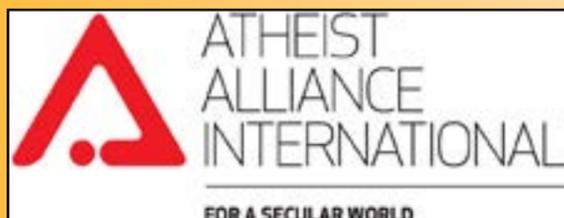




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Open Talk Magazine

Dare to think

Issue 7,

July 2015

CEREMONIES!

Ushs 3,300/=, US\$1

IT IS TIME FOR HUMANIST CEREMONIES IN AFRICA



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: THE TOP STORIES:

- It is time for Humanist Ceremonies in Uganda; writes Joseph Lukyamuzi
- Neil Anderson writes on Human Ceremonies in Scotland and we draw Lessons.
- Teens talk about Sex Education, Prostitution, Abortion and Gambling and all in the teens' Platform.
- Strange but true: Meet Nude Bikers and Fake Pastors
- Leo Igwe on why kicking out Christianity and Islam is not the answer.
- Thoughts on Entrepreneurship: Lesson from Warren Buffet.
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ABOUT THE HUMANIST WEDDING COVER PHOTOS

Blyth & Jeff at St. Brides Kirk, Blair Castle: lovely setting, great music and a perfect walk back to the castle through the woods. Chilli's were the floral theme!

Photo's by Liron Erel, and Jane Bechetel, Courtesy of Humanist Society Scotland

In another photo, after 18 years together Dave & Tracey share their first kiss as husband and wife.

All the family gathered together, with the backdrop of Creag na Culgeil.

The original Forter Castle was built in 1560, and only stood for 80 years before being destroyed by the Duke of Argyle, an act that was commemorated in song as The Bonnie House of Airlie

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Editorial



FROM THE EDITOR - Kato Mukasa

THE OPEN TALK MAGAZINE continues to grow from strength to strength over the years. Being the only magazine where young people are given a chance to give their views regardless of the 'sensitivity' of the topic at hand, the OTM remains the only secular magazine that not only put the views of young people at the front page but gives its readers articles and information that stirs critical thought and ushers in a breath of fresh air in a country influenced by millions of dogmas and hundreds of religions that continue to keep people under bondage, poverty, suffering, ignorance and anxiety. This publication is largely dedicated to the introduction of **Humanist Ceremonies** in Uganda and as such to inspire the start of humanist ceremonies in Africa where they are urgently needed today than ever before. We draw inspiration from the United Kingdom and in particular, England and Scotland where humanist ceremonies are a huge success yet in much of Europe, humanist ceremonies are a force to reckon with. In Scotland, humanist ceremonies have strictly taken over religious ceremonies

to the extent that there are more humanist weddings done in Scotland in a single year than religious weddings ! Just imagine that happening in Uganda.....It is **VERY POSSIBLE.**

It is our practice to give young people a platform to talk openly through the **Open Talk Debates** and in all schools where we have operated over the years, debates that promotes critical thinking have been promoted and young people have discussed themes such as legalisation of prostitution, gambling, abortion, the existence of gods and God, the truth in the existence of witchcraft, miracles and other dogmas, the need for sex education, being good without religion and we have ushered in a generation of godless teenagers, a crop of youth that can think for themselves. We have enabled young people to discuss the merit in such barbaric and retrogressive cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, arranged marriages, women or widow inheritance, women beating, and a host of several other myths and beliefs that continue to keep millions of Africans backward and exploited by those who pretend to own the key to their salvation, to

an imagined heaven! I am proud to say that HALEA has managed to inspire critical debates in several schools and such debates to go on smoothly even without the intervention of our staff and yes, some schools have continued inviting us to continue guiding their students in critical thought and we are happy to be part of the team that is working towards the creation of a critical mass in Uganda and Africa.

Our appreciation to our partners that have continued to enable us extend our services to young people over the years. We are always grateful to HAMU and the people of Norway for enabling us extend our services to you and deliver the Open Talk Magazine in schools free of charge. We are also grateful to our other partners such as IHEU, CFI and AAI among others for supporting our works.

In regard to the introduction of humanist ceremonies, we are grateful for the guidance received from the Humanist Society Scotland, the North East Humanist of UK, AAI and IHEU. As a humanist organisation we shall continue to promote science, reason and rationale as the best approach to handle the numerous challenges in our midst.

To all writers, photographers and the editorial team that out this together, thank you. As always, you are an incredibly wonderful bunch of people to work with, over the years, i have enjoyed working with you. To our dear esteemed readers, please continue sending us your views because it is the only way we can continue progressing forward. Enjoy this one life we have as you read the Open Talk Magazine.

It's Time For Humanist Ceremonies In Uganda

Lukyamuzi Joseph – Special Features Editor.

It will start it this way: Uganda is a country of interesting contrasts. It's a land of a people that have no problem with smiling at you when the heart says something else. It is a country where the led will clap and heap praises to a leader who is obviously cheating them. In the same vein, Uganda is a land of a people that claim to be Christians and Muslims but hardly adhere to the standards of those faiths. In the same way, many Ugandans find themselves engaging in life's social ceremonies they don't really believe in or aren't comfortable with.

Take an instance of wedding, burial and naming ceremonies. Most Ugandans find themselves giving their children names they aren't really comfortable with but only because they have to do so in order to fit into society. Many of the parents in Uganda do not know the meanings behind the names given to their children and in the same way, several children cannot understand the meaning of their names! Others have their families having to manoeuvre to have a religious leader to oversee the burial of someone who wasn't practicing religion, because they feel the ceremony will be incomplete without a religious leader. It means there is a missing gap which secularists and humanists for that matter must fill.

If for instance a nominal non

practicing Catholic dies yet hasn't been paying tithe, or even going to church, it should be that such a person isn't entitled to be buried in the Catholic way yet you will find that his family will sort of 'bribe' the priest and such a non-believer will have a burial presided over by a priest! In most cases, a catechist say some prayers at the burial. The irony is that someone who hasn't been attending mass or praying regularly but has been paying the tithe will be entitled to a priest praying for his corpse while one who has been attending prayers but hasn't been paying the tithe will not be entitled to a priest's prayers at his/her burial. That is double standards at its best, why should a non-religious person be buried as if he was religious.

It's therefore necessary to have our people have another choice that can give them comfort in how they would like their life ceremonies to be. When one of the leaders of HALEA went for the World Humanist Congress in Oxford in 2014, he (Kato Mukasa) got the chance to visit the Humanist Society of Scotland and the British Humanist Association- who all have humanist celebrants arranging and managing humanist ceremonies and came back interested in starting humanist ceremonies back here at home.

It's not surprising to find hypocrite politicians here complaining about how the Whiteman wants to dictate matters here in Africa yet the same people see no problem in holding marriages the very



same way the Whiteman's religion or the Mohamedans religion dictates them to be. The fact is that Africans have no serious attachment to naming of kids and the closest that comes is at baptism ceremonies where the clergy man can tell you whether the first name is acceptable or not. For the most, most tribes just require the grandparent to provide a surname to the child but there is no serious ceremony as such. It would therefore be interesting to have a ceremony where a child plants a tree as reminder of the day the he or she was named or a house foundation to be laid, a house that will be built for that child so that when he or she grows up to be a man or woman, he/ she will have a house to call her own, a house started on the day a name for her or him was given and that will be memorable.

Then there are the weddings. Weddings here involve two aspects usually. The traditional part and the religious part. First is what Ugandans term the introduction ceremony or Okwanjula and this is the part where the groom is introduced to the girl's parents and family. Then comes the wedding proper and this is when the religious vows are taken and a

reception follows at which various guests invited or uninvited are hosted.

Anyone conversant with the way these observances are done must be knowing how irritating some of the rituals or practices involved are. You start off with the introduction ceremonies which are more of a showbiz affair than the real tradition from which they stem. It's about how many times the bride's entourage has changed attire, the amount of sodas or beers delivered, kilogrammes of rice and sugar brought. Actually, it's more about how the ceremony fairs when compared to the last ceremony that took place in that village in other words, it is about which ceremony was more expensively organised than the other it is about extravagance and not the individual.

It's therefore necessary to have

humanist weddings where the involved can decide how to customise the ceremony. What they want to be said at ceremony, what can act as the union symbol (it doesn't have to be a ring), it is fair for people to speak what is practically possible and not what has been parroted over the years. Why declare the until death do us apart vow when you very well know it might be not possible to fulfil? Why not provide a provision for a civil mutual agreement which gives those in the relationship the freedom to be in a bond that is no prison as most have come to term marriage?

It is time for Humanist ceremonies to celebrate human dignity without the scarecrow mentioning of the name God which is used to frighten the involved into being virtuous when a simple call for being ethical could do, to terrify

the bereaved on how they have to pray so much so that the deceased doesn't end up in hell while entirely forgetting the good things achieved while that person lived. It's most likely that humanist ceremonies will go a long way in streamlining humanist lives already being lived in Uganda. So HALEA, here we go, we are promoting the introduction of humanist ceremonies in Uganda, support us, join us, be part of the winning team, NOW.

Lukyamuzi Joseph is a founder member of HALEA, a trained journalist working with Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) and a writer whose opinion articles have regularly featured in Uganda's Observer. He is the new Executive Director of HALEA and Director in Charge of Media and Communication.

HUMANIST FUNERALS ARE THE IN THING FOR NON BELIEVERS; HERE IS WHY, WRITES KATO MUKASA.

Well , one day I will pass on, I will be history, I will be laid down, hapless, helpless, breathless, stiff, cold dead and un wanted. Plans will be made how the burial will go and suggestions may be given to invite a local priest, because many will assume that I was a catholic- having been born in and raised by a catholic family, they will then ignorantly and loudly say that Reverend Father so and so should be the man (not a woman anyway) to come and conclude my business on earth for people must go back to work. The point is this, it will be a false hood to burry me as a catholic or a believer because I have not been one. For the record, I am a humanist but to put it more plainly I am an atheist who embraces humanism and all that it promotes. For that

matter therefore, I will desire to be given a humanist ceremony, a secular burial for that matter and there will be no need to pretend that I was religious and therefore deserved a religious burial.

The question is who will give such a burial, who will be the celebrant and how will this be conducted? I am not alone with such anxiety. There is a growing number of people in Africa that openly commits themselves to secularism, a people who openly say that they are non-religious yet when they die, it is more likely that the religious folks decide for them and are given religious burials! This has happen before and it is more likely to happen again if we do not start secular-humanist ceremonies and in this

case, humanist funerals in Uganda and in Africa now.

Religious leaders have always taken advantage of our inaction to fill the vacuum, as any opportunist will do, they are quick at 'forgiving' the non-religious telling the mourners that at the time of the atheist or humanist's death, he or she has 'seen Jesus or God' and therefore deserves a religious burial. We have read several death bed stories of nonbelievers 'turned' believers at the last minute and yet we all know that these are nothing but puffs, lies calculated to give the religious leaders mirage over the none believers, to make people think that no one can die a non-believer, that people embrace God at the last minute. Let me assure the doubters and self-seekers, the

promoters of religion and all its lies and nothingness that several people live and die non-religious and I am sure I am one of them. So help us, respect our wish to have humanist funerals.

Just imagine this, famous people such as Hon. Kahinda Otafiire, Mr. Tamale Mirundi- Statehouse Spokesperson, Mr. John Nagenda- Presidential Advisor on Media, and celebrated writers such as Allan Tucka, Fat Boy- Onen of Radio One among others have always indicated their non-belief openly but because we are not organised as non-believers, we do not have secular celebrants to do the desired job and time is now, HALEA is taking the lead.



(Photo courtesy of AFP)

While in England, particularly in the North East and in Scotland, I had the opportunity to witness several secular- Humanist funerals and I was very impressed. For the first time in many years, I felt I was in a community that shared my dreams, a people that respect the dead, honoured the dead and celebrated their lives in dignity, with precision and accuracy that reasonable people would demand and the entire occasion was in a lovely way made personal in the memory of the deceased and it was such a great moment to be part of humanist funerals that I wished that the same would be done back home. Time is now and there is nothing illegal about having humanist funerals in Africa. Just imagine being part of a funeral that lasts no more than thirty minutes and everything is on time and done accurately. Imagine

your loved ones assembling, a few selected persons delivering very short speeches in your memory just to remind the people who you were, what you did, what you loved and hate and what is remarkable about you. Then Imagine people seeing you talking to them or highlights of your best moments in life, a person reading a poem you loved so much, or a

quotation you loved so much or speaking out words of inspiration you usually said. Again remember, everything is personal, it is all about you and your loved ones, God is not allowed to interrupt, politicians are not allowed to make campaigns, supply hot air, parade lies at your funeral and religious leaders are kept at bay, no parroting lies about a God and a heaven and hell that you never believed in. Just imagine a humanist celebrant guiding everyone to do their tasks accurately, the music you loved being played and every one remembering you for what you were and celebrating your life. Then once all is done, people will gather for a cocktail or for a bite and life will continue as you rest in peace. That is the humanist funeral I am talking about.

