rivals to each other. Just like one

person invented a Desktop and another created a laptop, one is just a modification of the other because a laptop performs all the desktop functions only that it can work off power by virtue of having a strong battery which a desktop does not have. So that is how Islam and Christianity can be seen. Islam is a rival of Christianity and Hinduism as a rival of Buddhism and therefore they are all like routes or lanes leading to the same destination. Thus whatever religion one has, the aim remains the same.

Can someone be good without being religious? I say yes but also observe that it is hard to find someone without being religious or without being able to attach himself to something spiritual since even people who do not regularly go to church are in most cases influenced by beliefs that may be traced from their religious background and in most cases, many people still believe in their African Traditional beliefs which is another form of religion. A person can be good without religion being doing good is mandated to every one through the laws of each country and the Constitution, being the Supreme law of the land demands doing good and who ever deviates from doing good and does harm, becomes a criminal and he or she is punished regardless of his religion. Thus, being good does not depend on one's religion alone, it is determined by the constitution which warrants that everybody must do well to others or will be imprisoned for doing wrong.

**Mbusa David**

**Form 4 Kampala Students Center**



well.

**WHEREAS** I respect religion, I am against several religious practices. In certain religions such as Islam, there is a practice of circumcision which may cause certain diseases like tetanus, HIV/AIDS and cancer if a circumcised person is not treated or looked after very

Some Muslims tend to neglect modernity and appreciation of technology because they have backward or ordinary beliefs like wearing long dresses for ladies, Kanzu for men, covering the face



## HERE ARE SOME RELIGIOUS PRACTICES THAT I AM OPPOSED TO

and many others.

Some Muslims discriminate against non Muslims by calling them infidels, pagans or “swaitan” In addition some Muslims insist that their children must be married to only Muslims yet in the modern world people should have freedom of choice to marry people they love regardless of their religious background.

The born again believers tend to misuse fellowship with witchcraft and they indirectly promote witchcraft existence and witch hunting. Born Again believers are stopped from watching certain movies and they claim that such movies abuse God’s image. Honestly speaking, why should a religion stop people to watch a movie they like? Isn’t that religion violating people’s rights to access information and get the entertainment they deserve?

Islam has generally undermined women in a way that women cannot be leaders in religious matters yet women have the ability to lead as religious leaders. I understand that Islam does not accept women who are in their menstruation periods to enter mosques for prayers which promote discrimination of women yet they say that Allah receives every kind of human being.

Catholics do not allow religious leaders to have sex and thus catholic priest and nuns are expected to be celibates yet many need sex like any other normal and mature people. It is a bad religious practice to deny such religious leaders to have their biological right to have children and enjoy sex. I have heard cases of priest having sex and forcing young people into sex yet if such priests would have the freedom to marry people of their choice. If such practices are changed, a number of crimes will be reduced and this can attract many other people to join priest hood.

**Lillian Katusiime, St. Thereza The Little Flower-Primaty School**

**I AM A CHRISTIAN** but in my religion there are some practices and beliefs that are not favourable to Christians and need to be changed because they force Christians to lose trust and faith in religion and end up giving up to attending church services. Some Christians do not have a strong faith and therefore



it is easy for them to leave one religion and join another whose practices or rules are favourable to them.

Some of these beliefs are not easy to follow if you do not have a strong faith in God for example among the Seventh day Adventist and Muslims, they tell people not to eat pork or drink alcohol because they are not allowed by God. This is not scientifically good because pork and wine can be good to one’s health. I have also heard that some of the Seventh Day Adventists discourage people from eating certain foods that have blood yet foods such as fish have proteins and fats which are energy giving foods and therefore make us healthy and able to do work so if we do not eat them we shall end up malnourished and unable to perform well.

Another practice which is common among the Seventh Day faithful is the obligation to obey the Sabbath which is not possible to some of us because you cannot leave your child when he or she is sick and do not take him or her to the hospital for medication and think that mere believing in God will heal the child.

Therefore such practices and beliefs are supposed to be changed so that the Christians can be at peace and keep their faith and see the relevancy of going to church. There is also hypocrisy as some of the pastors and bishops tell us not to eat certain foods such as fish, meat or take alcohol when they eat and drink the same in the privacy of their homes. Such leaders cannot be trusted and there is no reason why we should follow their views yet they do not practice them.



## TEENS SPEAK OUT AGAINST WOMEN BEATING AS AN UNACCEPTABLE CULTURAL PRACTICE

**Wabyooma William**

**Kampala Students Center: Form 4**



**I HEAR SOME PEOPLE PRIDING** themselves in beating women; they think it is a good cultural practice for a man to beat his wife since a man is considered superior to women. Women beating is a dangerous habit where by it may lead to families breaking up and divorce.

Women beating may lead to death most especially if the woman has health complications or when the husband badly beats her. In most cases, women beating disorganize the family as the woman abandons the family, the children may drop out of school since children are not provided with enough school requirements such as books, pens, food and the absence of motherly care.

In addition it may lead to early marriages most especially if the children see that their home is always having conflicts, they will find ways of going away to avoid the conflicts hence getting married off. It may lead to hatred between the children and the parents most especially the fathers who normally beat up the women. I have read stories of boys beating their fathers as a means of saving their mothers from constant beatings.

Women beating is a bad cultural practice since it drains the financial resources of a family as a beaten woman may go to police and courts of law and the effect may be sharing of property and fines in court settlement which leaves the family financially incapacitated.

**Ariho Dean**

**Kampala Students Center; Form 4**

**I THINK WOMEN BEATING** is an acceptable cultural practice because many cultures inherited it from their ancestors. In early days during the first generation



of African Traditional Society (ATS), disciplining a woman was one of the practices the society and traditional leaders (chiefs) would consider relevant for a man to have a strong and firm family. Women would be punished in public but first the man had to notify the chief(s) about the behavior of the woman and if proved to be unsocial or bad, the woman would be punished heavily.

For the woman to fear and respect the husband, she had to be taught a lesson through punishing her. Not until the man disciplines the wife, she will not learn how to behave.

Men usually go through a lot looking for money and food but to their dismay, women go with other men committing adultery and therefore should severely be punished because they do not value the men's struggle to look for money, food and their basic needs.

In the modern world, women are the leading home of immorality for example when you move around the heart or outskirts of the city at night, the city is filled with prostitutes here and there. In order to stop that, the women need to be beaten so that they stop fornication and pornography.

Women beating is an acceptable cultural practice because the parents of the ladies also support it highly because if they did not want it, their daughters would be sent away from their marital homes which was a sign of poor upbringing by the parents and bad fortune.

**Mugabe Aston**

**Kampala Students Center, Form 4**

**I CAN NOT ACCEPT** the backward practice of women beating to continue in Uganda. No! It's not acceptable because that leads to violation of women's rights.

The practice of beating women is in most cases caused by poor meal preparation as well as women coming back home and when the woman gives fake reasons, the man responds by beating the woman severely.



Some men tend to beat their women because of ignorance, believing in stupid cultural beliefs for example if a woman disobeys a man, he will just beat her. Women beating is a backward cultural practice that no longer has a special place among reasonable people. It is unreasonable to beat a woman for doing wrong but rather sitting on a round table and talking to one another is the best alternative to solving conflicts rather than resorting to the use of violence to settle scores.

In Uganda today, beating a woman may land you in prison because it is against women's rights and human rights. Thus it is only simple logic that we should respect the opposite sex and respect their rights in the same measure we want our rights to be respected.

Beating women is not acceptable because it makes women think negatively about themselves and about life hence many abused women resort to committing suicide. Sometimes women tend to think that they are second best to men and consider themselves inferior to men thus diminishing their self esteem. I therefore conclude by disagreeing that beating women is not a good cultural practice.

**Abalo Sonia**

**Kampala Students Center; Form 4**



**FIRST AND FOREMOST** women beating is not an acceptable cultural practice for it is termed under domestic violence. Science has it that this act has the ability of mentally, physically and psychologically torturing women.

In most families and societies women tend to be undermined by their husbands. Furthermore when they

try to work and earn a little to support themselves and children as usual, many men do not value their financial contribution and most men associate working women with infidelity and prostitution and many men resort to violence against women. Many women are beaten by their men who consider it as a way of manipulating their understanding and making the women submissive and subordinates to men.

For instance in Mukono District, Kyagwe Sub-county, NTV news anchors found a woman with serious bruises on her body and when they inquired, the lady justified that her husband wanted to cut her into pieces simply because he had heard rumors around the streets that she was adulterous. My take is that violence against women is not a solution that can stop women from being adulterous.

Women beating leads to several health complications and there are several cases in which battered woman cannot be able to have babies since after such beatings many get complications and their wombs may not be in position to keep babies hence leading to barrenness. It has also led to physical disabilities as many have lost their limbs and are not able to walk again or even work to earn a living hence leading to a miserable life.

