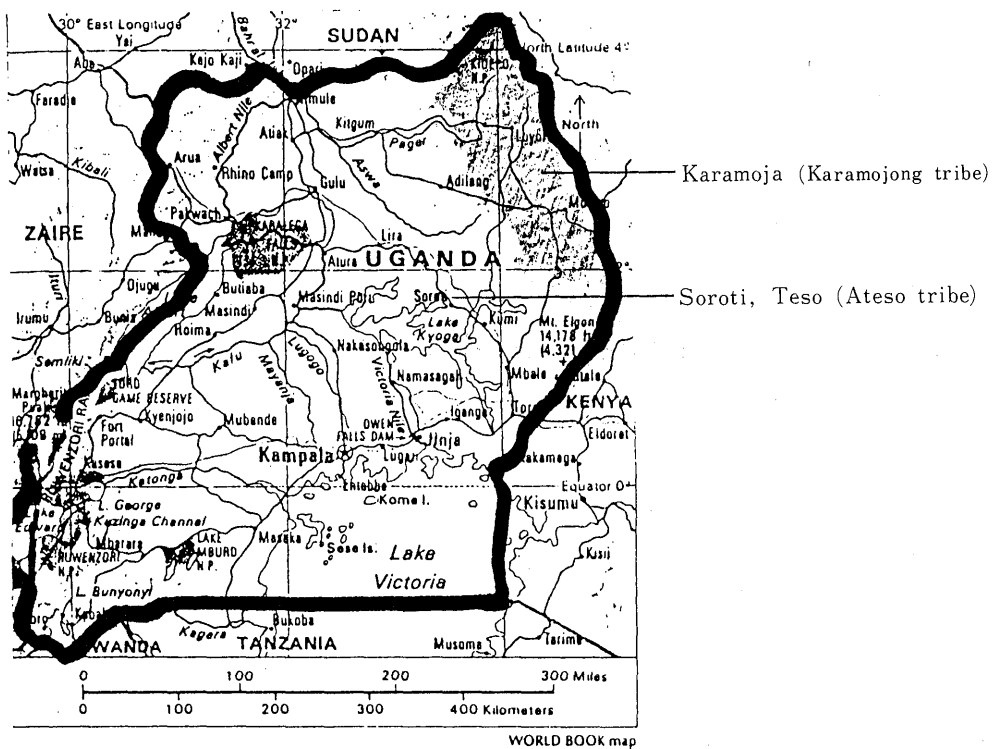


**DEFINITIONS OF PEACE—EXAMINING AN ATESO
(UGANDA) PERSPECTIVE**

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An important element in global harmony would be an accurate understanding of the needs and perspectives of the parties engaged in conflict. At a peace education seminar comprised of members of the Ateso tribe in Soroti, Uganda, participants were asked to define their concepts of *peace*. Responses (in English) appeared to apply across cultures in that they were similar to what could be expected from people in any corner of the global community. Given the Ateso's recent survival of protracted conflict, there was a need to probe further, to define their definitions, to understand their unique perspective on such universal concepts. Further research provided a deeper understanding of their reality, their suffering, their anticipations, their desire for tranquility and a return to their memories of normalcy.

WHY DEFINITIONS IN ENGLISH?

Uganda is one of many former British colonies where English functions as a unifying language due to the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual population. Although controversial, the sheer practicality of English appears to have enabled its usage to continue beyond the legacy of imposed colonialism. According to Braj Kachru, a proponent of "world Englishes", the power of English as a means of transformation of both individuals and society is now acknowledged, and accompanying this recognition is a new attitude toward English more as a language of many cultural identities and traditions rather than a European language exclusively expounding western values (vii-viii).

Perhaps the most pronounced example is India, a country of 15 official languages, where the politics of language can be extremely emotive and has been incited to fatal riots. Currently right-wing Hindus in the north are attempting to impose Hindi usage over English because of negative connotations to past imperialism. However, the southern regions are adamantly anti-Hindi to the point of officials refusing to broadcast Hindi on television and radio. Therefore, English, more than any other language, still holds together this diverse nation. According to Tim McGirk, "English remains the preferred medium for many politicians and the intelligentsia. Surveys suggest that out of every 1,000 newspaper readers, 250 buy English-language papers. The closest contender is Hindi, with 30 readers out of 1,000." (10). Parents and teachers readily acknowledge the power of English for transformation, as professed by Kachru, and in the northern regions are revolting against change to education in Hindi: English is their children's passport to better jobs, a chance to emigrate, an opportunity to do better in life than the parents (10).

In northern India, due to decreasing use of English and increasing use of Hindi for primary education, it is expected that in the early 21st century literacy in Hindi and English in urban areas will be about equal, but in rural areas literacy in Hindi will be five times that of English. Therefore, the greatest growth in literacy is projected in an Indian language. In contrast, in Uganda as in most of Africa, there is less promotion of vernacular languages as means for literacy. In addition, Africa has less linguistic nation-

alism than Asian countries such as India or Malaysia. Indeed, post-colonial Africa is promoting an expansion of French or English. African governments of former British colonies are introducing English earlier in the educational system than the British did themselves (Mazrui & Tidy 299–300). Expansion of education has promoted the expansion of English, facilitating participation in the global community. Leopold Sedar Senghor defends use of colonial languages: “It has allowed us to bring to Universal Civilization a contribution without which the civilization of the twentieth century would not have been universal.” (qtd. in Mazrui & Tidy 300).