Before you have one, you must clearly indicate that you need

one. Your family and associates, friends and acquaintances should be alerted such that the religious folks do not take advantage of your death. We all know that they are opportunists, good at exploiting every opportunity when you are dead, they want to claim that you were on their side, they want to scare others to live a free of God and gods life, so you can only beat them when you indicate that you need a secular, humanist funeral and your god/ Godlessness will win and you will live your wish even when you pass on.

HALEA has embarked on the journey to introduce humanist ceremonies in Uganda and take the same to other African countries. With the support of our partners worldwide, we have introduced a course for Humanist Celebrants at Pearl Training College where humanist and secularists will be trained to become celebrants, the course takes only six months and why not, come be part of it. It is our humble appeal to our partners to support this cause, to send us some of your experienced trainers to share with us, to send us the materials that are much needed to do the job and to sponsor some of the celebrants who cannot afford to attend such an important course. Time is now, humanist ceremonies have come to Uganda, it has never been better than this. And we can do it, YES WE CAN.

Kato Mukasa is a trained Economist and Lawyer. He is the founding Chair, Past Executive Director and now the Director in charge of Legal Services and Humanist Ceremonies at HALEA.

HUMANIST CEREMONIES IN SCOTLAND: LESSONS FOR AFRICA

By Neil Anderson



The Humanist Society Scotland was formed in 1989 in response to a rising

demand for a nationwide Scottish organisation that was open to all. The history of free thought goes back a long way in Scotland. The earliest known group was based in Glasgow in the 1930's and came under the auspices of the Rationalist Press Association. A separate Edinburgh Group was formed in 1956, hot on the heels of the controversial talk given by Professor Margaret Knight of Aberdeen University on the BBC Third Programme entitled 'Morality without Religion.

One of their many initiatives was to set up **The Edinburgh Youth Homes** in 1964, which cared for boys from disturbed backgrounds and which operated successfully for more than forty years before being wound up in 2005. The Nigel Bruce Charitable Trust, which founded and supported them, continues to make grants to young people in need and to other organisations around the world involved in the care of the young.

The first Scottish Humanist Conference took place in Edinburgh in 1962. Later, the Edinburgh and Glasgow Humanist Groups jointly organised regular

conferences, many being held at Stirling University.

In 1978, both groups agreed to set up a **Scottish Humanist Council** to represent the voice of humanism in Scotland when and if the long awaited Devolved Assembly came into being. The leading lights were Alex Stewart and Nigel Bruce, the Convenors of the Glasgow and Edinburgh groups. In 1989, the **Humanist Society Scotland** was established. Gradually the relationship with the Groups changed and as they surrendered their autonomy and became part of the Society, their members became members of the HSS as well.

We were very fortunate that at about this time Eric Stockton, a member from Orkney, started the **Scottish Humanist Magazine**. This has grown from humble beginnings into a very professionally produced magazine, now called "Humanitie", which is not just an old Scots form of the word that would have been familiar to David Hume, but the oldest word in the English language for Humanism. The magazine became the voice of humanism in Scotland and led the fight for both the legalisation of weddings and an end to segregated schooling.

A BRIEF ON HUMANIST CEREMONIES IN SCOTLAND.

Ceremonies were something that crept up on the Society. Since the inception of the Groups, the occasional funeral had been conducted in both Edinburgh and

Glasgow, although at the time, most secular funerals were carried out by members of political parties, such as the Socialists and Communists.

Thanks to two pioneers, by the early 1980's demand for secular ceremonies started to grow and a few more humanists got involved. In 1987, we were fortunate to get some publicity about our ceremonies on a BBC Scotland TV series called "High Spirits", when the first humanist wedding in Scotland was re-enacted for the cameras. At this time, it was still necessary for the couple to attend at the Register Office for a civil ceremony, to make the wedding legal.

In the early 1990's, as demand continued to grow, we started to organise the **training of celebrants**. This was led by George Rodger of Aberdeen who again took up the matter of legalising weddings and - with the support of Fergus Watt, an HSS member with a legal background - sought Counsel's advice. With other people coming on board, including Ivan Middleton of Edinburgh, we eventually won our case when humanist marriages were authorised by the Registrar General of Scotland in June 2005. Thanks to the hard work done by very many people over the years, the Humanist Society Scotland continues to go from strength to strength. Given that in the 2001 Census, 28% of the population stated that they have no religion, there is clearly a role for our organisation in Scotland and we will continue to fight to be heard



on equal terms with the religious lobby, to desegregate education and to establish a secular state.

Humanist Funeral Ceremonies

Humanists accept death as part of the natural order and our funeral ceremonies celebrate the life of the person who has passed away.

A humanist celebrant will spend time with the bereaved family gathering information on the life and personality of the deceased before writing a tribute to the life that was lived. This will be the centrepiece of the ceremony at which family and friends are invited and encouraged to read personal tributes or choose other readings and secular music.

"Don't you just hate it when a funeral seems to be all God and Jesus and sod all about your good pal? The Humanist Society of Scotland provides people just for this purpose. Called celebrants, they'll whoop up the deceased's life, not mourn it. That's for me." *Reg McKay*, Daily Record
Humanist celebrants are aware that amongst those attending the funeral there may be people of faith and respect this. Although prayers and hymns are not part of our ceremonies we usually include a brief period when people can reflect or pray silently if they want to.

Normally when a family engage a funeral director the staff will contact a celebrant on their behalf but they are free to contact the Society themselves, or a known celebrant. Where families ask their funeral director to **find** a celebrant they should specify that they wish to have one from the Humanist Society Scotland.

HSS also provide **advance funeral wishes forms** if you are looking ahead to your own funeral.

Our fees for Humanist Funerals

The HSS is transparent about the fees charged by our celebrants, which cover the time to arrange the ceremony, a meeting to discuss it, and its preparation, which includes all correspondence and communication, and of course its delivery on the day.

HSS celebrants make no charge for funeral ceremonies for young people under the age of sixteen, or in cases of financial hardship.

They also donate 10% of their fee to the society, to support our campaigning on issues of equality and social justice. **Funeral:** £145, **Extended Funeral:** £180 and **Travel:** 55p a mile.

Wedding and Civil Partnership Ceremonies

Scotland is one of the few countries where Humanist marriage ceremonies are fully legal, and recognised throughout the world.

respect, and our ceremonies are unique, dignified, and deeply personal. Whether on a beach or in a castle, your front room or a grand hotel, you're free to have a fully legal humanist marriage or civil partnership wherever you want, and declare your love in a way that feels right for you.

Some couples choose to have a Humanist Commitment Ceremony, or to restate their commitment in a Renewal of Vows. These ceremonies are not legally binding, but they give you the freedom to speak of your love in words of your choice.

Our fees for Humanist Marriages

The HSS is transparent about the fees charged by our celebrants, which cover the time to arrange the ceremony, a meeting to discuss it, and its preparation, which includes all correspondence and communication, and of course its delivery on the day. HSS celebrants donate 10% of their fee to the society, to support our campaigning on issues of equality and social justice. **Wedding:** £390 in 2015, £400 in 2016 and £410 in 2017, **Rehearsal:** please discuss fee for rehearsal with your chosen celebrant and **Travel:** 55p per mile. If you live in Scotland, then we ask you to join the HSS, but if you live elsewhere, you should join your local or national organisation. HSS membership is currently £40 for a



couple, initially for two years, or £25.00 if you are on a low income.

Humanist Naming Ceremonies

The birth of a baby is a very special event and bringing up a child is one of the most important undertakings we ever have.

Many parents choose to acknowledge and celebrate this and Humanist naming or welcoming ceremonies are increasingly being chosen as a secular alternative to a traditional christening.



The ceremony can be as formal or informal as desired and can be held in any venue from a castle to the parents' own living room! In addition to making their own pledges and promises to their child (or children), many parents also choose to ask other supporting adults to act as guide-parents (the non-religious equivalent of god parents).

We can advise on every aspect of the ceremony (including music, readings and symbolic gestures) and meet with the parents to plan a uniquely personal celebration to welcome and formally name their baby. Involving the whole family is important and for many parents the ceremony becomes not just a naming or welcoming ceremony, but a family celebration day!

Our fees for Naming Ceremonies

The HSS is transparent about the fees charged by our celebrants, which cover the time to arrange the ceremony, a meeting to

discuss it, and its preparation, which includes all correspondence and communication, and of course its delivery on the day. HSS celebrants donate 10% of their fee to the society, to support our campaigning on issues of equality and social justice. **Naming:** £200, **Travel:** 55p per mile.

Today HSS has over 7000 members and over 130 humanist celebrants. So, how did we get to this position of relative strength? The Humanist Society of Scotland was formed in 1978 – prior to that humanism in Scotland had been represented by a number of disparate groups.

HOW WE ACHIEVED THE SUCCESS

The first Humanist wedding ceremonies in Scotland took place around this time - but, of course, at that time couples had to have a Civil ceremony as well - so the campaign to legalise Humanist weddings in Scotland really started over 35 years ago!

The first steps involved correspondence between the Registrar General for Scotland and our then Secretary and also individual members of HSS also approached politicians directly. Nothing much came of this but in 1994, the HSS National Executive

Committee formally began a campaign to seek legal recognition.

Sadly, this initiative was unproductive, but by then several HSS celebrants had performed wedding celebrations; indeed one of our Celebrants, Robin Wood, even appeared on a television programme and with a couple re-enacted their ceremony for the benefit of the cameras.

Following a referendum in 1997, in which the Scottish electorate gave their consent, the current Scottish Parliament was convened by the Scotland Act 1998, which sets out its powers as a devolved legislature. The first meeting of the new Parliament took place on 12 May 1999 and so in 2000 our campaign was re-launched and a petition was presented to the Scottish Parliament's Petitions Committee.

It was heard on 6th February 2001 and our Secretary at the time, Ivan Middleton, appeared on behalf of the Society to answer questions.

By this time we had carried out **over 500 weddings** and so Ivan amplified this by saying we had married over 1000 people! Ivan's main argument was that we are very professional in what we do and so why is it that non-believers have to have 2 ceremonies whereas believers only need one.

In addition, we were of the view that as HSS was the Scottish affiliate of the International Humanist and Ethical Union - a body which was recognised by the United Nations on the same basis as traditional religious organisations - then our beliefs and practices were

protected by Article 9 of the Convention of Human Rights.

}}}} This was recognised by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Kokkinakis v Greece 1994 in which the European Court of Human Rights made it clear that Atheists and other non-believers were protected on the same terms as members of theist religions.

We argued that this was backed up by a further ruling from the ECHR that a State has no discretion to determine whether beliefs are legitimate - see the case of Manoussakis v Greece, 1996.{{{{

And so we argued that while over 30 religious organisations in Scotland were authorised to conduct marriages, secular marriages had to be performed by a Registrar which therefore curtailed the freedom of non-religious people to have a ceremony of their choice in the place of their choice.

We argued that this therefore infringes the right of non-religious people under article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights to freely manifest their belief in practice and observance. {{{{

}}}} It was also discrimination, on the grounds of their opinion, against the exercise of their rights under Article 12 and Article 14 of the Convention.{{{{

The politicians were apparently quite sympathetic but they referred it to the government lawyers and their response was that we don't need to do anything ... so we won't !

At this point the Executive committee considered seeking

a couple who were prepared to contest their right to a Legal Humanist ceremony, but after taking legal advice it was concluded that even if such a challenge were successful, it could be appealed.

A protracted legal battle could have risked our financial viability and so it was decided instead to go back to Route One and to speak again to the Registrar General for Scotland. And so meetings were established which took place every 4 months.

We wanted to persuade the Registrar General that we were capable of conducting a marriage ceremony in a professional manner so we gave him and his staff copies of all of our pamphlets and leaflets...hold up leaflets.... set out our philosophy and approach and also gave them examples of our scripts.

To allay the concern of the Registrar General that *"If we say yes to you who will be next?"* we also had to convince him that our beliefs were quite unique and could be seen as separating us from other groupings.