Women beating is a form of domestic violence that is fatal and many times leads to increase in the death rates as many women do not survive domestic violence. Causing death is criminal and can lead to life imprisonment or the death penalty if one is found guilty in courts of law.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**Are you a talented teen or an adult yearning to record your music in Kampala's best Audio and Video studio?**

**Contact:**

**BIG TALK STUDIO ON:**

**Tel: +256 - 704 - 351896**

**+256 - 753 - 719596**

**+256 - 706 - 504893**



## TEENS TAKE ON PRESIDENT MUSEVENI'S VIEW THAT SCIENCE SUBJECTS BE GIVEN PRIORITY OVER ARTS

**Najjuma Shaluwah Jaziirah**  
Form 4: Kampala Students Center



### I DISAGREE WITH THE TOPIC

by saying that science subjects are more demanding in terms of practical exposure yet many students study in schools that lack such facilities. This means that many times, science subjects are more difficult than the art subjects to some

students and therefore opt to do subjects they can pass very well and end up taking courses like law, education, economics and many others.

The government should also give bursaries to the best students who pass art subjects to create uniformity and equity in the education sector such that all students are equal irrespective of the subjects they offer because even art subjects are very relevant as one can become a resourceful or respected person. If only students who offer sciences are given bursaries, people many arts students may fail to achieve their goals since they are denied bursaries for offering art subjects yet they are also needed in the country for example most politicians who contribute a lot to the governance and development of the country studied arts and not offer sciences.

Although art subjects are important because it is also true that many people in the arts wing are able to create their own jobs yet many scientists generally want to be employed since they need lots of capital to start their own businesses.

**Cankerunga David**  
Kampala Students Center, Form 4

**SCIENCE SUBJECTS** should not be given top priority over art subjects because different people have different ways of understanding. Some people may be best at sciences while others may be best in art subjects. In this case if we say that science subjects should be given much priority then there is going to

be a general elimination of people who are good at art subjects.



### MEAN WHILE SCIENCE

subjects have their own areas of coverage or professions in different fields, they are different from art subject professions and therefore one decides the profession he/she can take. Science subjects can produce doctors, engineers

etc however the doctors and engineers cannot do work/tasks for art subject professions for example lawyers.

It is not out of sciences only that one can get employed. The government should lay strategies in areas of job creation in all public sectors and private sectors in order to suit both science and art professions and fields. However, it is not advisable to prioritize science subjects at the expense of the arts because it will affect most of the people in the country.

Therefore with the growing population in this country, the professionals and non professionals should now learn to create jobs and avoid being job seekers. It's not through science alone that a country can develop but through all areas. So sciences should not be prioritized over art subjects.

### HOW GLOBAL WARMING AFFECTS PANTS



## TEENAGERS TAKE ON ABORTION: SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO ABORTION?

**Asiimwe Harriet**

**Grace Fellowship Primary School: 12 Years; P.5**



### ABORTION IS THE PROCESS

by which a woman forces the unborn baby to come out of the womb before its right time. Morally, abortion is bad and is generally a condemned practice since it eliminates one's life. First of all abortion is bad to teenagers and they should not

practice it because some teenagers and women end up losing their lives as they are carrying out abortion mostly due to over bleeding and poorly carried out abortions. I will share with you the reasons as to why abortions continue to happen in our society.

All parents hate having pregnant girls at home, it is a shame to the entire family. Many parents can send their children away from home when they get to know about their pregnancy and therefore the teens end up aborting because they are not ready to go to the men who made them pregnant since in most cases teens are not ready for marriage and therefore abortion is the best option for a teenager who loves to continue with studies and receiving parental care.

Some men/teenage boys deny being responsible for teenage pregnancies and yet teenage girls cannot take care of themselves and the babies because they are unemployed and in most cases their parents are also sending them away from home hence many young people have always decided to going in for abortion to avoid suffering because of the pregnancy.

Most teenagers are raped by men who are above their age which results into pregnancies and yet the men responsible are not known and therefore the teenage girls end up aborting to avoid producing fatherless children or taking responsibilities of the father.

It is good for teenagers to abort because most of

them do not know how to take care of themselves and therefore cannot manage to take care of their babies. If you produce a baby at 13 years, in a few months of baby breast feeding, you will look like a 23 year old and therefore to avoid that, it is therefore better you abort so that you keep young and have a chance for a better future.

While I accept that preserving a life is good and abortion is biblically condemned, we should emphasise precautions that prevent teens from getting pregnant. Teachers and parents should advise children not to practice sex because its results are at times unbearable at a tender age for example HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and many others. Just imagine if I was aborted, would the world have known my ideas? Everything has its own time and sex too has its definite time. Some parents deny their children the right to know about sex and hence ruin their future.

**Birungi Shakirah**

**Grace Fellowship Primary School; 11 Years: P.5**



### ABORTION IS THE REMOVAL

of the premature baby from the mother's womb by either a health professional or none professional. I am against abortion because of the following views:

The teens should not have a right to abortion because it leads to death. If an abortion is carried out unsafely, it may cause over bleeding and fistula which result into death. Abortion reduces the country's population because babies that would have increased the country's population are terminated and even the mothers that practice the act (abortion) lose lives in due course.

If you do not want a child please do not play sex because when you are a teenager and you start your menstruation period, that means you are mature and can become pregnant anytime you engage in sexual

## RIGHT TO ABORT?

intercourse. Everything has its own time and sex too definitely has its right time. Do not be deceived to have it when you are not ready, you will have plenty of sex when you grow up and get married.

However, I have realized that many young people are having sex and some get pregnant. Many support abortion because it gives them another chance to continue with education. This is one reason that may make me develop a rational thinking that abortion can be good in saving the future of teens. I know many teens may shy away from such truth but deep inside support abortion because they do not want to drop out of school.

**Arinaitwe Julius**

**Grace Fellowship Primary School 13 Years: P.5**



**ABORTION IS THE** removal of the premature baby from the uterus or womb. This topic demands to be discussed on all sides such that the best reasons can be advanced either way.

The teens should not have a right to abortion because it leads to murder. When a teenager aborts, she will have killed the unborn baby and therefore liable to a punishment

for murdering someone who would have been important to the world.

Some teenagers who carry out abortion are disrespected, abused, and looked at as murderers in the community and live a life of regrets more so if they see children of the same age as the aborted baby which torments their brain that they can never have a joyful life.

Some teenagers cannot hold the pregnancy till birth because of health problems for example her uterus may be too weak to hold the baby or she may be too weak that if she persists on keeping the pregnancy she is likely to die. In such cases, to save the life of the pregnant teenager or woman a safe abortion has to be carried out.

Since teenagers today are growing rapidly like mushrooms, you will find a girl of 13 years looking like a girl of 19 years. These girls are shamelessly raped by their relatives including their fathers, uncles and brothers which results into pregnancy. The only solution to the girl and the family is to abort because no one amongst them will accept to look after a child who is as a result of incest and besides, it is shameful to have a child born out of incest and the only solution is abortion.

## APPRECIATION AND A FURTHER CALL FOR SUPPORT

**IN THE NIGHT OF THE 26TH OF JUNE** this year, HALEA's offices were attacked and its signpost destroyed by unknown people who attempted to enter into our offices and failed. A few days later, on the night of 7th July 2014, the attackers managed to find their way inside our premises and took away everything valuable that was found in HALEA's office. Property worth millions were stolen. We reported the case to police and the Reference number is SD 07/8/07/2014 the case being Burglary and Theft. We sent word to our associates and well-wishers calling for support and so far the Centre for Inquiry, through its SHARE CAMPAIGN has raised over \$6,100 and we expect some support through a fundraising done by IHEU and AAI. We are grateful to all individuals for the love and support extended to us in our

trying moment. Our plan is to secure our future by obtaining a piece of land and constructing HALEA's offices as well as an entrepreneurship centre that will empower the disadvantaged youth and young mothers. We appreciate your support and call for your further support that will see us securing a piece of land, constructing an office and starting an entrepreneurship centre.





## SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM- VIEWS FROM THE BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION



### WHILE THE UK EDUCATION

system excels in many areas, one place where it does not is sex education. In England the subject is more commonly known as sex and relationships education (SRE), and is part of a bigger subject called personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

The problem that we face is quite similar to the problem Ugandans face, namely that there is very little that must be taught. England has a national curriculum which (until recently) sets out a core entitlement of content that all pupils in state schools would be taught. This curriculum covers English, maths, science, technology, arts, humanities, languages, citizenship and sports. It does not, however, include PSHE.