In Uganda, English has been adopted as a politically neutral language, free of tribalism. The extent of English usage in Uganda is astounding. It is the de facto national language, although there is controversy from proponents of either the Luganda language or Kiswahili. Most people speak three languages, but the medium of all education is English. The national anthem is in English. The telephone operators answer in English. All television programming is in English, except for brief news summaries in Luganda and Kiswahili and an occasional local drama in Luganda. Of course, most people speak their own tribe’s language at home, but with such ubiquitous use of English and such fluency, the distinction “native speaker” loses significance. As in other post-colonial nations, English usage is gradually shedding the negativity associated as the imposed language of oppressive colonists. Although still controversial, English functions as a bridge between divergent cultural groups.

Despite the proliferation of English, the debate on choice of an official national language for Uganda continues. According to Patrick Ssali-Kali, in order for a government to be effective,

... it must encourage, nurture, embrace and utilise an accepted national language. This has not been so in Uganda. The problem has been as intractable as its politics. Competing and clashing interests anchored on ethnic pride and revulsion have simply put the whole matter in infinite abeyance with no consensus in sight. (6)

Ssali-Kali and Mazrui & Tidy concur that English is the preferred language of only the educated elite, not feasible as the official language of a nation with a majority of its population illiterate (6,300). They argue that English achieves national integration only among the educated; at the grass-roots level English could actually pose an impediment to the process of national integration. Mazrui & Tidy prefer the promotion of Kiswahili, citing examples of its success in Tanzania as the medium of education and all government business. Tanzanian universities offer degrees in Kiswahili literature and linguistics. Committees are organized to compile fuller vocabularies—loan words are incorporated from African languages, Arabic and English, and new terms are invented out of morphemes, such as *Jokofu* for refrigerator from *joko* (stove) and *fu* (dead cold). The Tanzanian government has sponsored literary competitions in Kiswahili, and President Nyerere himself translated some of Shakespeare’s plays. Mazrui & Tidy believe that Kiswahili is ethnically neutral; the small native-speaking population along the east African coast is an ethnically mixed, diffuse community, posing no political or linguistic

threat. As such, Mazrui and Tidy they claim that the Tanzanian experience demonstrates that it is possible to adopt a language without adopting other aspects of culture (300–302). That same argument could be used in promotion of English.

The strongest proponents of Kiswahili were the British colonial authorities in the 1920s, arguing for policies to spread the language and deepen its roots in Ugandan culture. They viewed Kiswahili as a means of integrating with eastern Africa; any other language would potentially isolate Uganda. Resistance came from the southern Baganda, the largest ethnic community in Uganda with a complex system of government and sophisticated cultural heritage. Their interest in spreading their Luganda language, culture and leadership was threatened by the promotion of Kiswahili. The British administrators abandoned their mission and acquiesced to the Baganda hegemony. In post-colonial Uganda, a military coup led by northerner Milton Obote sent the Bagandan *Kabaka* (king) fleeing in exile to England in 1966. At that time the only official role of Kiswahili was its role as the language of command in the military; therefore, the strongest enthusiasts were the soldiers. Ugandans from the non-Baganda north much preferred Kiswahili as the grass-roots, inter-ethnic language (Mazrui & Tidy 302). During the reign of Idi Amin Dada in the 1970s, Kiswahili was declared to be the national language; during the 1980s it was officially given the status of inter-territorial language of Eastern Africa; during 1986 the current government's National Resistance Council established Kiswahili as one of the official languages. As a result, it is spoken in various parts of Uganda—studies indicate 35% of Ugandans speak Kiswahili as a second language (no native speakers). However, its acceptance is limited because it is regarded as the language of the various oppressors. Throughout Uganda's years of turmoil, military security forces terrorized the civilian populations, communicating in Kiswahili. Even today only the security forces voluntarily speak it, and given the attitude of the populace towards these institutions, the acceptability of Kiswahili is questionable (Ssali-Kali 12).

The last systematic research on language in Uganda was conducted by G. Ladefoged between 1968–1970, before the escalation of conflict rendered such research impossible. Results indicated that the largest percentage of Ugandans—39 percent—spoke Luganda as a first language. Proponents of Luganda as the national language argue that this figure would be increased if second language speakers were included, indicating that an even stronger majority of Ugandans are able to communicate in Luganda (Ssali-Kali 6, 12). Its predominance stems from the aforementioned colonial support of the Bagandan hegemony, both politically and economically. Kampala, the capital, is in Buganda, and thus the region attracts people from all other ethnicities who must speak either Luganda or English.

Arguments in favor of and against the three contenders for the national language can be summarized as follows. The advantage of Luganda is the fact it is the dominant African language; its disadvantage is an aversion to a Bagandan hegemony. Kiswahili is an ethnically-neutral, widely-spoken African language that would linguistically unite Uganda with neighboring Kenya and Tanzania; its disadvantages are no native speakers and most importantly, its reputation as the language of the military oppressors. The

emotive arguments against both Luganda and Kiswahili foster acceptance of politically-neutral, ethnically-neutral English, although it is a non-African language of only the educated elite. Interestingly, both Luganda and Kiswahili are considered to be languages of oppressors—culturally or militarily—ininitely more than English.