Now around this time the Scottish Parliament decided to make civil marriage ceremonies more widely available and allowed local Registrars throughout the country to licence alternative venues such as hotels, theatres and castles. Up to this point ceremonies had to take place in Registry offices.

The new legislation was due to come into effect on 24th of April 2002 and as it would clearly lead to a great deal of extra work, the Registrar General asked us to give him two years until it all settled down before reviewing our

request.

While this was another setback, it was also an unexpected opportunity. In response to this expansion of their services, the Registrar in Edinburgh advertised for supply Registrars.

Our Secretary, Ivan Middleton decided to apply to become a supply Registrar, and was fortunate to be selected as one of the ten new temporary Registrars. And so Ivan received training which then led to him being able to conduct many civil marriage ceremonies.

This new role not only gave him insider knowledge and connections but also the opportunity on about six occasions to ask the Registrar General for authorisation to conduct a legal ceremony and follow it with a humanist celebration.

In April 2005, a new Registrar General for Scotland was appointed – his name was Duncan McNiven, and he got in touch with Ivan and our Chairman, Charles Douglas and invited them to come in for a meeting: ...let me at this point quote Ivan directly –

"We went along expecting nothing but Duncan McNiven was incredible. He said, 'I've read all your arguments, I agree with every one of them and I will authorise Legal Humanist Marriages to be conducted by approved HSS Celebrants from the 1st of June 2005'.

As Ivan told me - I nearly fell off my seat!"

Ivan *asked the Registrar General 'Is it important that the couples*

are members of the society?’ to which the Registrar General replied ‘yes it is’ and so that is why we ask all couples to join the Society.

Effectively, The Registrar granted us the same powers as religious celebrants. We can conduct weddings anywhere ‘safe and dignified’ provided the couple each separately and clearly accepts the other as their lawful wedded husband/wife.

Only two months later, on the 18th of June 2005, Ivan was lucky to find himself conducting the first wedding under the new regime when Martin Reijns (27) and Karen Watts (29) had their marriage ceremony at Edinburgh Zoo.

Ironically, although the couple lived in Edinburgh, neither of them were Scots; Martin was from the Netherlands and Karen from Ireland. When the wedding

ceremony finished, Ivan and the happy couple emerged to find three camera crews and twenty snappers from the nation’s press waiting to celebrate the moment.

However, as word of our legal status spread, the demand increased exponentially and we very soon realised that we would require more Celebrants to be authorised. So, in 2006, another 8 celebrants were authorised by the Registrar General and since then we have gone back to him each year to make further requests for an increase in our numbers.

When the Registrar General for Scotland announced, in July 2008, that Humanist Weddings were now the fourth most popular form of marriage in the country, the media had a field day. The best comment of all came from the philosopher and columnist Julian Baggini, who wrote in The Herald newspaper, *“Weddings up 64%”*

is probably the most unlikely headline of the year, but add one word and it's completely true. That word is "humanist."

Legal weddings have been very important to the Society in a number of ways:-The impact of the legalisation of humanist weddings in Scotland should not be underestimated. Weddings have brought the philosophy of humanism into the lives of thousands of ordinary men and women, and as our numbers swell and our ability to campaign increases, our voice will grow louder. We now carry out more legal weddings than the Roman Catholic Church and on current figures we will overtake the Protestant Church of Scotland by 2015.

Neil Anderson is a Registered Humanist Celebrant -Humanist Society Scotland and President of European Humanist Professionals.

HALEA IDENTIFIES LAND

To ensure a sustainable and strong organisation Halea has identified land in Nabbingo Masaka - Road. A Fundraising Campaign is on to raise \$10,000 to buy this land by December 2015 Support us.



TEENS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLATFORM-OPEN TALK MAGAZINE:

SHOULD CORPORAL PUNISHMENTS BE ABOLISHED? TEENS HAVE THEIR SAY.

WE ARE AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, HERE IS WHY.

Ankunda Daisy, S.6: Bright Way Hill School Bukesa



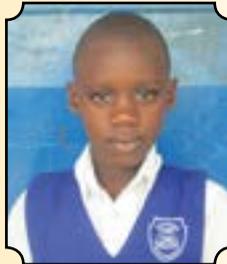
Corporal punishments are a form of punishment that involves inflicting pain on another person in most cases, a person regarded as a criminal. It is mainly takes the form of caning, burning, maiming, subjecting the victim to hard labour among others. It is normally occurs at home, institutions like the schools, police and army.

Corporal punishment violates an individual's human right that is a right to life. As per the constitution of the republic of Uganda, article 22 states that; each citizen has a right to be treated with dignity. No one has a right to torture another's life. Corporal punishment is bad because it does not give one a chance to reform for the offence committed, because if he or she thinks of reforming he/she thinks of how he or she was punished and will become accustomed to such beatings and will thus continue with the bad behaviours.

It shows total unforgiveness to a student subjected to such a punishment yet from the Christian point of view the bible urges; Christians to forgive one another. What is absurd is that corporal punishment exists in religious schools and is done by religious oriented teachers! And if we talk about practicing Christian values, then we should follow the biblical teaching and embrace the greatest command of loving your neighbour with all your heart therefore it should be abolished.

Nanyonga Rukia, P.7 Children's Corner Junior School.

Corporal punishments should be abolished in schools because teachers normally give such punishments to pupils they discriminate against, teachers generally punish students and pupils they consider undisciplined and underperforming pupils' hence promoting segregation in schools.



Corporal punishments are forms of children's rights abuse according to the children's act and the constitution of Uganda and therefore whoever that punishes a pupil in such a way is liable of being taken to court and imprisonment.

They lead to school dropouts because many students and pupils cannot manage to stay in an environment where they are treated harshly or mistreated hence tarnishing their future.

Kitara Louis: P.7 Children's Corner Junior School.



Corporal punishments at times lead to death of the victim (student) in case he/ she is sick prior to punishing or in case punishment is administered

on a delicate part like head, chest and back and therefore should be abolished in schools. Corporal punishments lead to hatred between the students and teachers, parents and teachers which may result into bad performance at school.

Furthermore, corporal punishments lead to imprisonment of teachers most especially if it resulted into the death, unconsciousness or harming of the student which is a loss to both the school and pupils/ students.

ADONG JOEL- Bright Way Hill School Bukesa

Corporal punishments make children to lose respect in front of their peers and thus may affect their performance in class as they always fear to speak up and hence lose self esteem. Corporal punishment may lead to lameness or the victim being crippled in case the victim is hurt and wounded terribly and some parts like the bones are injured.



Corporal punishment is a situation where students/pupils are given heavy punishments in schools, homes and society. The punishment tends to be heavier than the crime committed hence massive suffering and torturing of children at school and at home.

Corporal punishment includes canes, burning, and all other forms that lead to pain and the hurting of the human body.

Corporal punishments such as burning of the body parts leads to death, scars on the body, loss of some body parts since they are burnt, other parts become less functioning for example when some fingers are burnt, they will not still function well as they had been hence causing disfunctioning of the child's body.

It affects the children's attention in class during lessons if a teacher is fond of giving heavy punishments the moment he/she enters the class to teach, the child will start thinking that again the teacher is going to punish them hence disorganising their capacity towards learning.

Corporal punishment can also lead to hatred of the education process and thus leading to school drop outs. For example during my primary education in a certain school, one of my friends was caught in a mistake he was given a harsh punishment of digging the whole garden but instead he decided to end his education there and then.

RELIGION: HAS RELIGION DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

NAME: Mukundane Bright Bariyo
Grace Fellowship High School



Religion is a strong divine belief that one holds towards faith and what one believes in. In Uganda we have got various

religions for example, Christians who believe in God, Muslims who believe in Allah and others have their divine belief in traditional gods for example Muwanga, Mukasa among others.

These gods are commonly worshipped amongst Baganda in Uganda but are as well as worshipped in other African societies though named differently. Though Christianity and Islam were introduced by foreigners because the Africans were with their traditional religions (African Traditional Religion/ATR) and they would worship their ancestors. The Christian religion was introduced by the Europeans not only to know God but they were also aiming at also softening their hearts so that they could take over their land and other property and thus colonizing African states.

To a large extent, religion has done more harm than good. Politically, economically, socially, and spiritually as shown here: Religion encourages inequality, discrimination and segregation. In most churches, they take rich people to be above others, people are shifted from their front seats to leave them for the rich since they earn highly and give in more to the church than the poor ones. And this is contrary to the biblical teachings.

In this modern era, religious leaders are participating in inhuman practices to obtain riches and wealth and this is unholy/ungodly since it involves sacrificing peoples' lives, for example it is alleged that pastors like Robert Kayanja, Samuel Kakande are devil worshippers and that they obtained their wealth that way. Astonishingly these are great preachers and an ordinary person can get carried away due to their preaching and this later turns into idol worshipping.

Religion leads to unplanned pregnancies to young girls as these girls are impregnated by church leaders together with their followers like pastors, bishops among others. In many church services, church leaders develop lust for their church members while pretending to be praying to the Almighty Lord.

Religion causes scarcity of resources like land, Churches and mosques are built and developed on large pieces of land and on which that land can be used for economic activities. For example, industrialization and other human activities that encourage the improvement of people in their standards of living or which can provide man the ability to satisfy his needs. In addition to the above, pastors usually say "if you give to God, you will be rewarded with twice what you have given in". With that promise, the poor man gives in almost all what he has hoping that he will get more from God and in the end results to aggravated poverty.

Religions cause family break ups, in situations where some partners go away for several weeks and months to preach the gospel and

due to mans' nature of weakness it prompts them to cheat on their spouses to sexually satisfy themselves.

In addition to that above, without any single grain of doubt, some women are weak vessels with the empirical evidence that at times when they go for church conferences and seminars, they tend to get into sexual acts with their church leaders and this has increased immorality in society. On the other hand, religion has positive impacts on society as shown below;

Religion gives hope to Christians, for example hope for eternal life, and this is due to the biblical teaching that, *for God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone that believes in him shall not die but have eternal life. John 3:16*

It encourages unity among people for example on many occasions, various people from different tribes, religions, colours and region, come together to praise and worship God. For example annually every 3rd June in Uganda, people gather and converge at Namugongo martyrs shrine to pay their respects to those who died for their religion. So religion is also credited for the spirit of unity and togetherness.

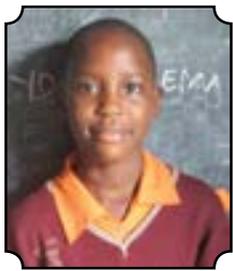
Religion has helped many people in their growth and development like students, orphans among others, religious leaders have taken care of them especially in orphanages where most of them stay with them and they afford to take them to school and provide them with scholastic materials.

An eye for an eye was discouraged

even, the bible talks about it and it does this by emphasizing forgiveness, hope, obeying God's commandants and trusting in God while following the bible. With that the Africans, their hearts were softened and that manages to explain how the foreigners managed to exploit the Africans. In conclusion, one should always be alert and aware of religion and work in relation to it for a better society for all of us to live in harmony and enjoy God's work.

TEENS TAKE ON RELIGION. RELIGION HAS DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD

TEDDY MUZAKI : PRIMARY FIVE-Grace Primary School



Yes , religion has done more harm than good as shown below: When these people go to pray, they are asked for money in order

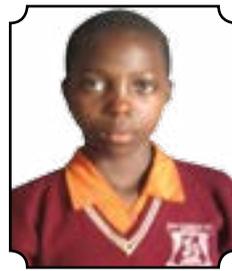
to pray for them and this shows how religion is a business, getting money even from the poor to pray for them and this makes them poorer.

Some religious leaders like pastors take over other people's partners and marry them and sometimes just use them to attain their pleasures and desire, with the view that 'God has sent me to you, so you should obey the wish of God!'

Some people go to church and instead of focusing and praying to God, they start buying pictures, sculptures and other items which they take back home and begin praying to and praising and this is idol worship which is bad.

RELIGION HAS DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

ESTHER PROMISE, P.5: GRACE FELLOWSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL



I definitely agree with the topic because of the following views;

Some pastors ask for money to pray for you, which has resulted into theft and death because the poor who do not have money will have to steal so that they can get money to take to the pastors and in the process, some are killed.

People kill their friends because of religions for example the attacks on the staff of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in France where people were murdered because of printing a cartoon of Mohammed which is supported by religious books.

Religion is not only the one brought by Europeans or Arabs but also witchcraft is a religion where the witch doctors ask for money and other sacrifices like children, body parts to give you blessings and wealth which have increased the number of cases of child sacrifice, orphans and wide spread of superstitious behaviour. I am only lucky to have escaped the knife of a witch doctor, it was by the grace of God that I survived a sacrifice and I strongly condemn people who believe in witchcraft and the related gods. **(Editor: Esther's Story is also produced in this very issue of the magazine.)**

RELIGION HAS DONE BOTH GOOD AND BAD, HERE IS MY ASSESSMENT.

