

I

My Formative Years

ON DECEMBER 8, 1931, I WAS BORN to Ms. Maria Nosianta Nakalyango Terugwa Mukulu-Abula-Awawe and Mr. Erika Kapere. My father named me “Senyonjo,” an Egret (Nyonyi-Nyange) clan name from Buganda in Uganda. In Buganda, clans, which are extended ancestral family lineages, are critical identifiers. Each clan is symbolized by a totem, normally an animal, bird, fish, or other object which is considered sacred and inedible for clan members. Each of the clans has a set of male and female names that are exclusive to it. Before one courts a love interest, one must know the beloved’s clan, for clan members are considered brothers and sisters. Thus clan marriages are exogenous; that is, one has to marry from outside his or her clan. Traditionally, one cannot even marry someone from his or her mother’s clan, as that is considered taboo—like marrying your maternal aunt or uncle.

The name “Senyonjo” signifies cleanness, perhaps deriving from the clan’s totem: an egret, an immaculately white bird. I understand that my father chose that name because he valued cleanness and wished that I live a clean life. My father might have given me another name such as “Kyeyune,” which means “follow it up immediately.” He did not. I feel that the name “Senyonjo” has shaped my life as I put “love” first of all other pursuits in the universe. Love is the cleanest concept that I can ever imagine in this life and thereafter.

I was my mother’s firstborn child. Her two other children were my younger siblings: sister, Meresiane, and brother, Langton; respectively four and nine years younger than me.

On the other hand, I was the youngest of my father's three children. I had two elder half-brothers: Ananias Kyeyune and Yokana Senyonga. Although we did not belong to one mother, my brothers and I grew up caring and respecting each other. Ananias and Yokona died leaving no children. I chose to name two of my grandchildren "Kyeyune" and "Senyonga" in memory of my two childless brothers.

My mother was an intelligent and loving disciplinarian who taught me to respect not only my siblings, but all people. She did not tolerate discrimination of any kind. She also served as my home kindergarten teacher.

Before I enrolled in school, my mother had already taught me the alphabet of my mother tongue, Luganda, the native language of the Buganda kingdom that is located within Uganda. While instructing me, my mother tolerated neither laziness nor absent-mindedness. Thanks to her strict discipline, I developed a voracious interest in reading as a way to learn about the world. Even now, at eighty-three, I take great pleasure in reading a wide variety of books and newspapers.

Even though I was a little boy, I vividly remember Mr. Yafesi Lwanga, a road inspector and family friend, suggesting to my mother that I was old enough, at five, to join the local primary school at Sinda. Mr. Lwanga had seen me reading the *Mateka Elementary Book* but observed that I could not write; my mother had neither skill nor implements to enable her to teach me how to write. Aware of her limitations, my mother gladly accepted Mr. Lwanga's suggestion.

I remember my mother as a brave woman. Before the establishment of game reserves, wild animals would sometimes roam villages looking for prey. One day, when I was still a child, a lion attacked my mother's goats, but she made such a hullabaloo—shouting and gesturing—that the lion dropped its prey and fled as villagers rushed to help.

And when I was about five years old, a thug with a machete broke into our home. Instinctively, my seven-year-old nephew,

Wilson Lubuka, and I hid under the bed. My fearless mother somehow managed to grab the man's testicles, squeezing them so hard that the thief fled, writhing in pain. Needless to say, he left his machete behind!

My mother remained a staunch Catholic throughout her life, despite my position as bishop in the Anglican Church. One time, when she came to visit us at Kako, I drove her, along with Joseph, to Kitovu Catholic Cathedral a few miles away for Mass. Joseph fondly related that the nuns at Bishop Adrian Ddungu's residence entertained them well, and that the distinguished bishop personally drove the two of them back to our home in his Volkswagen Beetle.

Near the end of her life, when she was very sick, my mother confided in me that she knew she was about to die. But before I could take her to hospital, she asked of me one favor: summon a Catholic priest to administer unction to her. I brought the priest as she requested. As I drove her to the hospital in Kampala, she told me that she was only going for my sake, as she did not want me to live with any regrets. The day after her admission at the hospital, she died peacefully at the age of seventy-five.