The science aspects of the national curriculum cover some very basic sex education – namely anatomy, puberty and reproduction; and there is a separate statutory requirement to teach about sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS. But that is it – schools do not have to teach anything at all about topics such as relationships, consent, contraception, abortion or sexual orientation. And worse still, about half of state funded secondary schools have in the last few years become a type of school called Academies, that do not even have to teach the national curriculum. In other words, they don't have to teach about sex education at all if they don't want to.

Instead, schools can take the approach of teaching only about abstinence until marriage, instead of providing the full and comprehensive sex and relationships education to which young people are entitled. While there are many examples of excellent practice in schools, the problem with SRE not being statutory is that provision is decidedly patchy.

This is an issue for two reasons. First of all, it goes against what the evidence shows actually works: young people who have had full and comprehensive SRE are not more promiscuous, as some would have you believe, but are actually likely to have sex for the first time later than others. When they do so it is more likely to be consensual as well as safe. And as a result, these young people are less likely to experience unwanted outcomes such as sexually transmitted infections and teenage pregnancies and (as a consequence) are less likely to have abortions.

And secondly, it appears to be out of step with international law. Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states, 'The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers...' The last (2008) report by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child into the UK recommended that 'the State party intensify its efforts in order to provide adolescents with appropriate reproductive health services, including reproductive health education, in school.' And in 2009 the UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights said that proposals for mandatory SRE as a 'significant human rights enhancing measure'.

To expand on that last point, in 2009 the UK Government (then being run by the Labour Party) proposed to put PSHE and SRE on the national curriculum wholesale. This proposal seemingly gained support of all three parties and even many of the churches (who are somewhat more liberal in the UK than in Uganda!). But the Government failed to get the plans passed before the 2010 general election. After the election the Government was taken over by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, and the Conservatives, who have been in charge of the Department for Education, have gone back on their pre-election position and refused to

improve the quality of SRE. This has been supported by groups like the Catholic Education Service and the Muslim Council of Britain.

However, there is still a lot to be optimistic about. There is a very broad coalition of civil society groups supporting full, comprehensive, age-appropriate, compulsory SRE, led by the Sex Education Forum. SEF has been running a campaign called 'SRE – It's my right', with support from all the major teaching unions, sexual and reproductive health groups, children's and family groups, and the British Humanist Association. This has been supported by thousands of individuals writing to their members of parliament, and a petition targeted at the three main party leaders.

As a result, Labour remain as committed as ever to making SRE compulsory, and the Liberal Democrats have made other commitments. If there is a change of who is in power at the next general election, in May 2015, which at the moment looks more probable than not, then it is likely that SRE will become compulsory soon after.

The British Humanist Association has long played a prominent role in campaigns around SRE. We often find ourselves able to speak out about religious interference in schools in a way that other groups cannot. For instance, in 2012 we secured front page coverage when we exposed an anti-abortion group going into schools and telling children that abortion causes breast cancer – when there is no evidence to support that claim. Later that year we received more front page coverage when we criticised the Catholic Education Service, after it told all Catholic secondaries in England and Wales to tell pupils to sign a petition opposing same sex marriage – arguably breaking equality laws and laws against political indoctrination. And in 2013 we also secured front page coverage after we discovered almost 50 schools forbidding the promotion of homosexuality – something that was once the law of the land here in the UK, but was repealed in 2003. These issues help highlight why we think that ultimately schools cannot be simply left to their own devices, but need more instruction from the centre about what must

and must not be taught.

But in the absence of such legislation, we are also active in working in schools to help ensure that they provide the lessons pupils need. Through our website <http://humanismforschools.org.uk/> we provide humanist perspectives on topics such as abortion, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS. We have also worked with the Sex Education Forum on the production of its two most recent books on how to teach about different religious and non-religious perspectives on sex and relationships education (which does not mean forcing those perspectives on anyone – just informing them what the religious hierarchy's view is but ultimately providing young people with enough information to make up their own minds). We also have a Humanist School Volunteers programme, which launched last year, and through which we have trained over 100 individuals to help teachers cover Humanism in lessons about religious and non-religious worldviews and also include humanist points of view in PSHE and SRE classes.

There are a whole wealth of other groups out there who we work with and who provide high quality resources on SRE issues, such as the Sex Education Forum itself, the PSHE Association, the RSE Hub, Brook, the Family Planning Association, Education For Choice, the National AIDS Trust, Stonewall, Sexpression: UK, and many more besides.

I am sure they would all be delighted to share these resources and experiences with those educating young people and campaigning towards the same ends in Uganda.

Richy Thompson is the Education Campaigns Officer at the British Humanist Association.

- i. See [http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/494585/sef\\_doeswork\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/494585/sef_doeswork_2010.pdf) for UK evidence. and <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11673/49240/49240.pdf> for international evidence.
- ii. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC.C.GBR.CO.4.pdf>
- iii. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200910/jtselect/jtrights/57/57.pdf>

## A TEACHER'S VIEW ON THE ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY LAW

**Mr. Watsala Enoch**

**Teacher at Children's Corner Junior School**

**WHEREAS WE** usually organize debates at our school and teens have a chance to bring out their views, teachers simply guide the debates and we may not necessarily give our views. I wish to use this opportunity to contribute on the topic that was discussed at our school in second term: Whether or not the anti pornography law is a good law. Being a teacher makes me a person who generally observes the social behaviors of people around me on a daily basis. I have seen indecently dressed teenagers, adults and parents and I do believe that we need to have a law that can regular the way people dress for the sake of upholding morals within our society.

I supported the introduction of the Anti Pornography Law because it was introduced to regulate the dressing habit of individuals, be it performers on stage or people moving on the streets. It is vital that people should respect their bodies as well as respect the other people they associate or mingle with on a daily basis. You may be smartly dressed but your dressing may be an embarrassment to

others. Just imagine having a parent visiting her children in a school while dressed in skimpy clothes! What message can such a parent be sending into the young brains of the children? Just imagine how the children will lose concentration and crack their necks in order to see some one's mother showing off her buttocks and thighs in front of a big gathering of people?

It is a good law because it will put the bad way of dressing to an end. Secondly it will help to support people's culture through imprisoning the participants in the promotion of immorality.

Thirdly it will limit the school drop outs due to the fact that most girls have been raped and defiled due to bad and indecent wearing. In addition, it will limit copying of foreign cultures which are bordering on sexual deviations yet these are bad for the country.

The law will promote respect of women because of the fear to be punished, they will always try to be decent and dress as adults are expected to dress. I believe women are the mothers of the nation and should wear respectfully. The law will also enforce our ethnic cultures and traditions after foreign culture has been curtailed and banned. All in all I do think the Anti-Pornography law is a good law, there is no need to fight it, it is only better that we support the law against immorality.



**JOIN  
OPEN TALK DEBATES  
ORGANISED  
BY HALEA AND  
SUPPORTED  
BY IHEU**



## BETI SAYS: SERIOUSLY SPEAKING HANG ON TO THAT VIRGINITY

**MEET JUDE.** He had always had a crush on this village belle since childhood. To him, she was the epitome of beauty with her afro hair neatly combed in a puff. Her face so angelic with soft pink lips. No girl walked gracefully like her in that yellow uniform in the entire school. All he knew was one day he will approach her and say a simple 'Hi' or even pour out his undying love for her. He knew that she came from a large family and her parents had a big cemented house a few kilometers from the school. At school, he would often watch her as she paid attention to the biology teacher. Even with the most boring of classes, Anita's presence made it worth attending that lesson. The biology teacher had caught him before staring at Anita and made him to stand in front of the class while he gave him a bible lesson about brother-sister relationships. He was so embarrassed that she had found out his crush on her. One day Anita approached him but Jude could not look into her eyes after that incident when the teacher scolded him. Whatever she was thinking of him, Jude was still embarrassed. But as luck would have it, the incident brought the two together. They promised to meet behind of the class the following day at 6.30am before the rest of the students arrived at school. When D-Day came, he was so anxious that up to now the events are still clear as day light. He recalls.

"I remember by the time I arrived behind the classes she was already there. She had sprayed her uniform with that perfume called Blue Lady. Every girl was wearing that same perfume in school, maybe today was going to be special for me. The sky was still dark because the sun had come out. The behind of the class seemed to be a good hiding place because I had heard from my fellow boys that this is best place where action went down. I was so nervous to even come closer to her. She seemed to know what to do but I was scared. It happened so quickly. Perhaps I

should have waited. The following days were more weird because I was afraid of going to school and I could not look directly into her eyes or for that matter any other person's eyes. At home, my mother commented that something had changed about me. Had she found out what I had done since Parents have eyes at their back? I could not concentrate in class at all. When I talked to my peers, they said the change was because I had become a man and were green with envy because I had accomplished every teen's dream. If this was supposed to be wonderful, Why was I feeling so much guilt?" Jude said.