Auma Zalika Debra: Bright Way Hill School Bukesa

Religion is what one attaches himself to and believes in and entrusts his faith to. It creates

some differences among people due to some debates that are always carried out by the Moslems and Christians about who is the real God and whose God is supreme, hence causing more harm than good.

Religion brings about family neglect where by some people tend to concentrate on religion, sleep in churches leaving their families missing that parental love. And at times go for weekly seminars and conferences and with this they stay away from home.

Furthermore, religion promotes discrimination, where by the Muslims tend to discriminate the



non Muslims, where by Christians are called infidels, pagans and even still Muslims women are not allowed to

marry non Muslims.

It brings up a lot of confusion among people. For example Moslems over read the Quran and end up miss understanding it and causing confusion among the Moslems. Hence it has done more harm than good.

However, religion has also done great things as seen below:

Religion stabilises marriage among married couples for example the Christians who believe and follow the commandments and live up to the bible standards do not commit adultery, love one another and with that marriages are stabilised. We should also remember that Catholicism does not allow divorce but look at the countries where God is not respected, people divorce as many times as they

want and this affects children's wellbeing and many women have no better chance of getting remarried than men!

Religion has promoted peace in the country where by some people engage in church activities and spend most of their time reciting prayers instead of participating in crimes. Religion teaches good morals among people which brings about a good moral generation in the nation hence causing good more than harm. The bad thing is that people who hate religion even go to church and kill those who are praying!

It promotes unity among the people because they know what they believe in, which is one God, they have faith in him and rally around him.

In conclusion religion has done more harm than good since it brings about difference , neglect of education , time consuming ,family neglect among others and it has led to more harm than good.

I STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT RELIGION HAS DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD. Here Is Why- Nakityo Hasifah: 11 Years ; Grace Fellowship Primary School



Most children have got chances of education through religion for example

some religions have constructed schools and universities like Grace Fellowship Primary and High School constructed by Pastor Kyasooka and I am a beneficiary of such church generosity, St. Marys Kisubi, St. Charles Lwanga and

UCU constructed by the Catholics and Protestants, UIU constructed by the Muslims and many others. Some religions have also introduced medical facilities e.g. hospitals and dispensaries such as Nsambya Hospital, Rubaga Hospital, The Seventh Day Adventist Medical Centre near our school in Makerere Kivulu and many others.

Religion has also helped to reduce immorality by discouraging sex before marriage, the use of condoms, use of vulgar language and respect for the elders. Religion creates friendship amongst people mostly if they are of the same denomination that is why we refer to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, I wonder what none believers refer to themselves?

FREEDOM OF PRESS: THE PRESS SHOULD BE FREE FROM GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP, DO YOU AGREE?

Kabalangira Alice,S.6: Grace Fellowship High School



Press in other words is mass media. Press or mass media are channels

through which information can be disseminated to the public. For example television stations, radio stations, newspapers and internet. On a large extent I agree that the press should be free from the government censorship as analyzed below.

First and foremost when the press is regulated by government, it will not give authentic news on Televisions, Radios and internet because it won't give the true facts on the government and its dealings , many facts will be

hidden from the citizens.

For education and enlightenment purposes on different issues such as politics, through the mass media, people have been sensitized about many issues of the world. But when the press is left at the mercy of government it will limit some issues and it will affect some people who would be good politicians of the country.

The press can be used for spiritual development watching the religious programs, pastors who teach the word of God, and this develops the spirits of many people. But when the government regulates it, preachers or pastors will fear to speak what happens in the government. So the press should not be regulated by government.

However; on a small extent the press should be subjected to government intervention or should not be free from the government because of the following arguments: Social interaction, through the internet, television the public people are able to watch foot ball match at any time. This is because the government has promoted the network in the country and too much time is spent on betting and watching English Premiership which bad for the economy as people do not give much time to serious work.

Conclusively, regardless of the above weaknesses, indeed the press should be free from the government censorship but also should take partial control as it exposes bad acts like corruption, embezzlement of public funds, that will reduce on crime rate thus having peace and stability in the country. To this end, I thank HA-LEA for promoting critical thinking in our school and for giving us a platform to speak our views.

TEENS TAKE ON ABORTION: ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGALIZED. DO YOU AGREE?



Nagawa Joan:
Kampala Students' Centre, S.4

Abortion is the removal of the foetus (unborn child) from the mother's womb. It is mostly done by young girls (below 18 years) and younger women. Abortion should be legalised according to the following views:

I believe that girls who do abortion don't do it out of liking it but it's the situation which forces them to do so. When a girl is forced into sex, rape or defiled by someone she doesn't know and it results into pregnancy yet she is carrying a baby, still in school and still under her parents care, she is caught in the middle, wondering whether to become a young and helpless mother or continue with studies and attain the set goals of life and so she has to abort so as to continue with her studies.

In some cases girls are tricked by the boyfriend's to drink alcohol so that they take advantage of them, and when they are drunk, they have unprotected sex with them and which may result into pregnancy when even the boyfriend cannot take care of the girl with the baby and the only solution is to abort.

I believe that some girls do not intend to have sex but most girls in courtship while with their partners their sexual desires tend to increase and to some extent it is inevitable especially when they are only two people in the room and this may result into sex thus unwanted

pregnancy and since both parties are not ready this will result into abortion.

Since some parents fear to talk about sex with their children and it is also not done in schools, some girls lack the knowledge about sex and they end up having unprotected sex since they want to show love and affection to their partners which results into pregnancy when they are not ready to take care of the child or responsibility thus abortion. In some cases, some girls are defiled/raped by their relatives for example their uncles, fathers and get them pregnant in the process they are forced to abort to keep the relationship secret and remain with respect in the family.

In some cases young girls and women may lack knowledge about the family planning methods which would prevent pregnancy thus the need for abortion since they are not ready to take up the responsibility.

ANGUCIA GILLIAN: S.4 ; KAMPALA STUDENTS CENTRE

I AGREE THAT ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGALIZED. HERE IS WHY:

First of all, abortion is the illegal removal of foetus or unborn baby within first trimester and second trimester. In my view, I would support the legalization of abortion because of the following views;

Many girls do illegal abortion due to the fear of their parents, like when you are at university and engage in sexual intercourse with your boyfriend and get pregnant since you want to remain with your parents funding for your education,

abortion becomes necessary.

Like when I get pregnant and the man says that he is not ready to be a father and I come from a poor background yet even my parents are so strict, I will not have any other alternative apart from aborting the baby although it's bad. God said help yourself and I will help you, knock the door will be opened, seek you will find, ask and it will be given to you, so I have to help myself by aborting.

I know there are many ways of preventing unwanted pregnancy but there are also so many conditions which can force one to get pregnant for example rape whereby you may not even know the father of the child hence aborting to avoid producing a fatherless child or child that reminds you of trauma.

Abortion should be legalized because it creates employment opportunities for doctors most especially those with the skills of carrying out safe abortion hence reducing on the unemployment rate in the country.

Many girls in schools have boyfriends and lovers but unfortunately cannot count their safe days, in case of sexual intercourse with their boyfriends in unsafe days, they may end up pregnant. With the essence of not wanting to loose their education, abortion becomes a better option which should be protected through its legalization.

The girl or woman who is pregnant may be too sick that in case she goes further to keep the pregnancy or deliver the baby, she will lose her life and therefore the best option

would be safe abortion to save the life of the mother. This normally happens when the mother's womb (uterus) is too weak to carry the foetus/baby for 9 months. I should say, I speak from a little experienced being a young mother myself who has been able to have an opportunity to go back to school, thanks to HALEA for providing such a wonderful platform.

**NALUMBUGU KEZIAH : S.4 17 YEARS; KAMPALA STUDENTS CENTRE
ABORTION SHOULD NOT BE LEGALIZED: HERE IS WHY.**

Abortion should not be legalized because abortion is a crime whereby mothers kill innocent babies who may be tomorrow's presidents,



ministers, lawyers and many others

Abortion should not be legalized because it causes dangers and according to the

law of Uganda, abortion is illegal whereby a girl or a woman who is pregnant must deliver the child but not to abort the child. The law only accepts miscarriage and the death of the baby but not abortion.

Abortion causes problems like death, barrenness, cervical cancer, fistula and many other diseases that are a result of unsafe abortion. It is said that when a woman aborts, she has 50% chances of becoming barren or contracting cervical cancer.

A woman who aborts may end up losing both life and the baby and that is why professional doctors who do the job of abortion do it secretly because it is illegal when the government gets to know that a certain doctor is providing abortion

services to people, the doctor may end up in jail and his/ her license revoked and if he/she has been working for the government, he/she will be banned from working as a medical practitioner for 7 years and or above depending on the gravity of the offence.

Whereas I am aware of some advantages of abortion such as abortion being good in case it's done to give a girl child a second chance to continue with studies in case she is still very young and not ready to be a mother. In case the girl or woman is raped by her biological father or a relative, abortion is the best option because we cannot allow producing babies as a result of incest. This has some sense in it but I am a Christian and should remain so.

Many others have suggested that abortion can also be acceptable in case the girl was raped and the parents do not know who the father of the baby will be; I still believe it is the wrong path to take in a country that puts God first, remember, our motto is *For God and My Country*.

Sometimes school girls who usually abort babies may have curses according to religion because a baby is innocent and abortion means breaking one of the Ten Commandments that were given to Moses of "Do not kill".

The government always advises parents who have children to advise them when they get pregnant and the dangers of abortion such that they might not engage into relationships when they are still in school because these relationships may lead to problems like being a mother at early stages, school dropout and the boy will just run away because he knows he is going to be arrested and he will not be able

to take care of you and your baby that's why many boyfriends once they are told that a girl is pregnant, the first suggestion is always: let us remove the baby hence abortion which may result into death.

Sometimes girls are given a chance to go back to school when they have given birth although others do not get that chance. In my school, I have seen HALEA and the leadership of our school giving opportunity to young mothers to go back to school but I am sure many girls still miss out because there is no one to support them. Many parents hate their children after giving birth to other children because they cannot afford the expenses. This may be because of poverty, parents who do not value education much especially to a young mother and unwillingness of the young mothers themselves to go back to school since they consider themselves mature enough and cannot fit in a classroom with 'young ones'.

There have been several attempts to reduce teenage pregnancies, HALEA has been at it for years and debates and parents meetings have helped us to know how to go about several issues. Teachers especially female teachers always counsel girls to avoid unwanted pregnancies and stay away from sex that may result into a lot of un-predetermined troubles.

The government also encourages people who do not want unwanted pregnancies to use condoms, pills, coils, injector plan, and to also visit health centers to get more information about family planning to avoid problems of abortion, although many students do not use them, they are better methods to forego abortion.

It is upon the above elucidation that I still argue that abortion shouldn't be legalized because it destroys God's image according to religion because we were all created in God's image. It is destroying human-ship of God and relationship between God and humanity. I am a religious person, I will not agree with anyone who promotes abortion because it leads to death of an innocent soul. As a person, I do not agree with abortion because it may lead to many problems including loss of life and it is only God who should give and take a life not a human beings. That is my stand.

**NAMBALIRWA MONICA AGNES:
S.4 18 YEARS; KAMPALA STUDENTS
CENTRE
ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGALIZED;
HERE IS MY ASSESSEMENT.**

Abortion can be defined as the process of removing an undeveloped baby or foetus from the mother's womb by either an approved medical



personnel or by using medicine. This practice can either be bad or good depending on the situation at hand as

elaborated in the views below;

I would like to start with the good things which can come out of abortion. It enables the student to continue with studies: Some girls get pregnant when they do not want and as a result end up aborting so that they may have the chance to continue with their studies. This is also influenced by parents who tell them during growth that in case of any pregnancy, that will be the end of their education.

In case a girl gets an unwanted pregnancy from either strangers or biological parent through rape, the teenager has the right to abort because producing that baby may keep reminding her of the rape incident and ruining the whole of her life, most teenagers do not have the capacity to deliver on their own and in case delivering may lead to the mother's death, abortion should be practiced.

Poverty: Most families in Uganda are poor such that the mother may not be in position to look after the born baby by providing the necessary basic needs in case the husband ran away, died or refused to take responsibility. This causes a teenager to abort due to lack of enough money to look after the pregnancy and the baby.