My father was a hardworking man. He spoke fluent English, a rare skill in Uganda at the time. This fluency served him well when he served as a chef to the British colonial governor at Entebbe. I remember him fondly calling me "Nyonjo," short for Senyonjo.

One day, during my childhood, when I was weak with pneumonia, my heel accidentally got stuck in my father's bicycle spokes as he transported me for treatment. The spokes chewed a chunk off my heel. Fortunately the bicycle stopped before the spokes could pierce my right leg. By God's grace, I healed without getting tetanus.

When I was ten, a length of sticky sharp grass got stuck on my arm as I played; it left a permanent cross-shaped scar. In my fertile imagination, I often wonder if that was a sign that God would call me to follow Christ's example to bear the cross in God's service.

My father took a keen interest in my studies: whenever I returned from school, he would ask me to narrate what I had

learned that day; in turn I would eagerly recite Bible, hygiene, English, and arithmetic lessons to him. He was proud of my excellent academic performance, but he felt compelled to move me to another school due to other parents' envious remarks. He considered it ominous when they suggested that he should contribute a lion's share to the school's maintenance as I was purportedly the "pillar" of the school—he feared that jealous parents could harm me and perhaps even endanger my life.

Out of caution, my father asked his relative, Mr. Douglas Kyeyune, a teacher at Bukomero Primary School, to enroll me at his school. In 1942, at ten years old, I left home and went to stay with Mr. Kyeyune. I found him to be smart, kind, quick-witted, and a very good footballer. In 1943, Mr. Kyeyune and I moved when he was transferred from Bukomero Primary School to Nsangi Primary School. While at Nsangi, Mr. Kyeyune married his fiancée, Ms. Miriam Nabutto, who became like a mother to me. In fact, she was so kind and caring that I endeavored to please her at all costs.

Mrs. Kyeyune is today still fond of telling stories about me. For instance, she recalls that one day, I was asked to slaughter a chicken for dinner. I was horrified, but I complied under pressure, cutting the chicken's throat with my eyes closed!

She also recounts a time, during her first pregnancy, when she sent me on an errand to buy beef. When I discovered that butcheries in the neighborhood had already depleted their stock, I walked from Nsangi to Nalukolongo town—eight miles each way—to buy the beef as I could not dare disappoint her.

In 1944, Mr. Kyeyune was transferred from Nsangi Primary school to Nakanyonyi Primary School, in Kyaggwe County, and I accompanied him. That same year, in April, a cobra, hanging on a tree branch, spat on my father as he returned home from his farm at Kanzira. At first he did not think much of it, but his face, neck, throat, and chest soon began to swell. He passed away within only two days. Unfortunately, in those days there were no easy means of communication in rural Uganda, thus the news of my father's

death reached us after his burial. I visited his grave soon afterward. I confess to thinking that my family had not made enough effort to reach me before the burial. Not being present for my father's burial left a wound in my heart that has never completely healed.

Following my father's death, my aunt, Yudesi Nanyonga, asked Mr. Kyeyune to let her take care of me. In 1945, I relocated from Nakanyonyi, in Kyaggwe county, to Kitti, in Kyadondo county, to stay with my aunt and her husband, Mr. Bernardo Bamwera. I enrolled in primary five (fifth grade) at Wampewo Primary School, six miles from my aunt's house. To attenuate the distance, my aunt gave me a bicycle to ride to the school. My aunt, an intelligent and business-minded woman, showed me how to prepare banana pancakes, which she encouraged me to sell at school.

While at Wampewo Primary School, I met the late Hannington Kintu, a child from a well-to-do family, who would become a lifelong friend. Hannington and I were grade 5 classmates, even though he was a year older than me. I liked him because he was quiet and gentlemanlike. He was also a clever and hardworking student, so we studied together. Hannington's clan, the leopard, was also my mother's clan. As per Buganda culture, I referred to him as my maternal uncle. Hannington and I became so close that we were like brothers; I often went with him at his invitation to visit his parents in Kamuli. Our families became intertwined.