**Beti Kakulu**

A few days passed then she threw the biggest bomb in my life. "I have not heard my periods." Up to now I can't get those six words from my head. What do you do with such utterances? Do you shift to another school, ask her to find where she left her periods or take responsibility because you were party to the sexual encounter. On top of the weirdness, I realised that I was going to be a father, I was only fourteen, how could I afford to be a father at such age? Why did we not use condoms or pills? I had heard something to do with contraceptives but I had not seen any, there was nothing like a lesson on sex, call it sex education at our school. How would I ever know how to have safe sex? I became more prayerful than ever before, prayers were the only immediate relief, I had nothing more practical to do apart from saying lots of prayers. My entire being was now filled with all sorts of prayers because I knew I was being punished. My father had often said sex is for adults and here I was ready for my punishment for committing the most high sin. After fourteen days, she disclosed to me that she had finally had her periods. What a relief it was. But after that I could not be with her. That was too much for my young mind. I harboured regrets of losing my virginity especially to girl who was trying to lure me into an early marriage with a pregnancy. Maybe because of her poor family status, she had hoped that she could



## REAL LIFE STORIES

get hitched early. The aftermath of my precious lost virginity and our brief relationship, she wrote me a note saying she had found someone better than me. Anita described this person as a better man than I will ever be. It was not long before we saw her sneaking into the teacher's quarters with the same biology teacher who scolded me. No wonder it was not her first time to have sex when we met behind the classes. How as a girl was she capable of sleeping with older men? She became pregnant at 15 and had to live off the teacher's salary which was peanuts. We went to see her in hospital when she delivered but was in tears because her "husband" was arrested for defilement. I thought I got off that hock easily but the guilt has never left me. She is the one girl I will always remember for taking away my childhood, my innocence! Now I know why they say that if you have sex with someone, you are having sex with all the people they have ever had sex with. When I grew up I became a teacher but I treat girls and women with a lot of respect because I know when you educate a woman, you educate the nation. Perhaps by becoming a teacher, I hope to change the course of the young men and women's future" That is Jude's story.

Now take time to understand and analyse Jude and Anita's story. Does it have lessons for you. Note them down and discuss the story with your friends to see their reaction. Does it apply in the day to day lives of any of your peers? Have you ever seen any of your friends in the same situation? What is the best way to deal with sexual approaches from the opposite sex?

### Why is virginity Important to the boys?

Virginity is sacred to both boys and girls. Most boys lose their virginity early because society/Media/peers' 'demand', pressurize and label them as uncool, cowards and weaklings if they are virgins for a long time. Media and friends pass on the wrong information and at the end of the day, they don't care how you do it or how many hearts you break. That is the time most boys feel left behind by the world hence their depression and hush decision to reach maturity. Male virginity is a big deal because it is like a rite to adulthood. A rite of passage- a stepping stone that should have good memories

not guilt or ill health. If you need experience, you can have plenty of time with the one you deserve when you are mature. So, keep your virginity as a treasure.

### What are disadvantages of losing virginity or early sex?

- Sex intercourse is dangerous to the young body and mind. There is a reward for keeping your virginity but there is also a punishment for losing virginity too early. Everything in life comes with responsibilities. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Early sex damages the girls' internal and external sexual organs because your body is still growing and is not ready for sex.
- Failure to concentrate in classes which leads to failure and disappointment of yourself. Most students think they are disappointing their parents yet whatever you do impacts your future. Getting involved in early sex takes away your class concentration because instead of thinking about the academics, you think about love and this affects your performance. It is very hard to serve two masters at ago, chose academic excellence, avoid early sex.
- 'Eggaali Ekozeko' concept is a misleading one. Some people argue that early sex is good for the experience it gives to the young ones. But the fact is that men will always look for well bred and kept women as future wives because they do not want to be associated with girls who have had sex with Tom, Dick and Harry.
- Getting infected with HIV/AIDs and many other sexually transmitted diseases.

### Do single-sex schools guarantee preservation of virginity?

When parents run out of options to preserve their children's virginity, they opt for single-sex schools. There is no guarantee that a teen cannot lose virginity in such schools because they have holidays and 'kadankes' or dances and re unions which may not be unsupervised. Some students escape from single-sex school to meet the opposite sex. In the end whether you are in a mixed or single sex school, its about your character, zeal and social behavior that ensures that you preserve your virginity. What is vital is your determination to keep off early sex,

## REAL LIFE STORIES

regardless of the environment in which you are, you can make a personal choice to remain safe, who says you can not control your body? YES you can.

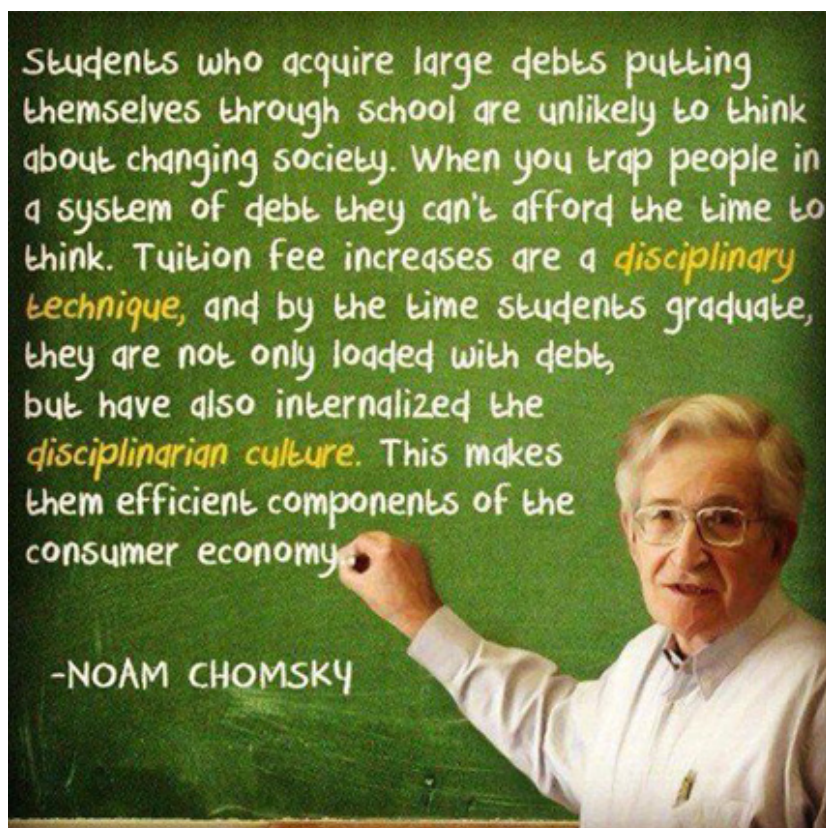
### Is it possible for opposite sex to be friends and nothing more?

Time has come when you can not use traditional norms and stories to scare young people to keep their virginity. Twenty years back, all you had to say to scare a girl from having sex was: 'you will get pregnant if a man stands next to you'. It reminds us of the "Golola style" of getting women pregnant if he looked at them. Girls and boys can be great friends. If you can be friends with your brothers, sister, nephew or cousins without having sex, then you can be friends with any other person without sex being part of your relationship. Just look at that boy or girl in your class as the best friend, brother or sister whom you respect and in turn he will respect you too. Value your body as your best asset, cherish keeping it safe and clean, there is no need to be in a hurry to have sex now, only have it when you are ready for it and when you can afford to manage the consequences that comes with playing sex. Having sex cannot be your top priority today, academics are.

### What are possible ways of preserving virginity?

- Keep your eye on the ultimate prize and that is- Education, your future and aspirations.
- The beautiful ones are not yet born is a popular saying you can learn to cherish. Beautiful humans are being born everyday and by waiting you will find the friend who cannot live without you and get married.
- It's important that you keep the relationship with your parents stronger. Any doubts about sex can be discussed with counselors, elders and parents who trust your decisions. Feel free to talk about sex with your parents, there is no harm in doing so.
- Know how to make the right choice of friends. A friend who says that losing virginity is not a big deal and encourages you to go ahead, is the one who lost his/her's early and needs others to join his miserable group. Be the light on to yourself.
- Virginity or abstinence pledges can be made out to commit yourself not to be sexually exploited until you are grown up and can make the right decision.

**Beti Kakulu is a member of HALEA, a journalist and Broadcaster. She is currently pursuing her Masters Degree in Journalism in India.**



Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society. When you trap people in a system of debt they can't afford the time to think. Tuition fee increases are a **disciplinary technique**, and by the time students graduate, they are not only loaded with debt, but have also internalized the **disciplinarian culture**. This makes them efficient components of the consumer economy.