Making their dreams come true. Most teenagers abort because they want to achieve their goals which they set at a tender age. Most of them get unplanned pregnancies as a result of rape, sex from sugar daddies and boys who provide basic needs. Some do look for school fees but in the end they are raped or kidnapped by drug users or strangers which may deter them from pursuing their goals in case they accept to give birth. Abortion is a better alternative because it will enable the girls to stay in school.

Health complications: In case the pregnant girl or woman has health complications for example in case delivery of the baby would lead to her death, not being able to conceive again, it would be better for her to abort so as to save her life as she is more valuable than the unborn baby.

Uncontrolled bleeding: When a teenager gets pregnant, she

does not know how to take care of the pregnancy for example making physical exercises and drinking herbal medicine to soften their bones. This leads to body complications which can result into uncontrolled bleeding at the time of birth hence abortion being a better alternative for them.

I would like to look at the other side where the legalization of abortion would be a disgrace.

Misery and rejection by the family: Abortion leads to one's rejection in the family because it is considered to be a satanic act involving committing murder. Most families do reject their daughters who practice abortion because the whole family is considered a murderer that is laughed at in the community.

Loss of prestige: Some Christian families do not allow aborting because they want to gain prestige from the public, some Christian families and friends. This can be strongly emphasized by the religious leaders.

It is not accepted by the laws of the bible; God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and it is the seventh commandment where it says that do not kill. Some teenagers say that a foetus is not a baby but forgetting that a baby comes from that same foetus hence a foetus is a person not worth killing.

It causes infertility due to the continuous swallowing of drugs by the mothers to abort; this causes infertility among many women .

I conclude by saying that abortion should be legalized because the good things that result from its legalization are more than the bad things.

SHOULD SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS? TEENS SAY YES.

TUHAMYE MALLOW: S.4 18 YEARS; KAMPALA STUDENTS CENTRE
HERE IS WHY I SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF SEX EDUCATION SHOULD IN SCHOOLS



Sex education has done well in schools so it must be taught because of the following reasons;

Sex education has helped people to promote their personal hygiene, which helps people from getting diseases as a result of poor hygiene. Sex education also helps teenagers to know the functions of the body parts and how to maintain them to prevent them from contracting diseases.

Secondly, sex education should be taught in schools because students learn how to use better methods of protecting against diseases, like use of condoms which protects them from getting unwanted pregnancies and STDs for example AIDS. It also helps in controlling sexual emotions because sex education teaches how to control sex emotions whereby someone who is not enlightened on sex cannot do so.

Sex education also should be taught in school because it helps adolescents to teach their own children in the future which helps them to know where they are heading in their future life of relationships and sex. Sex education has also helped girls in taking control of their monthly periods; sex education helps

female students to know their time of menstruation which helps them to manage.

Sex education should be taught in school because some parents fear to speak with their children about sex and so it should be taught in school, because without sex education, the children's lives are in danger like getting unwanted pregnancies and diseases which may result into death.

Sex education also should be taught in school, because it teaches students how to associate with each other like how boys should associate with girls which helps them to control their sexual emotions.

Through sex education, people get to know how to treat sexual diseases because they are taught sex issues which saves people from death and diseases.

MWESIGE ARAFAT: FORM 4 - 17 YEARS; KAMPALA STUDENTS CENTRE
SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS , HERE IS WHY:



According to the title, I would suggest that sex education is taught in schools because of the following

views;

Sex education has led to more good than harm because without sex education, there will be an increase of unwanted pregnancies mostly in secondary schools. Sex education will lead

to more abstinence because the counsellors who will be teaching the students will mostly tell them to abstain from early sex until they get married. Sex education also will decrease the number of students who drop out of schools where by some students drop out of school because they fear to be bullied or scorned by their fellow students.

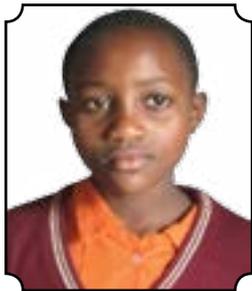
Sex education has promoted good family planning skills to the young people (youths) where it is taught in schools, it has also led to the new generation catching up with the latest information on relationships best practices. Sex education should be taught in schools because some students grow up in divorced families whereby their parents do not get time to talk to them; if sex education is brought in schools it will help both the student and the parents.

Sex education also helps mature students to know more about how they can safeguard themselves because it's sometimes hard to tell mature students mostly in secondary schools to abstain or to use condoms so it may be good if sex education was taught in schools so that the mature students' also get to know how they can protect or safeguard themselves.

Also if sex education is introduced in schools, it will be spread to future generations because some students will also start teaching their young ones at home so that by the time they are mature, they

will know what is wrong and bad. I conclude by saying that sex education should be taught in schools because the students are the generation of tomorrow.

NAKAVUMA JULIET; PRIMARY FIVE: GRACE FELLOWSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL
I AGREE, SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS.



I agree that Sex education should be taught in schools because of the following views;

Many girls in secondary do not know when they can get pregnant: they even do not know what they can do to avoid pregnancies. I have seen some girls who are twelve or thirteen years getting pregnant and dropping out of schools. Many do not reach primary seven as I have because they got pregnant and had to dropout.

It is important that children in schools are taught about sex education as well as sexuality so that they differentiate between required sex and sex misuse because it's the major cause of death and pregnancy.

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 which young girls get post-delivery of babies because of not being ready for pregnancy hence

the call for sex education so that young girls are protected from the scourge through teachings.

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.

YES I AGREE: SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS.
NAHYUHA ESTHER DAPHINE: S.4 19 YEARS: KAMPALA STUDENTS CENTRE



Yes, I agree because of the following views;

Sex education should be taught in schools

because it helps teenage girls to know the days they can get pregnant (unsafe days). This is so important to the girl child because it can help them prevent unwanted pregnancies if they engage in sexual intercourse only in their safe days.

Youth learn how to protect themselves when in relationships. This is where teenagers (boys and girls) are in courtship with each other and if sex education is introduced in schools, it will guide them on what to do in relationships and how to live a healthy relationship, so sex education should be taught in schools.

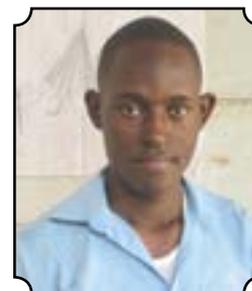
Sex Education encourages youth to be contented, confident and strong in whatever they do because they will be in know of the advantages and disadvantages of sex when still young and not yet married. Therefore Sex education should be taught in schools

because it enables them (youth) to do things from an informed point of view.

Youth get to know the ages at which they start to have physical and nonphysical body changes for example the growth of pubic hair, development of breasts, softening of the voice in girls, menstruation and deepening of the voice in boys so that they prepare accordingly. Sex education helps the students to know the age when someone starts behaving in an adolescent way and if it is not taught in schools, the youth will not know what adolescence means.

Sex education teaches about how to avoid some diseases like AIDS. So sex education should be taught in schools. I conclude by saying that sex education should be taught in schools.

Mwesigwa Arafat: Kampala Students Centre, S.4
HERE IS WHY I SUPPORT SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.



It widens the knowledge of students for example on how take care of themselves because during this sex education

lessons some topics about our bodies will be taught and how to keep them and use them.

Helps to develop our career in future through teaching and developing of knowledge and skill on sex education for example the 'ssenga' duties where by it is all about sex practice and education, of which they offer services and earn a living.

STRANGE BUT TRUE!



Nude biking: A group of cyclist taking part in the event as they travelled through Canterbury.

Nigerian Pastor makes congregation strip

By This Is Africa on May 26, 2015 — Another bizarre incident involving the man of cloth has gripped South Africa once again. A controversial Pastor of the End Times Disciples Ministries in Soshanguve, Prophet Penuel Tshepo made headlines earlier in the week for allegedly using eccentric methods to make members of his congregation strip and stepped on some of them as he preached.



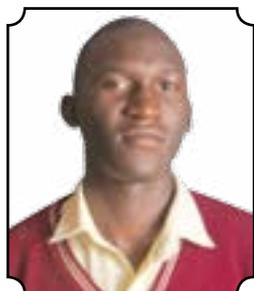
The most unbelievable was the one which showed one of the pastors allegedly jumping on members of the congregation, captioned “Total Demonstration of God’s Power “No Pain felt in them, meaning God is with us. To God be the Glory.” A baffling caption which seems to imply that the congregants felt no pain when they were being jumped and stepped on because ‘God’ was with them.



HALEA'S ONE LIFE EDUTAINMENT PERFORMING

SSENKUBUGE DRAVIN: GRACE FELLOWSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL; P.7

YES I AGREE; SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS.

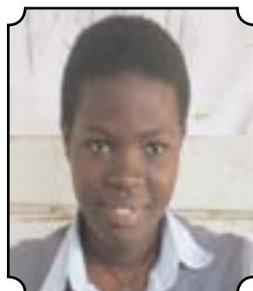


I agree because most parents do not take time to teach their children about sex, parents fear to talk about sex with their children. They say "how will the children look at me when I am talking to them about sex?" The parents do think that they are ordering their children to practice sex by mere showing them the pros and cons of sexual practices and how they can prepare for it.

I propose that sex education should be taught in schools because it helps the parent and the child to prepare accordingly and protect themselves from the repercussions of early and unplanned sex, for example a child can protect him or herself from the dangers related to sex when he or she has been told about it.

A parent can never protect his or her child against sex emotions because they are natural but a child can protect him or herself in case he/she has been taught about sex. Thus, dear parents, do not fear allowing us to learn about sex, it is good because it creates awareness and saves lives, surely you want us alive to serve you and country, so let schools empower us with knowledge that matters to us more, sex education is the way to go.

Busiro Lillian: Kampala Students' Centre; S.4, 18 years



I have no hesitation in supporting the teaching of sex education. Due to the fact that students need to know how their bodies change and how to control their bodies against sexual feelings and satisfaction and that is a very good reason for sex education to be taught in schools,

Some busy parents don't get time for their children to counsel them and guide them on matters concerning sex so teachers are the best and responsible people to fill in this vacuum and teach students about sex.

Most students may fall into traps which may destroy the future for example unwanted pregnancies and sexually Transmitted Diseases because they are not aware of sex and its dangers of having it before marriage.

Students get to know how use condoms and using contraceptives for protection if you can't abstain. And this helps to reduce early teenage pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (condoms). I have had a chance to study with young mothers and I know how they struggle to accomplish their dreams and if there was no support of organisations such as HALEA and good and accommodating schools such as Kampala Students Centre, these young mothers would not be able to go back to school, so,

please give us sex education tips to avoid getting pregnant while at school, it is very important.

My thanks again goes to HALEA for helping us as students to have a chance to express our views and the challenges we are facing as teenagers on sex matters, in seminars we are given advice and guidelines and even most of our questions and queries may be answered. This is very helpful, thanks to you HALEA and all the partners, you have empowered us over the years, we are grateful for helping us keep in school especially while studying in slum environment where drop out would be terrible, go ahead with sex education, it is vital to us, sex education counts.

Namulindwa Immaculate: Grace Fellowship Primary School



Why say that sex education is immoral? Sex is part of human life, sex education helps children in school to add value to their lives and maintain their virginity, for they will be taught the essence of keeping their virginity. We are keeping our virginity because we know the dangers of early sex yet those who are sexually active still know what to do to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, why then should anyone say, sex education is not religious? Does religion has to work against the safety and wellbeing of the individual? Or should be led to believe that parents and teachers do not want to see their children and students successful?

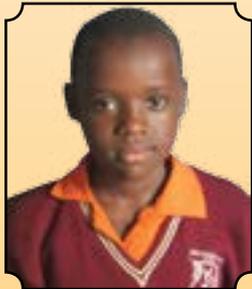
Parents usually tell us that sex is bad a practice but they never tell us why is it a bad practice. I have seen so many children getting pregnant at 12 or 13 years and they drop out of school but why? Simply because they don't know the consequences of having sex that means they were not told and taught about sex. Please let us avoid leaving good because of excuses, give us more of sex education and we shall complete our studies successfully and help in building our motherland, Uganda.

NO. I DISAGREE; SEX EDUCATION SHOULD NOT BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL.

NANTEZA PRAISE; PRIMARY FIVE: GRACE FELLOWSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

No! And I mean a big No because of the following views;

Sex education leads to unwanted pregnancy in schools. You may find a girl in P.3 who wants to



practice sex because she is very eager to know what it is all about and in the end she ends up getting

pregnant.

Sex education leads to school dropouts because a girl and a boy can practice sex because the teacher taught them about that thing which leads to school dropout. Sex education leads to child abuse and early marriage because a girl will get into sex practices with older men by virtue of knowing what it's all about meaning the girl will suffer during

marriage.