In 1946, I sat for Primary Leaving Examinations, which qualified me to join Junior Secondary School. The headmaster of Wampewo Primary School, Mr. Yosamu Kijjambu, a smart, disciplined, and father-like figure, worked hard to ensure that his students performed well. As I approached graduation, Mr. Kijjambu encouraged me to apply to King's College Budo, "the Eton of Uganda," for secondary school enrollment. It was a somewhat intimidating prospect, as the school's students were chosen from among the brightest pupils in the country, and many came from well-to-do families. Even if I were lucky enough to be admitted, I wondered how my aunt and I could afford to pay the school's

expensive tuition and fees. Nevertheless, Mr. Kijjambu had great faith in me. He was convinced that my academic performance would pave the way.

When the examination results returned, I was informed that I had done well and had won a scholarship to King's College Budo (KCB). The scholarship would cover all tuition and fees. I thought I was dreaming!! Hannington also performed well and joined me at KCB.

Mr. Ssemugoma, the KCB assistant headmaster, told me that the scholarship would cover my educational expenses as long as I kept up good grades. Fortunately, I managed to maintain good grades throughout my six years at Budo, from 1947 until 1952, when I completed senior secondary school.

I performed well in both the arts and the sciences, but I particularly excelled in the sciences. Biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics fascinated me because they gave me insights into causes and effects of various phenomena. While at Budo, I served as a library monitor, a position which gave me ample opportunity to pursue my hobby of reading astronomy books. I was greatly intrigued by celestial bodies—the planets, stars, comets, and meteors. Astronomy also humbled me as I realized that we humans (and our planet) are relatively minuscule creatures in God's vast universe.

In the arts, I particularly enjoyed history and religious knowledge. In fact, one of my best subject performances at Budo was in Mr. John Barlow's religious knowledge examination, which I passed with a perfect score.

Apart from Mr. Barlow's classes, I also remember Mr. Frank Kalimuzo's history lessons, particularly regarding the evolution of early man; living in caves, using stone tools, and discovering fire. Mr. Kalimuzo, an exciting and captivating teacher, later went for further studies in the United Kingdom at Oxford and at University College of Aberystwyth, where he graduated with an honors degree in economics. He then served in several high-profile civil service positions and later on became a distinguished chancellor

of Makerere University. Sadly, he was murdered by Idi Amin, who suspected him of links with Obote, whom he had served as permanent secretary.

After secondary school, my ambition was to join Makerere University College to study medicine. In 1953, I was admitted to Makerere University's Faculty of Science to do medicine. The prospect of joining the university to study medicine excited me, but I also looked forward to partaking in big city life that Kampala, where the university is located, offered. Unfortunately, I got so swept up in merrymaking that I did not concentrate on my studies. I mistakenly thought that I had plenty of time; I could relax during the first year of medical school and begin serious study in subsequent years, but there would be no subsequent years; I failed and was discontinued.

In 1954, as I reflected about my future, I found a teaching job at Luwule Secondary School (1954–1957), where I taught English, mathematics, and health sciences.

While at Luwule, I fell in love with Jennet Nantale, a beautiful, intelligent girl, who lived with her widowed mother. Jennet and I were both relatively young at twenty and twenty-three years old, respectively. After a relatively short time dating, Jennet came to live with me. Her mother consented, although Jennet and I were not legally married. During the three years that Jennet and I lived together, we had two children: Moses Baluduka Sembusi and Night Nabulime. Unfortunately, in the course of those three years, Jennet and I also frequently clashed due to mutual jealousies and unfounded suspicions. One day, when Jennet returned home at 10 o'clock in the evening after visiting her mother, I accused her of unfaithfulness; predictably, a bad violent fight ensued, resulting in the end of our relationship. I continued to support our two children, whom she kept custody of. Jennet later happily married and bore more children.