-NOAM CHOMSKY

# THE FIGHT AGAINST EBOLA: WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

**What Should Guide Africans In The Fight Against Ebola: Religion Or Science? By Leo Igwe**

**RELIGION PAYS A KEY ROLE IN THE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS.** And this should not be the case. Health care management is so tied and entangled with religion and superstitious notions like the belief in witchcraft. Many Africans still think that prayers can cure them when they get sick or that people can make other ill through witchcraft. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for a 'therapeutic' prayer. Disease carry witches are imaginary. But many Africans still hold tenaciously to these medically dangerous opinions.

The outbreak of Ebola offers an ample opportunity for Africans to re-examine the public health care system and disease control mechanisms, and then take urgent measures to beef up their medical infrastructure. We need to seize this opportunity and get our health care acts together. In fact the spread of Ebola presents us a chance to re-think our policies and improve our medical institutions. Africans need to take a clear stand on what should be the guide in matters concerning public health management. Is it religion or science? Is it the church(mosque, shrine or temple) or the laboratories and research institutes?

I mean, what should inform our decisions when diseases like Ebola strike? Is it reason or religious dogma? Is it evidence based knowledge or ancient 'revealed' texts? Who should Africans look up to when diseases are ravaging their communities? Is it the pastors and prophets, the bishops, imams, sheikhs, ulamas, mallams, marabouts, local diviners who communicate with spirits and ancestors? Or should we look up to our nurses, doctors, other health workers and scientists for guidance and counseling? Should we rely on teachings contained in the 'holy' texts- the Bible, Koran or Hadith- written centuries

ago by those who thought that disease causing micro-organisms were demons and evils spirits that should be exorcised?

Or should we base our decisions on products of cutting edge research and experiments, on evidence based falsifiable medical knowledge and practice? Should Africans look to Mecca or Jerusalem, to the Vatican or to the Caliphates or to the OIC for guidance and declarations on what to do?

Leo Igwe Carissa Snedeker-Wikimedia commons In what should we Africans invest our limited resources when it comes to health issues? Is it in building mosques and churches, in sponsoring pilgrimages to Mecca, Jerusalem and Rome? Is it in paying imams and pastors, in organising national prayer meetings and faith healing sessions? Is it in funding religious indoctrination and proselytization? Is it in building sharia courts and paying sharia police?



Should Africans not channel their resources into funding science education, medical research and development, hiring and paying scientists? Should Africans not devote their limited funding to building hospitals, laboratories and clinics, and to training medical personnel?

These questions have become necessary now African countries are struggling to contain an epidemic that is threatening to destroy their economies. The region's medical infrastructure is in shambles. The response mechanism is weak. African countries cannot always be going cap in hand to beg for resources which they can muster if they could get their priorities right.

Yes, our main problem is the misplacement of priorities and we need to acknowledge and rectify that now. The spread of Ebola disease has exposed the fragile public health system in the region. It has



revealed the inability of countries to provide a robust response when health care emergencies arise. And part of the reason for this deplorable situation is the pervasiveness of religious and superstitious beliefs and a disdain for science and evidence based knowledge and education. Today Africa has more scientists but less scientific thinking, more schools but less education, more philosophers but less critical and logical thinking, more hospitals less medicine.

### **Dogma and superstition tyrannize over our lives.**

Religion plays a key role in the health care decisions. And this should not be the case. Health care management is so tied and entangled with religion and superstitious notions like the belief in witchcraft. Many Africans still think that prayers can cure them when they get sick or that people can make other ill through witchcraft. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for a 'therapeutic' prayer. Disease carry witches are imaginary. But many Africans still hold tenaciously to these medically dangerous opinions.

For many Africans in rural communities, local diviners, mallams, pastors and imams, spiritualists and soothsayers are the first port of call when they are ill. Some people go to hospitals only when they are at the point of death, when it is too late to treat the disease. That is when they seek out evidence based medical care. Others use a double barrel approach. They patronise the spiritualists and the doctors at the same. They believe that the medication which doctors provide in hospitals cannot be effective without the will of God, Jesus or Allah as the case may be. So many sick people in Africa invest much of their time and energy visiting one faith healer or mallam after another. They go from one prayer camp to another in search of miracles and divine healing. Some people have suspended their medication following some prophecy, divination or ministration from a 'faith doctor'.

Most Africans believe that their recovery from any illness depends on God, that the almighty Allah is the most competent doctor. If this notion is correct, there will be no reason for the high mortality rate in the region. So this absurd belief has been detrimental to Africans because it makes the people and their governments not to channel as much resources into medical research and infrastructure as they channel into religious programs and infrastructure. People

in other regions are researching and experimenting to find cures while we Africans are praying and expecting miracles!

So when health emergencies like Ebola arise, people are confused and in a panic. Their 'Dr' Jesus and 'Dr' Allah suddenly become impotent and incapable of helping them. Their faith is unable to heal or cure the ailment. Today, the fear of Ebola not the fear of God or Allah-in whose name many Africans have been killed, maimed and destroyed- has become the beginning of wisdom.

### **Wake up! Africans wake up from this religious and superstitious slumber.**

Now take a look at the measures that have been taken so far to contain Ebola. Are they informed by religion? No. Are they drawn from the Koran or the Bible? No. Were they dictated by islamic scholars, Ulamas, Sangomas, prophets and gurus, theologians or diviners? No. They are evidence based measures. And these measures have proved effective in countries and communities despite the religious belief or unbelief.

In West Africa, religious organisations look to governments, the world health organisations and other medical experts not to God or Allah-not to 'Allahmen' or god women- for medical advice and guidance. Many religious bodies have suspended certain rituals that involve body contact like shaking and laying of hands as part of the measures to contain the disease. Is it because Jesus said so in the Bible? No. Is it because Allah or Prophet Muhammad said so in the Koran or the Hadith? No. Is it because of some purported communication from the gods, ancestors and spirits to local diviner in one obscure corner of an African city or village? Not at all. Is it because medical science says so? Of course yes. In fact the measures taken so far to combat Ebola have nothing to do with religion but every thing to do with science and experimentation.

And this is what should be the case. When it comes to matters concerning health care, disease control and management, evidence based tested knowledge, not superstition or 'divine' revelation should inform our decisions. Science, not religion, should be the guide.

**Leo Igwe is a skeptic from Nigeria.**



# LIBERATIONISM: A GUIDE TO LIFE AFTER RELIGION

By Harjit Singh

**DURING MY** spiritual journey, which began in my early childhood, I came across people of many faiths who shared or boasted their religious beliefs. It was apparent to me that they would be absolutely weak and guideless without their faith. These religionists, especially the Muslims and Jews, many of whom lived their life accordingly to the laws of their respective faiths, would find it extremely difficult to give up their faith and become atheists or agnostics. This is because religious laws, customs and traditions became deeply intertwined with their life.

There are atheists and agnostics who manage to help religionists free themselves from the shackles of religion and walk into the fresh breeze and light of logic, but then these helpers offer no real guidance to those they help on how to live life after religion. It is like rescuing animals from the cages at a zoo and then just letting them run free on a busy motorway. So, for this reason, I founded Liberationism. Its 12 principles offers rational guidance and this guidance will be particularly useful to those whom have abandoned the more fanatical religions and cults.

A society that firmly follows laws which are very harsh and quite specific, such as Shariah or Jewish law, inevitably suffocates and that society will never see the end of turbulent times. Similarly, a society that lives without any guidelines will surely crumble through chaos. Therefore, there must be certain guidelines to live by, but they must be such guidelines that will allow society to enjoy genuine freedom without disturbing social order.

Liberationism is that ideal guide for real freedom and order. I am only offering this alternative way of life, not imposing it. You, the individual, have the right to take it or leave it. The choice is all yours. First, look around you and see the world as it is, and then, after reading the principles, imagine a world populated by Liberationists.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF LIBERATIONISM

By Harjit Singh

Liberationism is a new, unique, liberating, leaderless, unprofitable, rational, Agnostic path that is encapsulated in only 12 principles:

### 1) Agnostic Theism

Perhaps there is a God, perhaps there is not. Nobody knows yet. So neither believe nor disbelieve. Many have claimed to know God and convinced others to have faith in their claim, but faith is a gamble, not evidence. Appreciate creation and enjoy life, and if there is a God, He will be worshipped through your gratitude.

### 2) Global Temple

Places of worship can be used as centres for mind control and financial gain. No temple need be attended for praying, listening to sermons, etc. Nor is there any need for pilgrimage to be made anywhere. Consider the entire world a temple, good deeds the prayers, and visualisation of the universe the idol of a possible God.