In Soroti, although local Ateso participants all spoke private conversations among themselves in the Iteso language, our seminar was conducted totally in English. Three of the four facilitators were not Ateso. The level of fluency was equal to “native speakers”, and without the cumbersome burden of translation, people’s choice of words to define *peace* were unquestionably clear semantically. However, it sparked curiosity as to the depth of experience, the embedded meaning underlying such choices.

UGANDA’S RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

A brief examination of the extent Uganda’s protracted conflict is a prerequisite to focusing on the complications specific to the Teso area. Uganda’s long string of tragedies since independence in 1962 have been featured in the media to such a degree that most people probably regard the country as dangerously unstable and to be avoided. However, Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Army (RA) has ruled effectively since coming to power in 1986, and stability has returned to most parts of the country. The outlying rural districts of the north, including Teso, have suffered longer and only recently have begun to return to a more firm footing, although still erratic.

Before independence, Uganda was a prosperous and seemingly cohesive country. Its great beauty led Winston Churchill to refer to Uganda as “the Pearl of Africa”. However, post-colonial troubles surfaced to tar this image of beauty and prosperity due to the fact that the British colonial policy supported the Baganda tribal hegemony, with educational and economic development concentrated in the southern areas, whereas “soldiers had always been recruited from the ‘martial races’ of the poorer north” (Oliver & Fage 255). Post-colonial stability depended upon a precarious alliance that was destroyed when northerner Milton Obote seized the presidency from the Bagandan *Kabaka*, King Freddie Mutesa and drove him into exile in London in 1966. Obote was overthrown by General Idi Amin, also a northerner, who initially gained popularity by expelling all Asians and Europeans. Lacking the Asian community’s commercial and technical skills and European investment capital, the economy steadily deteriorated. With increasing criticism, Amin increased his indiscretion in use of brutal force to rid himself of perceived opponents. All political activities were suspended, and soldiers were to arrest or shoot on sight any suspected enemies. His targets included any person more clever than he, causing a grand exodus of Uganda’s intelligentsia into exile. He executed Acholi and Langi tribesmen within his own army, fueling ethnic fear and hatred, and setting the precedent in Uganda’s ongoing conflict of interlinking issues of ethnicity with issues of domestic balance of power (Mazrui & Tidy 278). As stated by Rosenblum & Williamson, “With brutal cunning, he dismembered the society.” (119) Amin was finally forced to flee in 1979, his army collapsed into lawless bands, driven out by counter-invading

Tanzanian forces. With arrogance and vengeance, the foreign invaders assumed the role of terrorizing the traumatized populace, looting and raping on their own account (120). Obote was restored as President, this time overcome by paranoia and revenge, but by 1983 his army was merely one competitor against various guerrilla groups for loot as well as power, further victimizing civilians. Although the much more disciplined and determined army of Yoweri Museveni of the western provinces emerged as the victor, "it was not easy to see how stability and prosperity might be restored to Uganda, especially to its northern districts" (Oliver & Fage 256).

By early 1986 "the Pearl of Africa" lay shattered and bankrupt, broken by tribal animosity, nepotism, politicians who had gone mad on power and military tyranny. According to Rosenblum & Williamson, "... three-quarters of a million Ugandans had been spattered with bullets, hacked to death by machetes, or forced to starve by soldiers who burned their crops." (117) While much of the blame can be attributed to the infamously sordid and brutal military dictatorship of Idi Amin, his successors continued the reign of terror, oppression and chaos. Amin's officers and soldiers looted anything and everything, sometimes including their victim's organs for "ritual cannibalism" (Rosenblum & Williamson 117). Toward the end, in Milton Obote's final years and under Tito Okello, soldiers took to raping ten-year-old girls. Women and children were murdered, homes were destroyed, crops were burned, and relief convoys were blocked (120). Indeed, there was really little difference between any of Uganda's pre-1986 rulers. One of our peace education seminar facilitators, Rev. Nelson Onono-Onweng, is of the Acholi tribe, one specifically targeted by Amin's death squads, and yet he claims several of the subsequent rebel groups were even more devastating. In a rural Acholi village I saw a woman whose lips had been savagely cut off, her teeth protruding awkwardly as she attempted to smile. The sexual abuse of women and young girls fueled the AIDS epidemic, as each deposed army retreated to the countryside, victimizing civilian villagers with vengeful violence. Unfortunately, before Museveni all post-colonial rulers appear to have come from the same depraved mold.