Sex education leads to diseases when they go into sex intercourse and I am convinced that teaching sex education promotes a feeling among the youth to desire having sex since they are assured of protection yet many will not always use such protection.

Ampangana Junior Kampala Students' Centre, S.4

The only bad thing is that we keep on pretending that prostitutes are bad people. This is not true, they are people like us, beautiful



women who earn their living differently from the rest of us. In my view, prostitutes

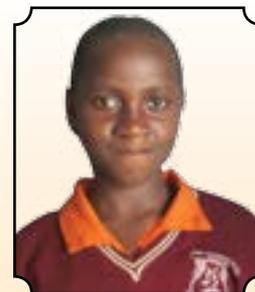
chose to make money while having fun and making men with lots of sex appetite have a way of satisfying their sex desires.

Prostitution provides money to the people who are practicing it because they get money after playing sex and with that money they are able to attain themselves the basic needs of life. Besides, who does not sex, now just imagine a man who is starved and badly wants to have sex and to avoid defiling minors, prostitutes come in to provide a service. Again, it is purely for enjoyment purpose whereby some women do sex work for the reason of enjoying because some women and men can never get satisfied sexually and this is due to addiction to sex and we all basically know that addiction is a

difficulty battle to fight, so let us not pretend, prostitutes can be a blessing to many people and prostitution should be legalised, many countries have done so, why are we so backward, let us move on.

Khainza Flavia: Grace Fellowship Primary School, P.6, 12 years

I am young and I know little about sex but I know that some people make money out of prostitution. It should be legalised because some



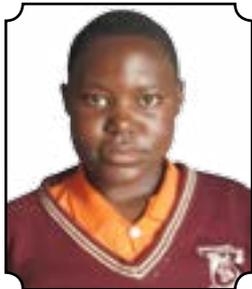
mothers are looking for school fees for their children. Just look around our slum in Kivulu and you

will see many single mothers with many children. Their husbands are either dead or abandoned them yet these mothers need to feed their children, pay rent, pay school fees and many are into prostitution to keep the dreams of their children, why then should I say that prostitution is totally bad? There are many people benefiting from prostitution. Due to poverty and early pregnancies, when a young mother does not have money to take care of the baby she can go for prostitution to get money to take care of the baby. Some mothers have very many children to take care of. Please let us not condemn prostitutes, we need to respect and support them instead.

TEENS' VIEWS ON PROSTITUTION AND GAMBLING.

NO, PROSTITUTION SHOULD NEVER BE LEGALISED:

Namuyiga Annet : Grace Fellowship Primary School, P.6



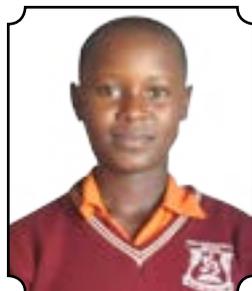
Well, I have many of my friends supporting prostitution because of the so called many benefits they say come

from it. Let me assure you that as a Christian, it is evil to sell your body to earn a living, you are immoral, dirty and unacceptable before your true God. You are a very bad example to the young ones and you are responsible for the immorality in our nation. The government was not blind to make prostitution illegal because it is too bad, how can a woman be proud of sleeping around, having sex with so many men all with their own challenges and disease, this means that the image of God is lowered, women are treated as sex objects and this will never be allowed in the eyes of God, I will never agree with anyone supporting such immorality.

If it is about jobs and survival, women should find better jobs, be empowered to learn practical skills such as weaving, tailoring, craft making etc instead of thinking that having too much sex will solve your financial problems. It should not be legalised because children will copy what prostitutes are doing, children staying near prostitutes learn abusive words, it can lead to drug abuse when they are fighting shyly, and they become addicts to sex. To those who support sex education, keep the bad views to your selves, not every activity is good to humanity, prostitution is a very bad practice in all aspects. Be very ashamed for supporting it. You cannot be on God's side when you support such evil to continue happening in our society.

TUSABE ROSE ; AGE: 14 ; CLASS: PRIMARY SIX

GRACE FELLOWSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL



G a m b l i n g is another evil which the bible condemns. Gambling has caused many dangerous things like; when you play

cards for money and if it happens that you lose, you start arguing, fighting and at times the end result is killing one another and that is why I do not support gambling.

And betting is also the same as gambling whereby it can cause poverty where some people end up giving in what they have at home and that is home property and with the thinking of getting more money and of which it is just a blessing to get today and loose out tomorrow.

NAKAYENGA SARAH, PRIMARY 7: GRACE FELLOWSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL



Yes, it should be banned because of the following reasons;

T h e f t :
G a m b l i n g leads to theft in that many

gamblers do not want to work and only depend on gambling as a source of income. In case one doesn't win or earn from the gamble, he or she will end up stealing other people's property so that he or she can survive, take care of the family and get money to use for betting.

Death: Gambling sometimes results into death for example if someone bets a lot of money on a team and that team loses the game, he or she can develop heart attack, pressure and diabetes which result

into death. Some gamblers end up fighting because of not wanting to let go of property which leads to deaths.

Illiteracy: Many gamblers initially were illiterate because they did not see the essence of education as they would get money from the gambling hence encouraging many school girls and boys to practice gambling. These children could leave school before time because they wanted to go for gambling and in case they got money from it, which would be the end of studies.

Indiscipline: Gamblers are a hub of indiscipline acts like speaking vulgar words, smoking marijuana, rape cases and defilement which come as a result of idleness and unemployment that can easily be learnt by the young ones who normally visit the gambling arenas.

ATUGONZA SAM BASHIRU; AGE: 15 CLASS: PRIMARY SIX



Why support gambling to keep in our society. Gambling is too bad because it destroys someone's life, when

a person starts gambling, his life gets destroyed because you give in money and when it runs out, you start giving in your property with the thinking of replacing it and yet you can lose it all in one instant, and at times it leads to family break ups where by some partners do not want the habit due to the negative effects of it like poverty.

Because some people gamble with their school fees and end up losing and after fail to pay and borrow money which they still fail to pay and go and look for jobs and they cannot manage and are asked to steal in order to pay back and later at times are asked to kill.

African Development: Is Kicking Out Christianity And Islam the Answer? By Leo Igwe



Shona witch doctor from Zimbabwe
Hans Hillewaert @Wikipedia

I state right away that I do not think so. And why do I think kicking out Christianity and Islam is not the answer to development in Africa?

I understand clearly the sentiments of those who would want Christianity and Islam kicked out of Africa. Yea, that sounds exciting. Isn't it? Definitely this is a proposition in good faith, a well-meaning desire to get Africa back on its feet, not kneeling or prostrating while other regions are standing. Christianity and Islam should be thrown out, some people argue, so that Africans would have peace, development, progress name them. But I think those making this proposal might be overlooking certain things. They may be under some form of illusion.

Surely, given what is going on in the world today, it is in order to dismantle the infrastructure of Christianity and Islam. Of course the brainwashing that is going on in Africa is massive. The damage which religious – Christian and Islamic- indoctrination is doing to

Africans is colossal. The savage acts of fanatics is mind boggling. The African youth capital is being depleted by religious extremism and other mistrusted other worldly ideologies. Religious fundamentalism is destroying the continent slowly.

But my concern is this, as impractical as the idea seems, kicking Christianity and Islam out of Africa is not the only solution and may not be the panacea for all Africa's ills. This is mainly because there is more to the damage in the region than what Christianity and Islam have done and are doing.

Now if we are to kick the Christian and Mohammedan religions out of Africa, we still have at least another religion to contend with – the African Traditional Religion which has some mind-and morality-numbing superstitions like Christianity and Islam. I said at least another religion because there are other foreign or home-grown faiths and spiritual systems out there, apart from these three faiths which are, competing for space and place in the African religious market.

But let us say, we will have mainly the traditional religion and deities to deal with, that is enough trouble still and I do not think, the region and its people will be

better off with African deities and religion taking over the religious space. Why?

Africa will face serious troubles and challenges similar to what it is confronting now. There will be sectarian and theological disputes. We have many tradition based-atrocious practices like witch hunting, ritual killing, albino murders, human sacrifice to deal with. Will kicking Christianity and Islam out of Africa stop these harmful traditional practices? I guess it may worsen the situation because throwing out these Abrahamic religions would create a vacuum which many might interpret as an opportunity to valorize traditional beliefs. I do not think African religion would be a unifying factor at all because it has never been. Actually there is nothing like 'African religion', what we have is African religions because what constitutes 'African (Traditional) religion' differs from country to country, from community to community sometimes from family to family, so also are African gods or deities. We may actually see Africa descend into religious chaos and anarchy as many countries did after independence. Africans may likely be divided more by African religions than has been the case with Christianity and Islam. The traditional deities which Africans worship are legion. There are thousands if not tens of thousands of them. And Africans seem not to have agreed on which ones are true or false. In fact due to the influence of Christianity and

Islam in Africa, many Africans no longer reckon with these deities. They regard them as false gods or idols. So kicking Christianity and Islam out of Africa may not lead to Africans embracing traditional religions and gods. I guess what could happen if we were to kick Christianity and Islam out of Africa, is that another fight might ensue among African god believers, that is the fight to determine which African god is superior, which version of African religion is 'true religion'; which African god is more or most powerful, which African religion is from god; which god is the true god, which African god is still alive; which African god is the supreme God. Yes I foresee a situation of "African gods at war", or better African religions at war. Think about what happened in aftermath of independence, many African countries went to war against the other. It will not be different to what could happen to African deities and religions if Christianity and Islam are kicked out of the region.

And that is where the division and conflict would start. So, I do not see how 'African religions' would unite Africans. I do not see how worshiping African deities will bring peace and harmony to the region. If there is anything that unites a people it is their relationship with human beings not with local deities; it is reality not revelation, science not superstition, thinking not blind faith. It is fact not fiction, the habit of reason and questioning, not dogma. It is the virtue of courage, not the fear of imaginary beings. It is openness to new ideas, not close mindedness. I think Christianity, Islam and other religions should not be kicked

out because such an endeavor is not consistent with the ideals of a free and open society. All religions and deities – local and foreign – are welcome to the African table of free inquiry and critical examination.

Christianity, Islam and other dogmatic faiths would fade away at some point just like other religions which human beings have created if they cannot withstand critical scrutiny. That is how they would kick themselves out. The god of Christianity – Jesus- and the god of Islam – Allah- would become useless and unappealing at least to most people and then would slowly disappear like other deities which human beings once worshiped and later abandoned.

Instead of thinking about how to kick out Christianity or Islam, Africans should begin to question and critically evaluate all religious claims. They should focus their energies on tearing away the veil of dogma that shields Christianity and Islam from critical evaluation and free inquiry. Africans should be exploring to know if these Abra-

hamic 'emperors' have any clothes at all. The people of Africa should start breaking the taboo against apostasy and blasphemy and start tasting the forbidden fruit of atheism and free thought.

Africans should embark on the process of ascertaining whether Christianity and Islam are still relevant and can serve as meaningful guides for 21st century humans. The problem in Africa is not Christianity or Islam per se but the dogmatic attitude of Africans towards these cultural myths and superstitious systems. The problem is in the habit of blind belief and reverence by Africans – Christians, Muslims or Traditionalists, in their reluctance to seek evidence for religious claims and the fear to question supernatural postulations; in the lack of rational and critical will to express doubts openly and publicly – and in the inability to freely examine spiritual phenomena. The future of Africa rests not on kicking Christianity and Islam out of the region but on Africans rediscovering the values of intellectual awakening and enlightenment.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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LESSONS FROM WARREN BUFFET

Warren Buffet is one of the richest men in the world. He is a man whose life and ways are interesting. Worth more than 70 billion dollars, Warren Buffet lives a very simple life despite his wealth.

Warren Buffet runs a media conglomerate and has also been the subject of various writers and authors. He has been referred to as the greatest investor in history and many investors have modelled their investment ways around Buffet's approach to investment.

In a newly published book 'The Great Minds of Investing' which was authored by William Green and centred on 33 famous investors, Warren Buffet takes up prime space in the book. Reading about him in the book gives one life lessons to learn and some of these are outlined here:

The Power of Love:

In the book Warren Buffet speaks about one of the greatest attributes for his success and it is the love he got from his father while growing up. He says his father nurtured in him a sense of confidence by believing in his son. His dad Howard Buffet was a US congressman and encouraged him to do his best in whatever task he took up or pursued.