### 3) Priestless Congregation

Priests can guide but also misguide. Be a self-respecting individual and be leaderless. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated and misled by the fear-, hate- and guilt-inducing preaching of priests, and trapped in the ignorant ways, i.e. female suppression, religious war, fear of hell, etc. Guide only yourself while remaining faithful to the 12 liberating principles.

### 4) Feminine Energy

Spiritual development is not possible without the feminine connection. Whether you are male or female, get in touch with your feminine side and radiate with love and softness. Feminine energy can overpower negativity and end war, gangsterism and other evils initiated by those whom are firmly connected to their masculine side. Be open-minded, gentle, sharing and helpful.

### 5) Marriageless love

Marriage obstructs individuality. Be with your compatible partner(s) but avoid any religious and legal marriage ceremonies, unless you have already undergone them. Marriage is just a time-, money- and energy-wasting custom which eventually ends in legal or emotional problems. Documents, rituals and jewelry certainly do not bind love. Simply be together, care for each other and procreate.

### 6) Non-violent Resistance

Violence only leads to injury, revenge, imprisonment or death. Try making peace with any enemies, but if that fails, cut all links with them rather than fight with them. Against bully employers or unjust governments, you may use non-violent resistance, such as formal complaints, non-cooperation, etc. Physical protection is justifiable if your life is in immediate danger.

### 7) Good Consumption

Good consumption arouses joy. Regardless of slaughter method, eat meat, poultry and fish, especially baked. Drink water, milk and consume fruits and vegetables in solid or liquid form; become a vegan if preferred. Cannabis juice or alcohol, such as cider and wine, can help relaxation, but avoid if desired, and try avoiding strong drugs to prevent vulnerability.

### 8) Hateless Heart

Hate imprisons happiness. Reject racism, homophobia, casteism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, even sports rivalry. Other faiths have long incited hatred against people who are different. Only ever measure a person by their deeds, and based upon that judgement, either be friends with them or completely sever ties with them, while not harbouring any hateful feelings.

### 9) Shameless Courage

Fear suffocates inner peace and outer success. Do not fear the gods, prophets, scriptures, demons, superstitions, so-called sins and myths of hell of other religions, nor threats, violence, governments, terrorism, media, imprisonment, dishonour, adaptability, animals, natural disasters, illnesses or death. Be playful and face anything with a smile. Beware of only present-life karmic retribution, so be thoughtful.

### 10) Guilt-free Conscience

Guilt burns ones energy. If you have done something truly wrong, just simply make a vow not to re-offend. There is no need to feel miserable, say certain prayers, make pilgrimage to some shrine, or commit any self-harm. Most things considered sinful by old religions are actually natural/normal, and therefore committing them should not invite guilty feelings.

### The 6 Comments:

The above principles of Liberationism is the official guide for a Liberationist. It is all you will need. The founder is mortal but the path is eternal. The rules and regulations of other religions do not apply to Liberationists. Liberationists are free from the strict laws and superstitions of Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc.

The world suffers because of Christian sectarianism, Zionist separatism, Islamic jihadism, Hindu casteism, Communist oppression, criminal gangsterism, racism, etc. Liberationists seek only good food, good sex and good fun. Liberationism is the solution to global peace. Make a positive transformation and join the Liberationism Revolution. To embrace Liberationism, simply accept the 12 principles of Liberationism and you will automatically and officially become a Liberationist. It is as simple as that. There is no need to travel anywhere, no need for rituals, no involvement of priests, and no requirement of payment.

Share the freedom by spreading the word wherever possible. If any of the principles are altered or misinterpreted, then it is not Liberationism, but something else. Liberate!

**Harjit Singh is a Humanist and Liberationist based in England.**

**Editor's Note: The views expressed above are entirely for Harjit Singh. Our reader should be in position to reason and think through all the ideas he promotes and then make your logical and independent choice. HALEA provides a platform on which views such as those above can be shared, criticized and appreciated for the enrichment of the mind. More principles and ideas from Harjit Singh can be obtained directly from him, get to HALEA to contact the author.**

## **BREAKING DOWN THE ANTI HOMOSEXUALITY LAW AND UNDERSTANDING WHY THE DRACONIAN LAW WAS UNNECESSARY.**

### **DENIS LUGEMWA.**

Being a humanist and a human rights activist and defender has always put me in touch with people of different orientation, that is to say, as a social worker and researcher with HALEA, I have worked with both heterosexuals and homosexuals and I can confirm to you that yes, homosexuals do exist in Uganda and they are not artificially manufactured as several media outlets have insinuated for a long time. Because of the ever increasing homophobia, many homosexuals will not simply come out to say who they are, who they love for obvious reasons, they will be persecuted. I have for a fact known several homosexuals who also have partners of the opposite sex just to keep appearances because they desire to fit into society and avoid ostracism.

The signing of the Anti Homosexual Bill into law early this year increased homophobia among people that are already obsessed with hate. Many people however did not know what the law had in store. I will dedicate the following paragraphs to give out some facts about the law and then show why I think it was a very bad, draconian law which our government ought not to have passed.

For starters, the Act also defines a homosexual act as any physical activity that doesn't necessarily culminate in intercourse and may include; the touching of another person's breasts, vagina, penis or anus. According to the law, a homosexual act also includes stimulation or penetration of a vagina, anus or mouth by a sexual organ, however slight. A sexual organ is defined as a vagina, penis or any artificial sexual contraption. Section 2 of the law creates the offence of homosexuality.

According to this section, a person commits an offence of homosexuality if he or she penetrates the anus or mouth of another person of the same sex with his penis or if he uses any object or sexual contraption to penetrate or stimulate or penetrate a sexual organ or touches another person with intent of committing homosexuality. How vague can this law be? How do you qualify intent when it comes to touching another person?

Furthermore, Section 3 of the law provides for

aggravated homosexuality where the offence is committed against a person who is below 18 years, or the offender is a person with HIV, or a parent or a guardian of the victim, or he or she is a serial offender or the victim is a person with disability. Fine, the law is already clear against having sex with minors, it is already criminal to have sex with a person below 18 years, meaning the AHA is a repetition of the existing laws and therefore unnecessary.

Also in cases where the offender administers drugs with intent to overpower his or her victim, the offence is described as aggravated homosexuality. Punishment for aggravated homosexuality is imprisonment for life. The act makes it mandatory for any person arrested for homosexuality to be subjected to a medical examination to ascertain his or her HIV status. I have a problem with this very statement. In practice, people who defile children or rape women have always been subjected to a compulsory medical check up to ascertain their HIV status even when there has not been a clear law on such practice, is it not pure hate that the law makers are putting it in writing that a medical examination be made on homosexuals? Why make a law that legally discriminate between homosexuals and heterosexuals, does it imply that homosexuals are the worst carriers of HIV in Uganda and therefore they need a written law to have their health status established?

Section 4 of the law provides for attempted homosexuality and prescribes a punishment of seven years and imprisonment for life in cases of attempted aggravated homosexuality. The question is, what are the ingredients of attempted homosexuality, is mere touching by and to a person of the same sex qualifies as attempted homosexuality? Will a physical fight between people of the same sex qualify to be attempted homosexuality if one party decided to claim so?

Section 6(3) of the law makes it an offence for the media or social media to publish or cause publication of the identity of the victim of homosexuality without his or her authority or permission from court. If a media house publishes the victim's



identity without authority, the editor is liable on conviction to pay a fine of 250,000 currency points. The problem with this section is that it only looks at the alleged victim and the assumed offender is not protected. I have seen pictures of people the media has labeled homosexuals- many known to me- whose photos have been repeatedly published in the media, their names mentioned by radio presenters without any protection of the law and some, like David Kato were killed in cold blood! Is the law written differently for homosexuals and heterosexuals? What happened to the presumption of innocence until proven guilty? Are homosexuals already guilty even before a crime is proven against them?

According to the act, a person who aids, abets, counsels or procures another to engage in acts of homosexuality, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for seven years. Procurement of homosexuality is also punished by a seven-year jail term. I do not agree with the law because of the fact that many individuals and organizations will be a target of malicious propaganda and attacks since they will be labeled to have abetted, talked to homosexuals or aided a person who happens to be a homosexual. It means that even people who often sing hate against homosexuals without knowing that they are amidst them will be victims of the draconian law. Priests, teachers, pastors, lawyers, administrators and social workers will be in danger for associating with a homosexuals whether they knew one's sex orientation or not.

The law also bans brothels for purposes of homosexuality. According to the law, a person who keeps a house, room or set of rooms or any place for homosexuality commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment of seven years. The question is, how will the landlord know that in such a room, people within are involved in acts of homosexuality? Will the landlords therefore have a responsibility to exactly establish the nature of sex intercourse the tenants engage in or cameras will be placed in hidden corners to establish the sex done in people's bedrooms? Is such a law realistic?