Yet despite the killings and disappearances, the brutality and the fear and destruction of the past, Ugandans appear to have weathered the storm remarkably well. Though difficult to believe, they still smile and find the enthusiasm to carry on and rebuild after such a nightmare, an observation shared by Rosenblum & Williamson: "Over and over, I was struck by the conflict between the lingering damage and the energy people devoted to overcoming it. ... Good old Uganda, I thought, here is proof of Africa's amazing ability to spring back from anything." (121) There is an air of optimism as people realize that the years of terror and bloodshed are finally over. Undoubtedly, the main reason is the regime headed by Museveni which has made a clean sweep of the government, the civil service and the army. Despite the tremendous odds against him and an empty treasury, during his early years in power Museveni made much effort to get the country back on its feet. This he did despite some rather dubious tactics, such as stories I heard of human skeletons piled along roadways to demonstrate his effectiveness in ridding the country of rebels and bandits, documented by Rosenblum & Williamson: "In better years, villagers

had lashed together small roadside tables of sticks, on which they displayed papayas and tomatoes for sale. . . now, the tables were stacked neatly with bleached human skulls and severed arm bones." (120) The new leader also totally banned political meetings to prevent a resurgence of intertribal rivalry. Perhaps most importantly, however, Museveni's army is the most disciplined that Uganda has ever seen, despite the astonishing sight of teenagers in uniform—some as young as fourteen. Each soldier has had to account for every bullet allotted him or suffer harsh consequences. Gone are the days when every road was littered with checkpoints staffed by drunken, surly soldiers intent on robbing civilians, or when soldiers took anything they wanted from stores at gunpoint. There are still roadblocks, but politeness and courtesy are what you're likely to encounter nowadays. I remember being stopped on our return from the north by a soldier so he could politely request a ride to Kampala for his friend; my hosts equally politely refused, and as we drove off commented on the audacity of setting up a roadblock for such a purpose. Sanity has reappeared. I met many people who had returned from exile in surrounding African countries, in Europe, in America. There was a grand coronation in August 1993 to restore the Bagandan monarchy when the son of deceased-in-exile Kabaka Mutesa returned. Stability has reappeared, although precarious in northern districts.

The economy is now the country's main problem. Under Amin, the economy collapsed, industrial activity totally stopped, hospitals and rural health clinics closed, schools closed, roads cracked and filled with potholes, cities became garbage dumps and their utilities fell apart. Upon defeat, each army would loot anything of value, then depart with the gratuitous shooting-up of many Kampala office buildings. The prolific wildlife was machine-gunned down by soldiers for meat, ivory and skins, and the tourist industry evaporated. There is still very little wildlife—during my stay a small group of elephants had crossed into Uganda from Sudan and were being protected by government officials. The tourist industry is slowly limping back—it's difficult to compete with neighboring Kenya where wildlife is so prolific. Office buildings in Kampala still bear the evidence of bullet holes and destruction, although new buildings have been constructed. Kampala still has electrical blackouts once or twice a week. The roads to outlying districts are barely passable and have only recently been considered safe for travel. Still, groups of bandits take advantage along the worst sections, attacking cars which must creep along slowly. No country roads are safe for travel after dark. A newspaper editorial attributes this thuggery to gangs of unemployed former soldiers who found their village homes and property destroyed (4). In the rural north, we encountered an enterprising group of youths along the roadside—they filled potholes with dirt and asked for money from passing vehicles. My hosts gratefully threw some bills out the window. Schools have reopened, but less than 50 percent of Ugandan children have the opportunity of an education—their parents cannot afford to pay school fees. Hospitals in the cities have reopened, but some rural areas have very little medicine—this in a country of vast varieties of natural health hazards including malaria and various types of common horrific worms and amoebas. The tragedy of the AIDS epidemic is ubiquitous; Uganda is

one of the worst-hit countries in the world, and every Ugandan has been affected by the scourge of AIDS in the family or in close associates.

PROLONGED CONFLICT IN RURAL TESO

Ugandans in outlying, rural regions have endured more prolonged conflict and suffering. The Ateso tribe in the northeastern area called Teso have been victims of cattle rustling and rebel activity. About one year after the Museveni government came to power, firearms were collected throughout Teso. Concurrently, cattle rustlers from neighboring Karamoja increased their activities. There is widespread belief that while arms were confiscated from the Ateso, the Karamojong were permitted to keep theirs, making the Ateso easy prey to cattle rustling raids. Moreover, it is alleged that government soldiers conspired in the rustling activities, with missing cattle being identified in pens in Kampala, far from the Karamoja homeland. These beliefs fostered mass disillusionment and distrust in Teso, resulting in extensive anti-government rebel activity. As recently as early 1993, government forces were staging offensive operations to quell the rebels (Maxwell 2).

At the time of our seminar, rural Ateso had finally felt sufficiently secure to move back to their homes from the relative safety of towns such as Soroti. Civilians had lived under continuing threat of attack from either the Karamojong, rebel forces or government soldiers. Even at the time of our seminar, Karamojong had allegedly attacked government soldiers and killed Ateso civilians in the remote northernmost region. The Karamojong have apparently stolen all the Teso cattle. The Ateso are reluctant to replace their missing cattle because the Karamojong are perceived to be a continuing threat held at bay only by a lack of cattle to rustle.

During the beginning stages of the seminar, our Ateso participants wanted to voice their frustrations and opinions on the Karamojong cattle rustling situation. A spontaneous heated discussion unfolded, with the following stereotypes and analyses surfacing:

*Cattle rustling is encouraged by Karamojong society—it's part of tradition.

*The Karamojong recognize that cattle are their property only, not to be owned by any others.

*Cattle are the source of survival for the Karamojong—their only food is the milk and blood (sometimes beef). No agriculture is produced in arid Karamoja.