It's Not All About The Money

According to Buffet, though he accrues financial rewards from his labor, he says he just loves doing what he does and that loving what

he does is the most important thing and not the money. Indeed, Buffet's aspiration is to give out two thirds of his money to charity before he dies. He is already doing so through the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

He says he has no use for all the money he has and is still making but that it's society that has a use for it. Despite having so much money, Warren Buffet doesn't live a luxurious life. He still lives in the house he bought for 31,000 dollars in 1958. He says life would be so uncomfortable for him if he owned and had to live in say eight houses of homes.

Do your own Self Appraisal

In 2008 two gentlemen paid 650,000 dollars to have a lunch out with Warren Buffet. One of the gentlemen Spier from Switzerland later wrote a personal memoir and he recalled the meeting. He however wrote that what he remembers from that meeting is Warren Buffet telling them that the best person to gauge someone's performance is oneself.

Buffet asked them, "Would you prefer to be considered the best lover in the world and know privately that you're the worst—or would you prefer to know privately that you're the best lover in the world, but be considered the worst?"

According to Spier, Buffet cared little about what other people thought of him but more of how he saw and judged himself.

Seek Friends and Acquaintances

Who Are Better Than You

Another memorable piece of advice Spier and his friend got from Buffet was to hang out with people who are better than you. Buffet was known for speaking about how much the people around us influence our lives. According to Buffet, if you hang out with people who behave worse than you, you pretty soon start behaving like them.

Control Your Time

According to Buffet, someone has got to manage his or her time meticulously. Buffet said his friend Bill Gates is very precise with time and that he keeps a calendar that has maniacal entries such as 6:47 Shower and 6:57 Shave.

Buffet says he organises his time in such a way that he remains with a lot of time for reading and thinking without distraction.

Buffet never allows people to interrupt him and said that you can't control your time unless you learn to say no to people when it's required.

A Reputation Built Over Twenty Years Is Ruined in Five Minutes.

According to Buffet, people who keep being successful every year are people of deep integrity. Tom Gayner who is President of Markel Corp said that he had been greatly influenced by Buffet's emphasis on telling the truth.

Buffet maintained that a reputation built over deceit, lies,

INTERVIEW:

bullying and intimidation soon unravels and falls apart.

Sticking Within Your Circles of Competence

Warren Buffet is testament to doing what one is able to do and leaving what one can't do to those who can. With the amounts of money he has, he could have started a charity or foundation of his own but he chose to channel his donations through Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

Buffet always puts emphasis on knowing what you understand and what you don't understand. According to Buffet, it's not terribly important how big the circle is. But it's terribly important that you know where the perimeter is.

Fore Seeing Problems Doesn't Count, Preparing Solutions Does.

The future is profoundly uncertain and as such one has to prepare for future hazards. According to Buffet, 'predicting rain doesn't count, building arks does.'

The More Love You Give The More Love You Get

The trouble with love is that you can't buy it. You can buy sex. You can buy testimonial dinners. You can buy pamphlets that say how wonderful you are. But the only way to get love is to be lovable.

Buffet said that 'If you get to my age in life and nobody thinks well of you, I don't care how big your bank account is, your life is a disaster'.

INTERVIEW:

KATO MUKASA: GOD AND gods DO NOT EXIST IN REALITY, THEY ONLY EXIST IN YOUR MIND AND ONLY WHEN YOU ALLOW THEM TO.



Kato Mukasa is the founding Chair of the Humanist Association for Leadership Equity and Accountability (HALEA) and its outgoing Executive Director. He is the Chair for the African Working Group of the International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organization (UK) and Acting Chair of the Uganda Humanist Association (UHASSO). He is a Director at the Atheist Alliance International (USA) and a Director at Pearl Vocational Training College (Uganda). He is a trained Lawyer and Economist whose specialization is in Commercial

interview:

OTM: Kato Mukasa, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed at length for OTM. May we start by getting to know more about you, many of your readers do not know your origin, history, family and how you ended up being what you are today- one of the leading Freethinkers in Uganda and possibly in Africa?

Kato: I am an African born in

Law. He is a Human Rights Activist and Defender, a Poet and Author of several works. Open Talk Magazine's Special Features Editor, Joseph Lukyamuzi linked up with him for this

Uganda in 1978. I am lucky to have been born a twin, the youngest of the two boys and my twin brother, a lawyer and founder member of HALEA - is also alive and actively involved in Human rights work with Uganda's Legal Aid Project. My Mum is a retired nurse and my father an accountant. Again I am lucky to belong to a family with siblings and relatives that are well educated, I am talking of a family with five lawyers, several social workers, teachers, accountants and journalists. So, I am deeply grateful to my parents and grandparents who took education of both the girl and boy child serious in a time when education was never taken seriously.

OTM: How did you become a Humanist and an Atheist? Is this part of your family philosophy? Did your schooling contribute to this? Or it is purely accidental?

Kato: Good question there. My father is somewhat secular

INTERVIEW:

(though he goes to church but has a secular outlook to life and he is very critical and balanced thinker) but my mother is deeply religious. I am an atheist with humanist values. Majority of my siblings and relatives are deeply religious and I am sure they do not approve of my Humanism and atheism stance but have nothing to do. I am sure they have tried a million prayers to convert me and failed. My father is a great lover of books so we had a big library at home where several books of Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Chinua Achebe, Alechi Amadi, Wole Soyinka and several other thinkers were stocked. I read some of those books as a child trying to learn about the world and I was surprised to read critical views challenging the gods and the God dogma. Then the major influence came from my grandfather, John Bbasi who never went to church, criticized it greatly and made us go to the garden on Sunday. He opened an entirely new world of critical thought and I learnt a great deal of things every holiday I went to stay with him. Thus as a young boy of 12, my grandfather made a huge impact on my critical thinking abilities and sowed the final seeds of scepticism, doubt and critical inquiry into my young brain and I never looked back. I strictly went to very religious schools and I was a student leader who always doubted the truth in what many men and women of the bible preached to us. The rest of this story is documented in my yet to be released book but the bottom line is that I am not a humanist and atheist leader by accident, I have been one for so many years and it is now too late, nothing can make me religious though I must

hastily add that I am not at war with religious folks, I love them, respect them and work with them, they are part of my life.

OTM: What is wrong with religion, why is it that you are critical of and why do you think your philosophy is the best way forward?

Kato: Religious doctrines are premised on falsehood, lies, and fertile imaginations. They hate real science and dwell on theories that can never be logically explained. They create a culture of dictatorship, no room for debate, free inquiry and doubt. Who tells you that there is a book that can never be criticized, analyzed and proven factual or false? Who wants me to believe that whatever is written in the Bible and Koran is the real truth, which yardstick can you use to make me believe in such crap? If someone tells you that Jesus was born by a virgin mother, walked on water, served thousands with a loaf of bread you can never be allowed to ask a question. You are instead expected to say AMEN. For them, you must believe without evidence, without proof and I am not as dumb as that, I have no faith in such wild imaginations, I ask questions, I want to reason things out and I do not follow things like a sheep. My fight with religious dogma is its ability to make people dull, to intoxicate people with fear- unfounded fear- to make people fear the imagined unknown. Just imagine a people fearing an imagined heaven and hell and you will find a professor of science parroting the same stories about God, heaven and hell and all the related lies. Religious doctrines and senseless preaching

have made millions of people poor and thousands of religious leaders and pretenders billionaires. Just imagine the number of people in Africa selling their assets to give money to money making pastors and church leaders! Just think of the many wars fought on religious grounds and the millions of people that have perished in the name of religion? I have seen families discriminating their daughters or sons for marrying a person from a different religion. I know of siblings hating each other because one converted to another religion! Look at the madness in the Middle East and see how Muslims butcher non-Muslims and their crime being that they do not believe in Allah! Read about Bangladesh today and you will know that atheist bloggers – harmless folks with pens- are lynched on streets and a religiously influenced leadership does nothing practical to stop the killings! So what is wrong with religion? My answer is: It makes its victims dull, unreasonable, poor, lazy and violent. Think about this too: Africa is the most religious but the most poor and backward! Now make the mathematics and get what I am talking about. Europe is far ahead because it has more people with liberated minds, they do not need to be professed atheists or humanists but they have millions of people who are able to think for themselves each day, this is not the case in Africa and the Middle East. What is the cause of the problem? Following religious dogmas without critically thinking through them, doing whatever your preacher says without asking questions! And what can we do to stop such a negative trend? Encourage more people to ask questions, think through what

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they believe in and encourage them to think for themselves. You have one life, it does not belong to the Imam, Pastor, Reverend or Father, it is your only life after all so be in charge. Religion makes people hate to think deeply and humanism, atheism and free thought exactly offers that.

OTM: So to you, it appears everything about faith, religion and God is false. Do you believe in the existence of God and supernatural powers?

Kato: Who says everything about religion is false? I enjoy reading the poetry version in the bible; they can be very educative and inspiring. As an entrepreneurship trainer, there are several stories in the bible that can be quoted to inspire people to do good and better themselves but sadly, religious folks do not use them in the way they ought to be used. I enjoy modern gospel music more than any music produced in Uganda. It is very soothing, lovely with the best sweet vocals you can imagine. I have gone through religious schools and I attained the best education they could offer though I was lucky to reject the indoctrination they parroted. I respect religious institutions that empower the vulnerable and the poor. But for sure I know that God does not really exist in a certain location somewhere as believers want us believe. But if you asked me about God, I can tell you God exist only in your weak mind, he exists because you programmed him in your brain to exist and he keeps on existing in your mind at your mercy, once you empower your mind, you have the power

to expel God and all the gods from your mind and there will be no more God and gods in your personal life. So God and the so called supernatural powers do exist because you have allowed them to, take courage and expel them, they will exist no more. I am lucky, I live a life free from God, Allah and all other millions of Gods and gods in the world. In a word, I am Godless and Happy.

OTM: How did HALEA start, do you have any achievements to talk about?

Kato: I got to know about organized Humanism and Atheism in 1999 while at Makerere University in the Philosophy classes. I got to know about Uganda Humanist Association (UHASSO) by accident in 2004, there was a news article about Humanists Conference promoting homosexuality and when I read, I discovered that UHASSO was the umbrella organization of humanists and freethinkers in Uganda. So I got interested and started looking for them, the rest is history. In 2007, I teamed up with some of my brothers and sisters and friends and we started HALEA. I did explain to HALEA's founder members almost every detail about humanism and why we needed to team up, get registered and do some good. We were well compelled to fight the so many retrogressive religious and cultural beliefs in our community especially in slum areas, hundreds of teens were being forced into early marriages, getting pregnant and falling out of school and many abused drugs. We had several objectives but keeping teens in school within Kampala's slums

was our first priority. We have achieved that since over 80% of teens in slum areas can now stay in a school.

OTM: How did you achieve this?

Kato: It has been all about dedication. We had to offer our assets like computers, tables and chairs to start an office. I remember dedicating a container initially used for my personal business to offer HALEA space for an office and indeed many founder members made huge sacrifices. We contributed whatever we could to ensure a functional office; some of us had to be full time without pay to ensure that the HALEA baby takes off. Along the way, we got HAMU, our Norwegian friends and partners who made us realize that our dreams could be achieved. Words may not describe how much we are indebted to the people of Norway and HAMU for keeping our dreams alive, for enabling us empower thousands of teens in Kampala slums, for reducing the hitherto escalating cases of teenage pregnancies in slums, for controlling crime rate in slums, for giving young people a platform to speak up and share their views on sex, sexuality, religion and all issues that could not be initially discussed in public and for enabling us take young mothers back in school, for paying our staff and for enabling us do our work professionally. I am grateful to my friend Mr. Gunnar Olfesen for all the dedication and support given to HALEA throughout the years. Then we later got support from IHEU to organize the Open Talk Debates which put us more in the public eye and ofcourse we

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later got support from CFI, and AAI among others. We achieved the results we show today because we have been supported by lots of individuals and organizations within and beyond Uganda, it has not been a miracle, it has been team work. We believe in results and you helped us achieve them.

OTM: You appear to have achieved a lot in empowering teens in slums, what are your next targets?