Section 12 of the law bans same-sex marriage and provides that a person who contracts a marriage with another of the same sex is liable to imprisonment for life. Any person or institution that conducts such a marriage ceremony is liable for a maximum of seven years' imprisonment for individuals and cancellation of a licence for an institution. This section is redundant and was never needed, there are already laws in our Penal Code and the Constitution to the effect that marriage

between the same sex is criminal hence the law is a duplication of the already existing tough laws against homosexuals, anyway.

Section 13 of the law bans promotion of homosexuality. A person who participates in production, dissemination, marketing, publishing or broadcasting of pornographic materials, funds or sponsors homosexuality-related activities, offers assets to support the promotion of homosexuality, etc, is liable to five thousand currency points or imprisonment of between five and seven years or both. My take here is that promotion of homosexuality is the most vague and ambiguous. It makes researchers and social workers useless because they cannot effectively disseminate data about homosexuality and therefore the public is kept in ignorance about homosexuality. Still, there is a fear of cramp down and persecution of several NGOs who in one way or another reach out to people of homosexuality orientation and share with them on issues that empower them as citizens of this country who deserve to be treated better. Are homosexuals regarded as animals who deserve no human rights? Are we denying these people the basic rights such as the right to life, association, access to information and the right to privacy?

Our concern as people in the civil society world is the blackmail and the hate that comes with talking about homosexuality the way I have done. The draconian law states that where the person is a corporate body, association or Non-Governmental Organization, on conviction its certificate shall be cancelled and the director, promoter or proprietor be jailed for seven years; and that is a clear violation of our rights to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society.

Thanks to the ten outstanding Ugandans who represented our views to challenge the draconian law in the Constitution court. My thanks to the lead petitioners that included: Prof Joe Oloka Onyango, MP Fox Odoi-Oywelowo, Andrew Mujuni Mwenda, Prof Ogenga Latigo, Dr Paul Nsubuga Semugooma, Jacqueline Kasha Nabagesera, Julian Pepe Onzimema, Frank Mugisha and Human Rights Awareness & Promotion Forum for going to court and take on the law and all the agents of hate. Finally the law was quashed and it deserves no other place among a people who claim to be democratic and a country which prides its self in respecting human rights. Let us walk the talk, let us live and let live. Let crimes be crimes and not manufactured crimes. It is only fair that way.

**Denis Lugemwa is a Humanist and Human Rights Activist. He has worked as a researcher and Social Worker with HALEA since 2011 and is HALEA's founder member and a volunteer for many years.**



## **A CALL FOR LEGALIZATION OF ABORTION IN UGANDA.**

**A paper presented by Kato Mukasa at the Open Talk Debate on 10 October at Fair Way Hotel**

**ABORTION IS ONE** of the most sensitive and controversial topics today. MANY women and girls continue to get rid of unwanted pregnancies in unsafe ways and get serious medical and psychological complications and many equally lose their lives. Many Women and girls use abortion as the illegal method of family planning.

### **KEY FACTS ABOUT ABORTION**

Except under special circumstances accorded to some women, abortion is illegal in Uganda but common due to rampant unintended pregnancies. Over 775,000 women in Uganda become pregnant unintentionally every year. Over 297,000 illegal abortions are carried out in Uganda annually. Over 150,000 women in Uganda suffer from abortion-related complications annually. Many fear to go to hospital thinking they might be arrested. The above figure is just the number which is recorded in the health facilities, there are many cases that undergo abortions and have died in the villages silently because they fear to be stigmatized and victimised by the colonial law that condemns abortion. Thus, there are high numbers of unregistered abortions. Every day Mulago Hospital receives 10-15 women suffering from abortion-related complications. Abortion is the fourth killer of women in Uganda and a total of 297,000 abortions are done every year, the United Nations Population Fund country representative. About 7,200 mothers die yearly and more than 144,000 survive death but develop serious complication in the process of giving life including obstetrics fistula according to UNFPA. In Uganda, every year about one million teenagers get pregnant and 40 per cent of these abort because they did not plan to have the children.

### **LEGAL FRAME WORK ON ABORTION**

Ugandan law allows abortion under some circumstances, but laws and policies on abortion are unclear and are often interpreted inconsistently, making it difficult for women and the medical community to understand what is legally permitted.

The Ugandan Constitution states in article 22 on protection of life that no person has the right to terminate the life of an unborn child except as may be authorized by law, this means that abortion is permitted if the procedure is authorised by law, but many of the medical workers cannot perform abortions because of failure to interpret the law,

Under the 2006 National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, pregnancy termination is permissible in cases of fetal anomaly, rape and incest, or if the woman has HIV.

According to the Penal Code, a doctor who thinks that an abortion is justified to save the life of the mother, must write to the director general of medical services in the health ministry, seeking approval to terminate the pregnancy who also convenes a medical team to scrutinise the case. This process is bureaucratic and life in danger may be lost as a medical doctor waits for an approval from the director general of medical services.

### **FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT**

When does a human being regarded to have rights? Does a fetus qualify to be a human being or does it have rights just like a new born baby? At what months would a fetus qualify as a human being and does it have special rights over and above the rights of its mother? Putting the ingredients of murder in perspective, does an abortion truly amount to





murder? Why does the law leave out young people (girls) even in the extreme cases where women are allowed to abort?

### **MEDICAL EFFECTS OF UNSAFE ABORTION**

Many young girls suffer from obstetric fistula and obstructed labour often due to small size of the birth canal amongst these children. Many other young girls are suffering from sepsis Gangrene, pyometia, pelvic inflammatory diseases, infertility, obstetric fistula, embolism, ectopic pregnancy, incomplete cervix and incomplete removal of products just because government has failed to legalise abortion to be performed in hospitals by qualified medical workers.

Teenagers are at the forefront of carrying out abortions and HALEA has established that teenagers fear pregnancies because teenage pregnancy contributes to loss of economic potential due to foreshortened education lost opportunities and constrained life options.

Medical figures from Mulago Hospital (2014) indicate that in Uganda six women suffer severe morbidities- anaemia, infertility, pelvic pain and obstetric fistulas that lead to ill health caused partly by deliveries and unsafe abortions carried out in rural areas. Recent studies have shown that the cost to the healthcare system of treating complications from unsafe abortion is \$130 (Shs330,000) per patient.

### **WAY FORWARD**

Part of my way forward is a call to reason through the proposals I am making:

Aware that abortion results from unplanned pregnancy, it therefore follows that preventing unintended pregnancy is a major step is preventing unsafe abortions. Can we therefore have condoms and other contraceptives readily available to young people in and outside school? Will the government and faith based schools allow teens and students access contraceptives?

Can we think of legalizing safe abortion and thereby allowing qualified and certified medical practioners to operate abortion clinics through which women will be given a choice to have safe abortions?

Can we give freedom to the man and woman (and

girls) responsible for the fetus in question have a right to decide on whether or not to keep the yet to be born rather than having a law in place that make them make unwanted choices?

If we chose to save lives as many people have proposed, do we have foster families that will take care of the many unwanted babies in Uganda? Will the government be financially ready to start a welfare system in which the needy can be helped? Why should countries will welfare system allow abortion clinics to exist? We have many already born children, unloved and uncared for, it is not important that we started taking care of the already born than the yet to be born?

### **FINAL SUBMISSION**

For one to assume that he or she has rights to tell another human being what they can or cannot do with their bodies is a violation of a woman's individual rights granted by our constitution. It is only fair that women should be allowed to have control over their bodies. Men and women need to be empowered to make the best choices, to access contraceptives and to be able and ready to use them. They should also have the freedom to raise babies they can love and can take care of. Condom use and contraceptives is not a woman thing, men need to be empowered too and girls and boys below 18 should be allowed to access and use contraceptives once they start to be sexually active.

Let abortion be a choice and not a crime. Let young people be given a choice. Abortion is the best choice in cases where a woman ( a girl) is raped, defiled, conceives through incest, she is still in school, or pursuing a career that cannot allow her carry a pregnancy, when she is medically un able to have the child or financially incapable of taking care of a pregnancy and a baby. Several drug addicts do not want to have children and equally so, many mentally sick individuals do not want to have children; it is only safer if women were given a chance to decide whether or not to keep a pregnancy and a safe abortion offers a remedy.

**Kato Mukasa is a Humanist, Human Rights Activist and Lawyer based in Kampala, Uganda. He is the Executive Director of HALEA and currently the Chair of the African Working Group under IHEYO.**



# KATO'S POETIC CORNER

## Poems extracted from Kato Mukasa's Anthology- 'BECAUSE I LOVE THIS LAND'

### THE MASQUERADER

I will start a church  
Once I become broke  
And indeed get free cash  
From duped brethren  
Who will supply me  
With money, chicken, goats  
Carrots, bananas and oats  
And I will grow fat  
And they will grow thin.