*Cattle owners are powerful and are leaders, able to command others in Karamojong society.

*Karamojong males are initiated into manhood through raiding and killing activities. Successful rustling dignifies them as heroes, and they are given some kind of mark for status.

*Many cattle are necessary for a Karamojong marriage—the family of the male must pay cattle as a *bride price* to purchase the female. (This is also Ateso tradition.)

*Karamojong traditionally used spears for cattle rustling, but now they use firearms.

*Karamojong have acquired firearms by looting or by corruption in the armed forces,

making cattle rustling easier.

*Some political forces benefit from the cattle rustling and subsequent instability—supplying arms to the Karamojong has established wealth in Kampala.

*Guns were also acquired during the recruitment of Karamojong soldiers by several post-colonial coups.

Despite holding the above views, our Ateso participants empathized with the Karamojong and offered positive action to resolve or manage the conflict, including the following:

*The conflict is a political issue more than merely Karamojong tradition.

*Karamojong should recognize the authority of the government in order to maintain law and order.

*There is a need for recognition and acknowledgement of the value and uniqueness of the Karamojong culture.

*Ateso and Karamojong have been cooperating peacefully in several ways, e.g., the Karamojong graze their cattle in Teso during the dry season.

*Good relationships could be facilitated by establishing common markets along the border areas.

*The Karamojong were promised dams which have not yet materialized. Assistance is needed for the construction of dams and development projects so the Karamojong have more than one source of livelihood.

*There is a need for a transformation of Karamojong society—they should stop roaming, find stability, engage in agriculture.

Our Ateso participants were searching for answers. In order to establish peace and stability in the Teso region, they were calling for a transformation of the more primal Karamojong, while a total transformation of the former cattle-based Ateso culture is currently in progress. Cattle had symbolized cultural and economic stability in Teso, and had empowered people to benefit from good health, education and self-sufficiency. Now their cattle are gone, and although the Ateso feel victimized, during our seminar there was an air of optimism and a realization of the need for transformation, for finding cultural stability without cattle.

ATESO DEFINITIONS OF PEACE

Professor C. F. Odaet of Makerere University, Kampala, was the Ateso facilitator at our Soroti seminar. During his session entitled “Why Peace Education?”, he elicited participants’ definitions of *peace*. Responses appeared to be universal, conveying the impression that across cultures there are similar assessments of basic needs in order to feel a sense of peace. However, with an awareness of the nature of the protracted Ateso conflict, a desire arose to probe further, to define their definitions, to understand the uniqueness of the Ateso experience. An interview was conducted several days later with Professor Odaet for further explanation, and the following is a listing of the participants’ definitions (in italics), with Professor Odaet’s elaboration (in block quotes).

Absence of disturbance in surroundings:

In Teso people used to be in their houses, doing their things in the way they chose to do in a particular day. For example at night you could tie your oxen 3 am at night if there was moonlight, you go and plow your gardens. In the morning when the sun rises, you bring your oxen back and rest. You bathe, take your tea, and maybe you go. If you are a teacher, you go teach. If you are an officer, you go too and work in your office. You've accomplished your domestic responsibilities, and then you are now fulfilling your official duties. There the surroundings were not disturbed. You were able to do what you wished to do without hindrances. That is what that means. If you wanted to sleep, you'd sleep. If you wanted to drink, you'd drink. . . People who make merry and eat, kill a bull. . . If it were during true Teso, those people would have just brought a cow and said this is yours, and they would have slaughtered it. As a visitor for honor. They just don't kill and bring you the meat. They will bring [the cow] to symbolize that this is sacrifice giving a gift to you. A live animal. Then you see it alive, and they go and kill it. So when you eat, the whole thing is internalized that this was a gift to me. Whoever is eating that meat is eating it in my honor. Without my being here, it would not have been killed. That's why we have an expression in Ateso "It is through visitors that you eat." When a visitor comes and is given a gift, they give him such a big animal, he doesn't eat all of it anyway. She eats only a little, when she goes after a few hours, whatever remains we continue feasting on it. And it is one explanation why Ateso like people because they like eating. I'd rather have visitors in my home, maybe twice a month because I have a lot of cows. If I kill a cow, that meat is smoked and dried and it continues to be eaten. Peaceful living without disturbance means you being able to do what you choose to do for yourself, for your own family, for your relations without any obstructions. . . they used to run to sleep in the bushes. People slept in the bushes! You couldn't stay at home because the rebels would come, you'd be the victim. Even the RA [Museveni's Resistance Army], when they come, chasing the rebels, you'd still be the victim. The only peaceful way was to go and sleep in a tree. Hide. When the sun comes, then you come home. So a home was not really a home in the sense of annoyed. So that is disturbance.