In 1958, I was transferred to Seeta Secondary School. That same year, at the age of twenty-seven, I decided to look for someone

to marry. I vowed that this time the marriage would be officially sanctified by the church. I sought God's guidance in the matter. As I seriously pondered marriage, an uncle by the name of Gershom Bifamuntunzi suggested that I visit him in Masaka District. While there he introduced me to several attractive girls. Among them was Ruth Nakanwagi, a beautiful, slender girl from a respectable family. When I saw Ruth, I fell for her. After a period of courtship, Ruth consented to marry me.

In 1959, shortly after Easter, Ruth and I were married at Mis-anvu Anglican Church.

After the wedding, we stayed for one week at Mr. George Mwesezi's home, after which we returned to my house at Kiwugo, in Mukono District. After another week of rest, I returned to my teaching job at Seeta Mwanyangiri College, about three miles from our home.

Ruth, who was full of vigor and life, stayed home. On the third day, after my return to my teaching job, Ruth went to tend to our sweet potato garden. Tragically, a poisonous snake hiding among the leaves bit her leg. On receiving the news, I rushed home in panic. I found Ruth in pain; she confided to me that she was scared.

I rushed her to the nearest medical center at Mukono, but her condition worsened. We transferred her to Mulago Hospital in Kampala, but she died the same day, with me at her bedside. Ruth and I had been married for only seventeen days; the tragedy was almost too much for me to bear.

I am grateful to Dr. Mohammed Kasasa, a friend and classmate at both Budo and Makerere University, who supported me throughout the whole ordeal. He hardly spoke a word, but his presence strengthened me.

Ultimately, only Scripture consoled me:

No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

I had first heard this verse while at King's College Budo when the Rev. Richard Drown, who was our chaplain and Bible studies teacher, read it to us. Its words flashed through my mind at the very moment Ruth was pronounced dead. I understood then that through God's strength I could endure despite Ruth's tragic death.

After Ruth's burial, I returned to teaching at Seeta College. On August 9, 1959, while back at home in Kiwugo, I heard Mr. Edward Nsulo interpret the Gospel according to John (3:3):

Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

On hearing the gospel, and with Mr. Nsulo's encouragement, I understood that salvation was the only means to the kingdom of God. I committed my life to Jesus Christ, and thus began my pilgrimage in the service of the Lord.

Seeking Further Studies

To further my commitment, I independently registered for A-level certificate examinations majoring in divinity, economics, and history.¹ I passed the examinations and was awarded the A-level certificate in 1960. Subsequently, I applied to Buwalasi Theological College in Mbale for the then newly introduced East Africa diploma in theology.

As I considered church ministry, I consulted my good friend, Hannington Kintu. I frankly told him that I was struggling with the idea of embarking on a path to priesthood. He was surprised and skeptical because for all the years he had known me, he had never heard me talk about becoming a minister in the church. But when I told him how God spoke to me at Ruth's deathbed, he

1. This is akin to American students independently studying for the GRE outside of a formal school environment.

wholeheartedly encouraged me to pursue God's call. In addition to Hannington's advice, I also sought my mother's advice. I was particularly concerned that a three-year absence, as I pursued theological studies in distant Mbale, would cause my mother hardship, as I could no longer offer her financial support. To my surprise, my mother categorically told me that she couldn't stand in the way of God: "If God has called you, you must go," she said.

Despite the support and encouragement, I was still full of doubt and trepidation. I knew my weaknesses. As a young boy, my ambition was not to become a minister of the church. Rather, I wanted to be either a medical doctor or a businessman. I felt that ministers were not remunerated well enough for the hard conditions in which they often served. Years later, one of my sons, David Muyanja, decided to study medicine at Makerere University. He is now the head of the Internal Medicine Department at Mengo Hospital, one of the major hospitals in Kampala. I am proud of his accomplishment and I thank God for his call to the medical ministry that had also been my dream.

