

PhD Dissertation Title

Beyond Religio-Cultural Violence: A Historico-Political Re-contextualization of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God

Abstract

In conceptualizing the emergence of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (MRTCG) and the mass violence that the religious movement orchestrated, scholarship and popular literature have accentuated the primacy of culture. The MRTCG is claimed to have arisen from ethnic Bakiga's embrace of Marian and Millenarian religious traditions. The MRTCG violence which climaxed with the 2000 Kanungu Inferno is also essentialized as a predestined result of inherently violent ethnic and religious traditions. This study however de-emphasizes the culturalist conceptions of the MRTCG and its violence. It deploys decolonization as a methodology and critically utilizes aspects of anthropology, historicism and political science to explore the context within which the MRTCG both emerged as a breakaway religious movement and descended into violence. The study contends that the MRTCG arose from multiplicities of the history of political marginalization within institutions of the nation-state. It illustrates that the MRTCG is a product of the colonial politicization of ethnicity, political parties and religion. The study further argues that the MRTCG violence erupted within the context of Uganda's regulation and criminalization of religious movements. In making sense of the agency of breakaway religious movements in postcolonial Africa, the study calls for a historicization that focuses on their interaction with institutions of nation-state power. It contends that breakaway religious movements arise not only as a critique but also a creation of the undemocratized state.