Going through problems:

[Before the insurgency] . . . when the problem came, there was no question of fighting. You are stuck, looked at the problem, provided answers, other than you have your mind in the good form. Because

you were that, before you have settled problems with your neighbor, with your people, and these people were normally there. You find that you are able to live in the community because the problem which perhaps was there has been sorted out amicably. You no longer look guilty. And in fact the other thing with us in Teso when someone did something bad, you'd say to him because he wants that thing to be solved so that his mind is at ease. If it means pain, you go to your people and this dispute is settled amicably. And during that time you'll find there is drinking, you are asked to greet one another, sometimes if there is drinking *Ajol* [alcoholic drink or "beer" made from millet, served hot in a large ceramic communal pot with drinkers sipping through long straws or "tubes"] you'll be asked to share a tube to symbolize you are settled, you are now friends. If it is eating, you are ready to sit next to one another and you eat from one bowl of sauce. You get bread, you put it there, you also get, put it there. Same bowl, togetherness. That is what that one means.

Ajol. That A should be capital because very important. That is the way most things are sorted out. It is also the place where most people are educated. Where stories are told. This is culturally very significant.

Carrying responsibilities:

Safe environment for fulfilling duties, able to travel if necessary. Paying school fees, sending our children to school. When we heard of a relative in need, but can't go and aid, hear of his or her death . . . In Kampala, we are supposed to bury dead in homeland, but we could not.

Tranquility and calmness:

Calmness, you know, if we are confident that there is not disturbance, why should we kick around? If like those days [before the insurgency], when people come for school holidays, I am not worried when time going back comes. I'm not disturbed because there is fees because money was there. You bring a list how are this, how are this [what is needed]. It does not bother me. I look at the total and I just get it. Or tell my mother, my wife to give it. Sometimes these things don't even reach me because . . . it's not important. If don't have what I think is enough, I just tell my son to go to my sister with a note that is necessities and they do it. She gets her own money, maybe she gets from sale of milk. And the school fees are covered, or any expense at all. So what disturbs me? I remain calm, stable in the mind. Nothing shakes me.

Similarly in the school, there was nothing disturbing our children.

When they went there, their work was to read. To study. Because they knew there was nothing which would go wrong. What if we went to see the children in the school, they would know what we would take.

In my school days, I never ate food which was fried. I didn't see any reason why I should eat. I ate dried meat, groundnut stew. Nothing fried. I ate millet. I'm telling our culture. That is the food I grew in, and I did not see any reason why I should change. Of course, now there are some people who are eating, but for me. And most of our homes in Teso you'll get these greens called *ebol* greens, which you cook and put groundnut stew there. Groundnuts was the stable food in the home. Most of these groundnuts were from Teso. We eat hot things. You pour water on something to make it hot. That is calmness.

Development of society and growth:

If you have cows and I didn't have, you'd give me two cows or three and maybe one would be milk, one that was delivering and one that wasn't delivering and maybe two oxen. You'd give me, you look after them. The idea behind you giving me the cows is purely that there is a cow for milk, when that one, the calf is grown up that one will deliver, so you continue with life. The two oxen are for you to cultivate with. You are really doing that because you want to improve me. You want me to develop and grow—as an individual and then growth which helps our community because when I come to your place I'll be able to sit and talk and drink milk and eat. You'll be able to see my children growing well and going to school healthy and eating well. So you are enabling me to develop and grow. So that one is underlined and in that way you are happy. Your love for me is now expressed in activity, your giving me those things to alleviate my situation, my position.

Basic life necessities—food, healthcare, shelter:

In Teso you begin with body, the way you live. You know when you change for the good, begin to develop. When you give me a cow, and my children now begin to look more healthy, that is development . . . when these things are coming . . . I am saying that Ateso are contented, so you find that because the body is content, the problems of conflict you will find very minimum.

[As far as traditional methods of reconciliation,] it was mainly land issue, if you are plowing and then you step beyond [the boundary of your land] . . . That is normally the way, but always the elders settle such things because they knew where the marks were and so on. In Teso the land belongs to a clan, it belongs to a

tribe, not an individual. So that is why they are not really fighters as such, not between the clans. . . You don't find people moving from one county to another county to fight themselves. That's not there. If you give me oxen, when it comes okay, I will cultivate. Then food comes in. I'm able to do other things now. I'm comfortable. Milk gives me energy when I drink it, so I'm able to cultivate more food. Then the cycle begins to come in. My wife is able to invite her friends. I'm also able to go to people and talk with them. People are now able to accept me because my home is beginning to show and so on. Then development begins because the best beginnings is our own place.

The basic need is food. In our case it is a cow. Because it provides for these other things. And healthcare because when you drink milk you are okay. If you sell milk and you get the money, and if you are sick you can go to hospital and get treatment. You can travel. Now people are not able to travel ! They cannot pay for drugs! They are poor! That is why the Bishop decided to open clinics . . . which will give treatment using the aid from outside. And avoid going to hospital. People are not able to go to hospital because drugs are not there. They cannot go to clinics in town, they are expensive. They want money, these people don't have money. So the Bishop, through the aid he has got, gets these drugs and gives treatment to these people.

Shelter is mainly houses. In case you've houses, then schools. But houses really. If you notice one thing in Teso . . . Most schools are good schools, good private schools. They are permanent. . . Even if you went deep, that would be a characteristic which you would see there because of the cow. We were able to sell the cows, buy the iron sheets and build. Because we said our children must go to school. In Teso there were a lot of subdispensaries which were put up. This was made possible because of the cow. Therefore healthwise, we were able to be enlightened enough by missionaries to see the necessity of being healthy. So really as you say, one has got to look at the cattle complex as a source of peace among the Teso.