The admission process to the ordination course required an interview and a recommendation from Canon Wampamba, the rural dean in charge of the Mukono parish church where I was a member. In fact, I was such an active member of the church that I read Scripture lessons to the congregation on Sundays. After screening me, Canon Wampamba recommended me to Bishop Leslie Brown for a final interview.

The bishop and his team that included Archdeacon Waibale asked me, among other questions: "Have you carefully considered the sacrifices that you have to make as a minister in the church?" I responded that I was ready for any eventualities, and that my well-being was in God's hands. On passing the interview, I was admitted into the inaugural diploma course at Buwalasi Theological College.

Even after my admission to Buwalasi, I continued to struggle with my decision to study theology. However, a divine revelation soon changed that: One night, in a particularly vivid dream, I saw

a bright candle burning in front of me. I tried to blow it out, blowing very hard, but the candle would not go out. Out of the blue, a huge mound of soil appeared. I decided to extinguish the stubborn candle by completely burying it in the soil. To my amazement, the candle's flames burst out from it, as if sprinkled with gasoline. I could not put the flames out! I woke up suddenly.

My interpretation of the dream was that I could not put out the flame that God had lit in me; I could not stop God's calling. Only then did I surrender unconditionally to joining the ministry; I enrolled at Buwalasi Theological College (1961–1963).

In 1963, I graduated from Buwalasi with a diploma in theology. I was one of just two students in the class. My colleague, Enos Bagona, was a brilliant man from the Ankole Kingdom of Uganda. As the only two students in the course, Enos and I had the full attention of our teachers; we had to be constantly alert in class! In retrospect, I am grateful for the intense instruction and attention we received because as the pioneer students in Uganda of the East Africa diploma in theology, our success was critical since the two of us paved the way for other highly qualified young men to join church ministry ranks.

While at Buwalasi, I made many friends from other parts of Uganda. There were students from Gulu, Kitgum, Lira, Soroti, Mbale, Sebei, Madi-West Nile, Tororo, and Karamoja. Other than Enos and me, the rest of the students were pursuing a certificate in theology. My leadership skills were first honed at Buwalasi, when I campaigned and got elected "senior student," the equivalent of "head prefect" in other school settings. I served in that capacity for two of my three years at Buwalasi. I tried to be just and caring for all students without discrimination.

It was at Buwalasi that I first got to know the Rev. Janani Luwum, one of the instructors at the college, who greatly impressed me. He patiently guided me in my role as senior student. His guidance was deeply appreciated, as some students were stubborn and prone to violence. The Rev. Luwum struck me as a just, nonprejudiced,

upright man of God. Later, when I became a bishop, I got to work with Janani again when he was enthroned as the archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Rwanda, and Boga-Zaire.

The Rev. Eric Hutchison, another instructor at Buwalasi, had a profound influence on the course of my life. He was like my Gamaliel, the great teacher that Paul talks about in the Acts of the Apostles. Rev. Hutchison's deep and charismatic teaching of the Old Testament, history, and theology transfixed me. His discussion of hubris in the context of the Tower of Babel and of God creating *ex nihilo* (creating out of nothing) deeply fascinated me.

Today, when I reflect on the phenomenon of the Big Bang, I recall Rev. Hutchison's discussion of God creating *ex nihilo*. He also taught us that God loves us with steadfast love (*hesed*), and that we were created in God's own image. Nonetheless, he warned that we should be careful not to make God in our own image. This caution is still pertinent to religious institutions today that imagine themselves infallible embodiments of God's word. God is transcendent—he eludes our imagination and understanding. What we know about God is partial, and only by revelation.

The Rev. Eric Hutchinson would become more than a mentor to me. In due course, we became such good friends that he asked me to be a godparent to one of his children, Mark.

Toward the end of 1963, Enos Bagona and I successfully graduated with our diplomas in theology and were ordained deacons in the Anglican Church of Uganda shortly thereafter.

Toward the end of my second year at Buwalasi, and three years after Ruth's death, I sought marriage again. At the beginning of 1963, Mr. Edward Nsulo and I prayed to God to help me find a suitable partner. This was not an idle matter, because as a minister in the church, I had to search for a young woman who was a firm believer in the living God.