I will feed them  
One pure lies  
And half- truth  
That without  
My only true God  
They have no blessings  
They will invite me  
Everywhere  
I will be everywhere  
Like sodas on  
Every function  
My life will go  
Full cycle.

I will have no  
Regrets whatsoever  
I will scare the brethren  
That I am a messenger  
Of a true God  
And they will supply  
Me with lots of cash  
And I will become fat  
As they slim.

### WHICH GOD IS GOOD?

I have lived full circle  
In this citadel of power  
Serving two gods  
One is god  
The other is God  
Which god is good?

I serve two gods  
At the same time  
One god is lubaale  
One God is Katonda  
Lubale is also Katonda  
And God is Katonda

Which god is good?  
One is for the white man  
One is for the black man  
The white man says his  
God is the best god!  
Which god is good?

My god is divided into parts  
One for fertility  
One for vitality  
One for rain  
One for hunting  
One for the sea  
My god is for prosperity.

The white man's God  
Is divided in trinity :  
The son, father and spirit  
Three gods in one big God  
The big God is for prosperity  
Which god is good?

I have come to accept  
To respect every one's god  
Freedom to worship is free  
I have learnt to co-exist  
Serving two rival gods  
Both for the white and black man

Be very careful my brethren  
And listen real good  
Before you challenge  
One's god  
Let your feet be rooted on a ground  
of a strong Lubaale.

## GOD FOR SALE

In this God-god country  
 God is not for free  
 He is up for sale  
 In the make shift Kiwempe church  
 This stout fat pastor  
 Parks his snow white Hummer  
 Named Kiwedde  
 As his sheep foot all the way  
 To the church  
 Meanwhile  
 His other car  
 A state of the art range rover.  
 Is parked at the rear entrance  
 For his concubine to buy wine

*"Praaaaaaizeeeeeeeeeeee de rod brazen  
 Learn how to tithe clean  
 GAD loves a cheerful jiver*

*Dose wiz a million come forward  
 Dose wiz five hundred thousand move  
 forward*

*Dose with four, three, two hundred forward  
 I hate coins do bring paper money only  
 You only reap what you sow  
 Pay for your blessings brazen  
 GAD bless you. Yes God bless you  
 GAD is good. Yes good all the time"*

The poor folks press forward  
 Holding their dime for all to see  
 To give a god who drives a hummer  
 A range rover, a Benz, a limousine  
 As they continue to worship in dust  
 As they die of jiggers and cholera  
 The cunning America sponsored Pastor  
 Goes laughing  
 All the way to the bank

## BECAUSE I LOVE THIS LAND

Because I love this land  
 I will allow no one to destroy it  
 I will succeed my self, myself and my self  
 Because I love this land  
 Because I love this land  
 I will own the means and resources  
 I will control the army and own the guns  
 Because I love this land  
 Because I love this land  
 I will appoint my loved one to juicy posts  
 Those who disagree with me will be sent to  
 the far posts  
 Because I love this land  
 Because I love this land  
 I will govern this nation as a family affair  
 I will reward those who praise me because it  
 is fair  
 Because I love this land  
 Because I love this land  
 I will own the Parliament  
 The rubberstamp Parliament will sing only my  
 song  
 Because I love this land  
 Because I love this land  
 I will manage the Electoral Commission  
 The Electoral Commission will manage the

election

Because I love this land.

Because I love this land  
 I will appoint Cadre Judges  
 Cadre Judges will judge my cases  
 Because I love this land

Because I love this land  
 I will admire Kibaki and act like Mugabe  
 Just like Mugabe I will be a Ssabagabe  
 Because I love this land

Because I love this land  
 I will preach life but sign your death papers  
 I will pay the piper and call for the tune  
 Because I love this

Because I love this land  
 We shall rule from husband to wife  
 Wife to son, son to wife  
 Because I love this land.

Because I love this land  
 I will imprison and pound the victor  
 I will share the presidency with the victor  
 Because I love this land.

Because I love this land  
 I will swindle your treasure and invest  
 abroad  
 Surely I know my offspring will stay abroad  
 Because I love this land.



# OF DOUBTING RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS.

## From the Editorial

Have you ever imagined a situation when religious leaders begun doubting the stories they keep on reading for the followers and the GOD they keep on singing to their congregation? You do not need to imagine anymore, this is happening today. Read on.

### DID ADAM and EVE EXIST?

A Catholic Cardinal says didn't exist

We have been taught that Adam and Eve existed and all of us are descendants from them Adam being the 'first man' to be created by God! Is that not the case of the kind of creation story that has been parroted for centuries and we have crammed it as gospel truth? Is it not the basis on which religion gained its prominence, GOD waking up one day and creating a man in his own image and creating the entire earth with all the creatures there on and directing man to be in charge, take control of everything on earth and thereby be in control of everything on earth. We have also been told through the 'holy' books that Adam sinned against GOD and ate the forbidden fruit and thus GOD fired him, chased him from the garden of Eden and banished him into the wilderness to sweat for a living and suffer with Eve, a woman who seduced him to eat the forbidden fruit? Well, all those nice to read, nice to hear stories have been put on a hold, they have been questioned not by a humanist, atheists or a non believer as you would have guessed by a religious person to the level of a catholic priest at rank of a Cardinal. In comments that have come to rock and shock the entire Christian world, Cardinal George Pell has described the biblical story of Adam and Eve as a myth.

The shocking statements were made on a the ABC's Q&A program on the night of April 10, 2012. Cardinal Pell was not alone on the hot programme, he appeared alongside renowned evolutionary biologist and atheist, Professor Richard Dawkins, and as Dawkins criticised religious thoughts to the core, then Cardinal Pell dropped the shocker! The good catholic Cardinal Pell said the existence of Adam and Eve was not a matter of science but rather a mythological account. He said:

"It's a very sophisticated mythology to try to explain the evil and the suffering in the world," "It's (the story of Adam and Eve) a religious story told for religious purposes."

For emphasis we should note that according to Genesis, God created Adam and Eve as the first man and woman and all people are descended from them. Cardinal Pell's explosive comments came after he was questioned about evolution. He said it was impossible to say when there was a first human. Was it the pressure from the well informed professor of Biology, Richard Dawkins that Cardinal Pell found himself speaking the obvious truth? If it is true that biblical creation story is inaccurate and it is only taught for religious purposes, why should we then continue to mislead young people that such stories were really true? Why not tell young people the truth that such stories are only written and said for religious purposes, to make

religion meaningful and that they are not necessarily true but they are the convenient truth that can be peddled to keep people faithful?

For those in the know and more so people in the scientific realm, critical thinkers, freethinkers and progressives, it is well known that we are not on planet earth in a manner that creationists and their creation stories want us believe. It is widely accepted in the scientific community that life on Earth has evolved over about four billion years. More about this subject will be handled in our 2015 publications, prepare your submission now. More on this story can be accessed here: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/13381016/pell-says-adam-and-eve-didnt-exist/>

### WHEN THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY DOUBTS THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

In another related story, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said he sometimes has doubts in his belief in God. In an interview with BBC, Bristol the leader of the Church of England said he doubted in "lots of different ways". He said: "There are moments, sure, when you think, 'Is there a God?' 'Where is God?'" The archbishop has recently completed a tour of the West Country and made his comments at an event called Standing Room Only at Bristol Cathedral. When asked about doubt by presenter Lucy Tegg, he said: "It is a really good question. I love the Psalms, if you look at Psalm 88 that's full of doubt. "The other day I was praying over something as I was running, and I ended up saying to God 'look this is all very well, but isn't it about time you did something, if you're there?' "Which is probably not what the Archbishop of Canterbury should say."

Well said the Archbishop of Canterbury, you also have moments when you doubt the existence of a GOD you chose to serve, a GOD you keep on preaching to thousands of people each year. Now if you have the audacity to question the existence of GOD, why should we not simply be happy to have doubters, sceptics, atheists, humanists, and freethinkers amidst us? Why should our society not consider to look at us as a people who simply have questions whose answers we have never convincingly got? Why should we continue to have a people that hate us because we have time to question the relevancy of the stories being parroted from the 'holy books', because we continue questioning the existence of a GOD imported to Africa by a people who now doubt the existence of the very GOD. If we are now in position to doubt to doubt the African GODS and spirits and we have been taught that they are unreal, why should we not be in position to doubt the existence of the imported GOD? Let us encourage scepticism, it is healthy to doubt after all, it is safe to believe not blindly. We are also doing the same doubting the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby is doing but the difference is that we do the doubting and criticism more aggressively and outside the church. More on this story can be obtained here: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29255318>