The basis for love, for kindness and so on has been built around the cow. That is now part of our way. That momentum which is there, that the quality which has been injected in there, can be used to get other things done. For example if there are not many cows and we are able to get the means of educating our people, we can still live with the attributes which were developed over time and live our lives instead of crying over cows.

. . . if we can get alternatives as far as people being able to get their

children to school, I believe we will be able to solve that problem. . . Let's us get the foundation for education and raw development. Try to look for funds for these things. And then we give education to people who have been thrown out of educations because of these problems. Give them a skill. Let this fellow go to the land and find ways of dealing with this situation so that the children they produce will benefit from this change.

Children able to go school:

Yes, it goes back to *disturbance in surroundings* because when there was insurgency, schools were banned. You could not go to school. People were killed. . . When therefore the process of teaching people formally was broken down, that was war, absence of peace. Therefore, when education is available, when we are able to access it, that is peace. We used to access education and lived happily. Now this insurgency came in, it stopped it. We are now saying if peace is to come, then education will be there. So really what we are saying, in some parts of Teso education is not there. [Still schools are closed—the insurgency continues.] . . .

In the north . . . the RA was attacked by Karamojong, the local people were killed. That's why they told you these Karamojong, you'll see, you'll see. There the children cannot go to school. It is not the government who is preventing these things, it is the Karamojong. And any places even where there is peace and the schools have been wiped over the last seven years, children have nowhere to study, teachers have nowhere to sleep, people are too poor to contribute to the erection of those institutions. So it's a vicious circle. . . the position which is very, very firm in Teso that without education we cannot say there is peace. Let the government give us education, let the government rehabilitate this place because they know how this place used to be. Then let our children go to school. Today in Teso has the lowest number of people going to school.

Freedom of speech:

Freedom of speech is oniy one little aspect of freedom. Freedom is mainly action. With you I want to express what I want to say, speak what I want to say, I should be free to move to you and speak with you without fearing. If I am annoyed, I tell you what you have done to me is not good. . . So I move, I don't send messages. I go myself. I come myself. Through expression. Speech. I verbalize it when you are looking at me. If you have anything to say, you speak directly to me, and I respond.

Communication:

Able to say what you want to say, speak truth. Do what you say, honor what you have communicated. True communication is mutual states of trust, not hollow words. Government people make promises which are unfulfilled. Open wounds. During trouble, radios were confiscated, radio calls taken from NGOs, clinics. State of blackout. Enemies don't communicate. If one person refuses to talk, then not on good terms. There's no talking with Karamojong.

Freedom from disorder:

Freedom from disorder means being able to be orderly. And in fact that is why at Teso I was with fairly strict people. They don't want disorder. They are very strict. And that is also a problem in Teso for some people who don't want to be strict. But when you are strict you want things to be done on time, you want things to be done well, you want things to be done in a calm way, you want things to be done without disturbance. Whatever views you have you express them, but don't hurt others. We are very firm people.

Proper government:

Doesn't cause disturbance, lack of happiness, etc. During the workshop people saying this looked at the RC-V representatives, who looked down.

Soldiers brought AIDS to Teso, but Ateso respect authority, are law-abiding. We respect people and people's things. Possessions. Number one is respect elders. Respect others regardless of position.

Love:

Love is actually love. . . When Christianity came. . . You see, Ateso wanted to express love, Christian love, maybe more sharply because of the way God has made them. Ateso are loving people. . . Christianity has sharpened the latent love they were born with. Love is what we call *amena*. . . It is a very excessive liking, excessive understanding of other people and even of oneself. . . thinking well of others, I think that thing is something which was there because you can get people who are not Christians at all but they will display that love. Like for example, love for visitors. Love for others. You talk to anybody sincere in Uganda say . . . towards one Ateso. People go there poor, when they leave there they are very rich. That doesn't mean one thing has saved us. People are talking in Uganda —why do people go to Teso? People who are contented. We never wanted to rule because ruling would be putting you from your own people, your own family, having sleepless nights, meetings, whatever. Let me bring my children. Let me be with my relatives. Let them go to school. Let us discuss things nearest to us. It is concern for others and for oneself. So when this Christianity came, I think it is

simply it found fertile ground. I think this Christian love found fertile ground.

If you trace that, there is something to do with the beginning, the way one was brought up. The love is rooted in families, in the culture. So Christianity simply sharpened it in my own view. I have heard people say that Ateso people are very hospitable, very kind, very loving. So that is love. It is more embedded than Christian. But Christian love has simply enriched.

Prosperity:

Prosperity really means having riches. [Having enough.] And even more than enough. We used to have more than enough because we used to feed . . . Mbale. Today in Mbale, if you go to Mbale, hotels sometimes don't have supper. Cows used to come from Teso, food used to come from Teso. They have no land, there are too many, and they are too lazy. They want to drink in Mbale area. Teso was their granery. They would have vehicles, go there, buy food and bring. We used to even fill milk from Teso to Mbale town. Now there is no source. The situation is not good.