On a mission, Mr. Nsulo and I visited Ndejje Teacher Training College, where I spotted a beautiful girl, whose name was Mary Kyebakola. Not only was she beautiful, but she was also smart and

kind. I fell in love with her at first sight. When I found out that Mary was also a devout Christian, I assiduously courted her. It was not easy to win her affection, but I remembered the English saying: “A faint heart has never won a fair lady!” So I persisted, and ultimately won her love.

Shortly after my graduation from Buwalasi, Mary and I got married at Namirembe Cathedral on December 28, 1963. Two weeks earlier, I had been ordained deacon at the same cathedral.

During our honeymoon, Mary and I visited several places. First, we stayed at Rev. Kezekiya Kalule’s residence in Jungo for one week. We were then hosted by the Rev. Absalom Omojong



Wedding day photograph of Christopher and Mary Senyonjo, on December 28, 1963.

at his home at Buwalasi for a few days. From Buwalasi we proceeded to Limuru and Nairobi in neighboring Kenya. The Hon. Elijah Agar, a member of Kenya's Parliament, and my former classmate at Budo, warmly welcomed us. He gave us a nice tour of Nairobi and of Kenya's parliamentary building. On our way back to Uganda, we stayed with a friend in Nakuru. While there, we were awed by flamingoes and many other beautiful birds at Lake Nakuru. It was a happy honeymoon; we are grateful to all the friends that made it possible.

After our return from our honeymoon, I was posted to work with Rev. Asa Byara, the managing director and priest in charge of "The Greater Kampala Project." As a young deacon, my task was to assist the Rev. Byara and his team in opening up worship centers in various Kampala locations. We opened centers in all sorts of places, including bars, restaurants, and marketplaces. For instance, we negotiated with bar owners to let us conduct prayer services in their premises on Sunday mornings when there would be no clients.

Such locations enabled us to offer pastoral care to people in Naguru, Ntinda, Bukoto, Namuwongo, Kiswa, Makerere Kivulu, and Wandegeya. Our *modus operandi* was to go where people were rather than to wait for them to come to us. Proper churches would follow later. My major assignment was to minister at the Ntinda and Bukoto church centers.

The Rev. Asa Byara and I were pioneers in the use of interim worship structures, such as the "biwempe" recently adopted by Pentecostal churches in Uganda, prior to building permanent structures.

My Time at Union Theological Seminary (1964-1967)

It is a great blessing that I was granted the opportunity to write my memoirs while in residence at Union Theological Seminary (UTS), the institution that has had the greatest impact on my theological thinking, and which helped prepare me for ministry in the church.

The Rev. Eric Hutchison, my teacher at Buwalasi and a UTS alumnus, recommended that I pursue further theological training at Union. He had thoroughly prepared me for more advanced theological training; he was also convinced that UTS was the best seminary to which I could apply. Following his advice, I applied to Union for a bachelor of divinity (BD), now the (MDiv) degree. Fortunately, I was admitted and offered a scholarship that enabled me to attend.

I recall this first trip to the United States in July 1964 as an exciting experience. I felt separated from my wife and was lonely on this long flight from Entebbe, Uganda, to J.F.K. Airport in New York City. On my arrival in New York, I was astounded by the skyscrapers, the large cars, and the wide highways, the likes of which I had not seen anywhere in Africa. I wished Mary was with me to share and marvel at the glamour and wonders of the new world. She was to join me sometime later the following year.

When I left Uganda, Mary was in the third trimester of her first pregnancy. Sadly, in September 1964, our firstborn, a baby girl we named Kutesa, which means “God’s will,” died at birth. She was buried in our land at Kiti in Kyadondo County.

By God’s grace, Mary withstood the shock of the loss and recovered her strength. She fondly remembers that our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Leslie Brown, prayed for her not to lose heart, and that he beseeched God to bless us with more children.