Kato: We are not shifting our focus from the empowerment of teens altogether but we are rather scaling down on the activities we have been doing in slum areas having realized that many schools can now conduct secular, critical debates without our direct intervention. I am happy to report that the Ministry of education made debates a compulsory school activity. Many schools now produce their own magazines and give teens a platform to speak out freely and indeed the number of teenager pregnancies have fallen sharply in slum schools than it was when we started in 2008. We shall continue empowering a few young mothers to continue going back to school and we are now finding ways of enabling several young mothers obtain vocational skills having realized that many hate going back to formal schools, they instead want to learn a skill they would use to earn a living and vocational training schools are their best interest. As HALEA we want to seek ways of addressing such a need. We are shifting our focus to concentrate more in shaping public policy and laws on issues that affect several other people such as the LGBTI

Community, the Prostitutes, the Albinos, Women, Children and the so called witches. We are going to engage Parliament and all Opinion leaders in ensuring that laws are fair to all and of course we want to see the introduction of Humanist Marriages that are legally acceptable in Uganda and I am sure they will be the first of their kind in Africa if we dare to realize this dream. We want to introduce Humanist Ceremonies such as Baby naming, secular funerals and other related ceremonies and in effect make Uganda a secular nation it ought to be. We want to see a practical separation of religion and state. This is going to require lots of support from our partners and friends all over the world. It is going to involve lobbying all stakeholders, sticking out our necks and speaking up and making the nation see sense where they cannot see it. It going to be massive work, we need lots of practical support and we shall try our level best to seek it.

OTM: What have been the major challenges in running HALEA?

Kato: Lots of people are poor and need lots of material support which we could not offer. As Humanists, we do not offer prayers, we offer practical solutions to existing challenges and this can be financially costing. We are talking of thousands of people here and we could only offer material support to a few hundreds each year. This left many of us hurting inside having failed to help all. There are some young mothers who come to me every day wanting us to enable them go back to school, learn a

vocational skill and we could not help them live their dream. We have been contributing money as HALEA members to purchase a piece of land but whatever little we collected ended up helping the needy teens but still we could not solve the needs of all the teens in our reach! Of course we attracted haters and our offices were attacked and we were robbed literally clean. We have had to start all over again. I have been personally attacked at home and my car burnt by haters and I guess my crime is having different views than those of my haters. Indeed some members of HALEA have gone through lots of difficulties and I know of some who decided to abandon HALEA because their relations branded them agents of the devil etc. Be as it may, the problems have been many and I have no guarantee that they will stop soon but what I know is that HALEA has committed friends and supporters all over the world. Organizations such as HAMU, BHA, CFI and AAI have always practically encouraged us to remain strong and several individuals have kept us from strength to strength and we have no shade of doubt, we shall continue achieving our dreams, win our battles if we remain working as a team and our supporters continue to be on our side.

OTM: Have you abandoned HALEA's land project and securing HALEA's Own Premises?

Kato: The dream is on and we shall realize it. We have managed to finally save over seven million Uganda shillings but we need more than twenty seven million

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shillings to secure a good piece of land within Kampala. So we are appealing to all our friends and associates and partners including IHEU, CFI, HAMU, AAI and all others well-wishers to join us in this fundraising drive to secure an already earmarked piece of land that will enable HALEA out live its founders. We have only 4 months (Up to December 15 2015) to raise Thirty three million Uganda shillings (\$ 10,000) or else we lose the earmarked piece of land so it is our humble appeal to all to join hands with HALEA to secure this land. We plan to build our offices as well as rentals that will enable HALEA be self-sustaining in years to come.

OTM: You told HALEA's 2014 Annual General Assembly in 2014 that you were stepping down from the post of Executive Director of HALEA, What led you to such a decision and what are your plans?

Kato: I helped start HALEA and I want it to grow from strength to strength. A good leader should know when to exit and how to give room for growth within the organization or company he serves. I am doing exactly that. I want to take on more challenging roles and give my team mates a chance to get more challenged. I wanted to play a more passive role but my colleagues insisted that I play another role, which I accepted. I will be the Director Legal Services and Humanist Ceremonies. This suits well with my legal profession which I want to pursue more practically. Whereas I want to go handle cases in court and do some legal lecturing at various universities

and colleges, I still want to be part of HALEA in engaging Parliament and other stakeholders in making fair laws, in ensuring that state and church practically separate, in ensuring the introduction of humanist ceremonies and marriages in Uganda and later in Africa. I still want to be part of a team that will realize that dream that is why I have accepted to take on a new challenge as Director Legal Services and Humanist Ceremonies.

OTM: You helped in the starting of another humanist organization, Pearl Vocational Training College with a team that are called Pearl Humanists, what is this about and how will it partner with HALEA and other freethinkers?

Kato: I come from a village called Nakatooke somewhere in Lwengo district part of the greater Masaka district. My village is just eight kilometres from Masaka town, and visibly accessible thus far from what you may call a remote village. I did contest to become member of Parliament for Bukoto South Constituency in 2011 and this gave me a chance to visit over 200 villages one after another. I saw great despair, disillusionment, poverty, unemployment, exploitation and backwardness among my people. It was disgusting, pathetic, and terrible. I saw a bunch of youth, women and adults who will vote any person having bought for them just a matchbox and a bar of soap! I saw a lot of people who could not reason things out, a people who were unemployable because they lack even the basic skills. I found girls married at 13 years to men old

enough to be their grandfathers, young mothers who wanted to learn a skill and earn own income. I found out that there were a several secondary and primary schools but no vocational training centre to impact skills. Even those who went through formal education remained unskilled just like their peers who never went to school. I learnt that over 85% of our people's income is generated by subsistence farming, 47% of our water sources are unclean and at least one Kilometre away from homes while only 30% percent own any means of transport which is a bicycle. The rate of household deaths due to HIV AIDS is 4% with two in Seven Households reporting at least one death from AIDS. I found several child headed households, noted high rates of child mortality and maternal related deaths so high than what is happening in Kampala slums. I was shocked and very sad seeing our rural folks living in such bad conditions with no hope of a better life. I thought something practical would be done to improve lives of the people in the rural areas. After the elections, I sat with my family to discuss the way forward. I declared that I was out of elective politics but wanted to do something to empower our rural folks and I sought the support of my family first and offered my house as a starting point. My family was entirely supportive, my father offered more land and my siblings offered logistical support. That was in 2011 and in four year's time, we have managed to put up five classrooms and schooling has started. I did contact HALEA board members with this proposal in 2014 and shared it during our General Assembly and all supported it. HALEA agreed

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to team up with Pearl Vocational Training College with the aim of empowering some of the young mothers in Kampala's slums who have always come to us in need of vocational skills. Through HALEA, we are calling for their financial support to enable them join Pearl Vocational Training College and learn a skill within a year. We need to offer accommodation, feeding, health care and practical studies that will change their lives for the better. More importantly, we need to pay trainers to do a good job. We are offering 1 year courses in Tailoring and Fashion Designing, Brick laying and Construction, Cosmetology and Hair Dressing, Art and Craft Engineering, Bridal, Decorations and Events Management and Catering.

We have started community empowerment projects in piggery, tree planting, wine making, diary farming and vegetable growing at a very small scale. We simply want our people to learn from one another and be inspired to develop themselves and empower each other out of poverty. We also offer Functional Adult Literacy to men and women who missed the opportunity to learn how to read and write. In the near future, we intend to expand and start courses in Nursing, Nursery Teaching, Carpentry, Motor Vehicle repairing, Electrical installation, We have realized that many of our people are too poor to even afford the basic costs at Pearl yet they need our services and have shown lots of desire to be part of it. Thus we have decided to change strategy and seek both local and international support from friends and well-wishers to help us empower hundreds of rural people one village at

a time. If you want to learn more about Pearl, visit: <https://pearlvocationaltrainingcollege.wordpress.com/>. We are appealing for volunteers all over the world to come to Uganda, work with us, stay with the rural folks, learn from them as they learn from you and gain a whole new experience about life while at the same time giving your skills to a people that most need them. The other important thing is that Pearl Vocational Training College will partner with HALEA and foreign partners to initiate the training of Humanist Celebrants and the advancement of Humanist Ceremonies in Uganda and Africa and as a Pearl Director, I need to tell you that we want to make a first Humanist University out of it, this is one of our long term dream.

OTM: It sounds to be a great initiative. What is your philosophy, how will you handle non believers and how will you promote free thought to a people that are deeply religious?

Kato: Our Education Philosophy is simple: We teach our students how to ask vital questions, we teach them to respect the scientific method. We are not at war with Allah, God or the gods so we do not teach them to reject Allah, gods or God but we enable them to understand how religion works without pressurizing them to adopt a non-religious stance for themselves. We encourage open and critical thinking and unfettered explanation of ideas without forcing dogma on our learners. We believe that by encouraging them to think and reason, the practical skills they learn within and beyond

the classroom will enable them live better and help more and thus become a people helping people and as they wonder more, they will live better and help more.

Our ultimate goal is to motivate and empower all students to achieve their personal best, to become inquiring, critical, knowledgeable, lifelong learners and self-reliant individuals striving to create a peaceful world through the application of science and reason. We strive to give hope to the discouraged people, to turn problems and challenges into opportunities and milestones, to create practical blessings where they seem absent and to empower one village at a time. We want to provide evidence based education through skills that promote critical thinking, innovativeness and self-reliance. We do believe and sincerely hope that Pearl Vocational Training College has the potential to one day become the first Humanist University in Uganda.

OTM: You are very hardworking and registering lots of success, what motivates you? Any people who inspire you?

Kato: The desire to live a positive legacy when I am long gone motivates me. I need to be remembered for the good I offered to the world and I need to do my best every day as if it is the last day I have on earth. I have one life so I want to make it purposeful. I hurt seeing many disadvantaged people around me when I can do a little something to empower them out of trouble. I at least can talk to a friend to offer some support and why not do that than simply



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ignoring others in great need and instead keep on lamenting about our challenges? I am inspired by the thoughts I shared with my late grandfather, John Bbasi, I am inspired by the committed team at HALEA, I am inspired by several humanist achievers globally and more so, I am inspired by very hard working people like Josh Kutchusky, and young humanist leaders and achievers such as my friend Andrew Copson. I was greatly inspired by the by the Human Socieity Scotland that had achieved a lot of success in a few years' time. Of course there are several other humanists that inspire me such as my brothers, Bob Churchill, Norm Allen and Leo Igwe among many others. I feel I should try to do just a quarter of what these great humanists have done and hopefully I will.

OTM: As the African Chair under IHEYO, what have you achieved so far?

It is almost a year when I took over office. I have been able to reignite humanist groups in several countries in Africa. Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda and Burundi and some of the examples. We have been able to organize humanist conferences and trainings and we are yet to do more. There is lots of positive signs that Africa will eventually move into the real enlightenment age where people will start reasoning for themselves and not through pastors, Imams and other promoters of the religious dogmas. I am happy to report that we also have very strong young women atheist and Humanist leaders coming up in Africa, Rosyln Mould of Ghana is such a good example and I am inspired to have

such a great team to work with.

OTM: You talked about Humanist Funerals and Marriages, would you love to have one and how?

Kato: Good one there. I will start with a humanist marriage. I am not married yet though I have children. The reason is simple, I am still hopeful that we shall have humanist marriages in Uganda soon. I have the option of traditional and civil marriages but I am not yet in a rush to have them, they should only come as a last resort. So you can see the need to push for humanist marriages, there are several individuals like me who are stranded and would embrace a humanist marriage.

On Humanist funerals, I have made it known that I want one for myself. I know some of my people may try to be smart and pretend that I was a Christian but I wish all to know that I was not and I demand to be buried in a secular way. I do not expect prayers at my funeral for I never prayed, why pray for me when I am gone? I want to have good inspiring music, people need not cry, they need to design means of moving forward, helping the orphans and taking the projects and the unfinished dreams of the late deceased forward. There should be few well calculated speeches and good will messages that will inspire the living. I enjoyed seeing humanist funerals in England and Scotland and I want exactly that. I want people to listen to the music I much loved, interestingly some if it is Christian Music but I have embarked on a project of composing humanist music purposely for funerals and

hopefully, we shall have such music in a few years' time. Mind you I am not in a hurry to die, so I am more hopeful that I will be in position to train enough people to do humanist funerals. Should I have an abrupt death in these prime years, I have at least given a guide to what I expect a humanist funeral to be, so humanist should never allow my family to take such advantaged, am happy I have already shared this with them and I am happy I will go into my grave a happy person.

OTM: At the OTM, we wish you lots of good luck and we are positive your dream will be a success. What final message do you have for our readers?

Kato: The best thing ever to have happened in my lifetime is finding organized humanism and atheism. I would have died a very sad and lonely person if I did not discover that people with similar intentions and thoughts existed. Humanists are the most peaceful, loving and purpose driven people, I only wished every person in the world was a Free thinker! I have lived my life full cycle since 2004, I have had hope that the world can be bettered if we only tried. I have found joy in living a Godless life. I try every other day to enable people find the joy in knowing the sweetness in Free thought, the fruits of living a liberated life, living a life without fearing the imaginary wraths of the gods, Gods and supernatural beings; doing good without expecting a reward from God or going to heaven etc. My final message is simple: Dare to reason and always do good.