Togetherness and unity:

That is what we call *aimorikikina*. Pulling together. . . It is a regular indication of happiness and pleasure. [Physically hugging, embracing] . . . is just an expression of that thing which is not visible. It is just one slight expression of *aimorikikina* . . . a combination of togetherness and unity. . . And then from meeting, cooperation, comes understanding, comes commitment, you know, peacefulness. All those other things are coming. Embracing is an outward expression of that thing. It is not itself this. Our hugging is not *aimorikikina*, it is an external expression of it. It means more than our hugging. It is the feeling behind the hugging.

Settled in mind and community:

That one, of course, comes from all these others. When I talk about school fees, that type of thing, when we had everything, your mind is settled. Nothing shakes it.

Good relations with God and man:

. . . we know that all that man does is a gift from God. But then if you are prevented from practicing your God, that aspect is cut. If you are unable to go to church because someone says they are going to preach war there, you are being prevented from worship, you are being prevented from having a relationship with your God.

We should have increased good relations with God after suffering. We should see expansion of the church—more churches, more men going for priesthood, the extension to the cathedral broken down

during the war! Now very crowded services, sitting on floor, sitting behind the priest.

It's dangerous to carry money to church. I wanted to give a donation for the cathedral. I said, 'I'm not familiar with the road between Mbale and Soroti.' and everyone laughed. So I carried one blank check in my sock.

ANALYSIS—CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION

Professor Odaet's interpretations and elaborations provide insight into Ateso life before and during the insurgencies, and assert that although a sense of stability has returned, the conflict is not yet resolved and victimization continues. He reveals an important cultural aspect to the concept and practice of peace among the Ateso: resolution of conflicts over possessions or use of communal land relied upon the knowledge and judgment of tribal elders. During our workshop, clear distinctions were made between arbitration and mediation, stressing the merits of the latter as a more viable and equitable method for resolution of dispute. During the process of resolving conflicts in role plays and simulations, participants would apply the communication strategies of mediation, but the resolution would ultimately be the result of arbitration by the one in the role of tribal elder. Its appeal was due to its institutional dimension within the Ateso culture as the established means of resolving conflict. However, since the insurgencies the Ateso people have suffered a sense of powerlessness in their inability to apply this traditional, intratribal method during Uganda's prolonged intertribal conflict. They are eager for training in alternative concepts and techniques to avoid further victimization.

Professor Odaet clearly describes the Ateso cultural dependency on cattle as a source of all basic necessities—food, health, education, etc. Although he referred to “the cattle complex as a source of peace” in the past, no one at our seminar defined *peace* specifically in terms of ownership of cattle. Now all their cattle are gone. The Ateso display an incredible ability to endure, to persevere, to assess and re-prioritize. Even their attitudes toward the Karamojong display their willingness to empathize and understand the needs and perspectives of the other, to move beyond their own stereotypes, and to suggest possible solutions. Their diet has shifted—without oxen, agriculture is produced solely by manual labor, making the abundance of the past unfeasible. Beef is a rarity, available only when trade is conducted with the Karamojong. During the closing of our seminar, guest speaker Bishop Ilukor of the Church of Uganda confirmed the prevailing theme of “think beyond the cow”, i. e., stop lamenting for what is beyond reach (qtd. in Maxwell 15). The prior convention of investing in cattle had to desist due to a perceived continuing threat of cattle rustling. The only deterrance to this mode of conflict is a cultural transformation; indeed, any hope for peace and progress necessitates a cultural transformation. Instead of again allowing themselves to be vulnerable to war in the form of cattle rustling, Ateso are investing in construction materials with plans to build. Bags of cement accumulate in corners, along corridors. After being driven from their homes for

so many years, the Ateso are eager to establish a foundation of stability in permanent cement structures.

Assessment has revealed a dire need for education. Less than 50 percent of Ateso children attend school; those fortunate enough to be enrolled are likely to be full-grown teenagers in elementary school, making up for the lost time when all education was halted due to the imminent dangers of war. In fact, their lack of educational opportunities due to continuing poverty and the closing of schools during the insurgencies is viewed as a more severe cultural handicap than the stolen cattle. War, or absence of peace, is equated with lack of education, not lack of cattle. As Professor Odaet stated, "... without education we cannot say there is peace." In that sense, from the perspective of the majority of Ateso, a war-like state of deprivation still exists, a prime example of what Johan Galtung refers to as persistent "structural violence" (291). The Ateso efforts to culturally transform themselves must be augmented by humanitarian aid to open the doors of educational institutions to more Ateso children. Education is the key for a total transformation to a society able to normalize daily life and to realize their modest ideals and definitions of *peace*.

CONCLUSION

The invitation to co-facilitate at the Soroti Peace Education Seminar presented an opportunity for an innovative, victim-centered approach to conflict analysis. Because Uganda is one of many former British colonies where English is a national language, spoken by all educated people, this workshop for community leaders was conducted in English. With the convenience of a common language, it was possible to gain an understanding of the needs, desires and perspectives of the victims of prolonged conflict by eliciting their definitions of peace. Even when the definitions appeared to be commonplace and of no special significance to this particular culture or conflict, with perseverance it was possible to delve further for an explanation. With Professor Odaet's elucidation, an anthropological-type analysis of the Ateso culture was revealed, as well as a victim-centered analysis of how Uganda's protracted conflict has affected one tribe in the rural north.

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