Mary arrived in New York in June 1965 after we had been separated for a year, but found me hospitalized. In May 1965, after I had successfully completed my first year at Union, I fell sick with pneumonia and was admitted to St. Luke’s Hospital. I was discharged one month after Mary’s arrival. I could not take summer courses in Hebrew during my recuperation. I was not used to the pollution that was in the air of New York City, the main cause of contracting pneumonia. I thank God that I fully recovered and continued my studies the following academic year without a hitch.

Prior to coming to New York, Eric Hutchison had already referred me to the Rev. Dr. Hugh McCandless, his former rector at

the Church of Epiphany in New York City. Thus, on arriving in New York, among my first priorities was to find the Rev. Dr. McCandless and to locate his church. I located the church on the New York City map, and took a bus there. I was greatly impressed by the warm welcome that Rev. McCandless accorded me. Here I was, a young and green deacon from rural Africa, being received unreservedly by a distinguished rector of a church in New York City!

At Union, my professor of speech was instrumental in helping me learn to be articulate and audible. New Testament Professor John Knox and Systematic Theology Professors John Macquarie and Day Williams were also great teachers. Professor Day Williams impressed on us that God is always creating. He is both primordial and consequential.

As Jesus put it, "My Father is still working" (John 5:17). The implications of this realization were mind-blowing. I see all great works, including the great scientific discoveries and new inventions, as a manifestation of God's unceasing creation in the vast universe. He creates through us, since we were made in God's own image. God's creation is unceasing in the vast universe.

My theological thinking and intellectual growth were further enhanced when we discussed contemporary theological topics such as "Man come of age" and "God is dead!" As I reflect on those topics, I am ever grateful to God for having made us in his own image. Through us, God continues to do great works (John 14:12): "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father" so when I think about "Man come of age" I envisage the mature human being who is free to explore his vast potential.

Furthermore, I found Bishop A. T. Robinson of Woolwich's pronouncement that Man had come of age intriguing. The human being is responsible for using the image of God to be a true coworker with God. In my estimation, "Man come of age" involves being aware of the indisputable need for justice, compassion, and forgiveness in order to live in love. Love should be the chief ingredient of "Man come of age." I found Dr. Joseph Fletcher's exposition

of new Christian morality in “Situational Ethics” inadequate, as it was only based in law. The law is in itself insufficient without reference to justice, compassion, forgiveness, and love. Action in any contextual situation should be guided by love.

In Professor Day Williams’s class we explored the “God is dead” theology. To some students this theology spelled blasphemy, but to some of us it had intrinsic pedagogical value. I personally valued it because, paradoxically, it illustrated that God cannot die as is exemplified in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the “God is dead” debate made me realize that God does die to people who find God in “gaps.” Such individuals only seek God when they are poor, sick, hungry, weak, and friendless. But when they are healthy and prosperous, they boast that it is their hard work and cleverness that enable them to attain their riches. There is a gap; God is left out. This, I have found, is the challenge of both rich people and rich nations.

The expression “God is dead” first appeared in Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science* publication whereby “the madman” laments:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us?

What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?²

The fear and despair expressed by “the madman” were due to lack of appreciation that Jesus Christ’s death on the cross was to atone for the sins of the world. His death was not an accident; it was preordained by God. In 1961, Gianni Vahanian published *Death of*

2. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche *The Gay Science* (New York Vintage Books, 1974), 181–82.

God in which he argued that modern secular culture had so lost all sense of the numinous that for all intents and purposes “God is dead” to the modern mind.

At UTS, I also studied the doctrine of the triune God³ in depth. From this doctrine, I deduced that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the world was God’s manifestation to humanity of his redemptive essence. It did not mean that when the Word became flesh by incarnation then God became minus the Word. No, God remained complete. Just as when one lights a candle from a mother candle’s flames, the mother candle remains complete and burning. Thus God never dies and is not dying; he is the God of Man come of age and the God of babies. God is over all and in all. Some rich and powerful nations and people get so corrupted by power and wealth that they are even tempted to usurp the place of God. As such, they can potentially destroy the earth. The “God is dead” theology helped me realize that “God is being itself” as Paul Tillich put it. In the same way, we humans, having been made in the image of Being itself, shall never die. We are eternal.

At UTS I learned that a fully developed human being will be interested not only in his own selfish interests but also the interests of others. A mature human being is concerned about mother earth, which is now being depleted. In the twenty-first century, nations and societies are capable of producing enough to feed, clothe, and shelter all human beings, if only we can control the selfish side of our nature. I dreamt of a world where unemployment and under-employment would be eliminated, enabling every person to contribute according to his/her talent. The needs of the young, the aged, and the sick would be universally cared for. This utopian world is possible only if we remember that we are alive for God and for one another. We are God’s stewards on the earth and beyond. It is our responsibility to preserve, conserve, and utilize our environment and resources to make life prosperous for everyone.

3. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Unemployment is a colossal problem worldwide largely due to greed and corruption of the so-called “Man come of age.” We cannot fully claim to “come of age” until we are aware of God’s image in us. It is time we woke up and realized our obligations to love and serve God in one another.

In the course of my studies at Union, the works of the great theologian Anselm of Canterbury, whose motto was “faith seeking understanding,” greatly shaped my thinking. Anselm argued that faith and reason go hand-in-hand. It should, however, be emphasized that faith precedes theology. We theologize on faith, but faith is not grounded in philosophy. Reason is used to understand faith. This knowledge has been the bedrock on which I base my work even when society attempts to discourage me. As I read the Holy Scriptures and listen to various religious discourses, I seek God’s guidance and revelation (John 16:13) to enable me to employ reason to understand and act according to God’s will. This foundation that I received at UTS has been the cornerstone of my ministry.

At UTS, I also studied “Christ and Culture” as expounded by H. Richard Niebuhr. Niebuhr argued that Christ transcended culture. Christ is simultaneously of culture and above culture; Christ transforms culture.

This understanding of Christ and culture has enabled and helped me enormously to face impediments, whether in African or other cultural settings. The question I always ask myself is: “What would Christ say about this cultural practice?” I believe that Christ is the litmus test of all cultural norms. This approach to culture has enabled me to be flexible. Because culture is not static, I readily accept positive changes that enhance my ethnic Buganda tradition. It is not enough to say “that is my culture,” just as it is not enough to just say “that is my faith.” I believe that is what Peter advised his readers to do:

Be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you. (1 Pet. 3:15)

The Church of Epiphany in New York: The Foundation of My Ministry

As I prepared for ordination to the priesthood, the Rev. McCandless, with whom I worked as deacon, took me under his tutelage. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Leslie Brown, my bishop in Uganda, had requested him to prepare me for ordination. Dr. McCandless wholeheartedly accepted the bishop's request. He prepared me well, sharing with me his wisdom and his insights into the intricacies of being a priest. On December 19, 1964, Bishop Horace Donegan of the Diocese of New York ordained me as a priest at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Subsequently, I was licensed to work as a priest in the city of New York.

After my ordination, the Rev. McCandless linked me with the James Ewing Cancer Hospital (now Sloan Kettering Cancer Center), where I served as a chaplain. I worked at the hospital for two years alongside Rev. Sibly, who was a perpetual deacon there. Deaconess Sibly was a kind and social person. She taught me how to communicate with patients; among the important lessons she taught me was that the last sense to die in a patient is hearing. Even when a patient is unable to speak, the sense of hearing is often intact. Consequently, it is advisable to continue speaking loving words to patients until their last breaths.

A particularly memorable experience at the James Ewing Cancer Hospital involved a terminally ill lady, ravaged by cancer. She was in great pain, but she assured me that she was at peace because she knew that she was going to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. I was struck by her faith that rendered her placid in the face of death.

On May 2, 1966, our son, Joseph, was born at Woman's Hospital in New York City. That same year, I received my bachelor of divinity degree (now master of divinity) at UTS, and started studying for the master of sacred theology degree, which I received in 1967.