

Tracing the Christian Heritage and the Emergence of Islam in Goma, DRC: The Way Forward for the Church

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Abstract

This article traces the Christian heritage in Goma and examines the increasing conversions to Islam and other cults in Goma, the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It highlights the failure of Christians to live a Christian life and values, the negative perception of Islam by pastors, and the lack of awareness of the Islamic religion by Christians as factors contributing to the recent spread of Islam in Goma. This study used the phenomenological researcher approach and interviews with pastors and district chiefs. It argues for the need for Christians to live out their values and participate in mercy ministries in their communities. The church should organise basic training on world religions for believers to respond to emerging challenges.

Keywords: Christianity, Islam, Goma, DRC, Church

Introduction

The church in Goma, a city in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, has faced unceasing civil wars and extreme poverty. Indeed, it is a church that has grown despite its challenging context. However, in the recent past, Islam has been making inroads in Goma. Kavutwa investigated the factors favouring Islam's spread in Goma. He noted that the Goma region had been known as a Christian land with very few Muslims. However, this is gradually changing because of the gradual increase of mosques in the region.¹ This is a recent

¹ Néhémie Kasereka Kavutwa. *Investigating the Spread of Islam in the Eastern Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Masters Thesis, Africa International University, 2017.



development, although Islam was first brought to this area in 1887.² In 1992, there were only two mosques in Goma, one in Birere and one in the Murara district,³ whereas in 2023, there is one or two in each of the 18 districts. Islam is spreading and attracting even those claiming to be Christians. The evolving situation raises missiological questions. It raises questions about the strategies used by the church to reach out and strengthen its members in the face of prevalent societal challenges.⁴ This article investigates the factors that possibly influence the spread of Islam in Goma and interrogates the pastor's perception of Islam as one of the key factors contributing to the spread of Islam in Goma.

Literature Review

The Arrival of Islam to Goma

By the end of the twentieth century, about 50% of Africans practised Christianity, 40% practised Islam, and only 10% practised traditional religions.⁵ Many researchers have recorded the spread of Islam in Africa since its arrival on this continent as related to the slave trade period between the sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries.⁶

Islam arrived in Goma from East Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century (187) through a caravan of Swahili Arabs crossing the border between Tanzania (Tanganyika) and the DRC to Maniema, searching for gold, ivory and slaves.⁷ Insoll records that the Central African region was one of the last regions in sub-Saharan Africa to come in contact with Islam.⁸ Earlier in 1850, a wealthy Muslim Arab trader, Tippu Tip, had come to Congo.⁹ He was foremost a slave trader but carried with him Islam. The first two mosques in Goma were built by Muslims from Maniema, the centre of Islam in DRC, where Tippu Tip established his camps in 1874.¹⁰

² Edward A. Alpers, *The East African Slave Trade*. Historical Association of Tanzania. Alpers 1967, 14

³ Kasereka, 16.

⁴ William Wagner, *How Islam Plans to Change the World*, Updated Ed., (Kregel, 2012), 178.

⁵ "The Encyclopedia of World Religions," 22, accessed August 11, 2022.

⁶ John Alembillah Azumah. *The Legacy of Arab-Islam In Africa: A Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue*, 117, accessed May 8, 2022.

⁷ Alpers, 14.

⁸ Timothy Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge, UK.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 361.

⁹ Leda Farrant, *Tippu Tip and the East African Slave Trade* (London: Hamilton, 1975), 21.

¹⁰ Farrant, 71.



The Second Entry of Islam to Goma

Islam's second and third successive arrival in Goma in 1994¹¹ and 1995 came with the Rwandan refugees (Hutus) arriving during the Rwandan genocide. They went to Bukavu and Goma. Gourevitch was one of the first journalists to enter post-genocide Rwanda and physically met the survivors. One of the largest camps was in the village of Tingi-Tingi in eastern Congo.¹² Many Rwandan refugees, including Muslims, escaped to Goma and Bukavu (east of DRC). Filip observes that in 1996, Rwanda tried to take back the refugees but was unsuccessful for security reasons.¹³ The refugees decided to stay in Goma and Bukavu, where they could receive humanitarian support from “Dawa al Islamaya,” a Muslim fundamentalist and humanitarian organisation in Khartoum that established an office in Kinshasa in 1995 to support the Rwandan refugee in camps in Kivu (Goma and Bukavu).¹⁴ Therefore, the genocide event influenced the Islamic entry to Goma.

The third move of Islam to Goma came in 1995 after the genocide in Rwanda. The Ugandan Muslim refugees who resigned from the Uganda National Liberation Army and are now known as (NALU), joined another Ugandan insurgency group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). It is noted, “The best-armed and most organised insurgency group that violently challenged the legitimacy of the Museveni regime in the region was the Uganda National Liberation Army (NALU). This is what had been destabilising the Beni since 1987.”¹⁵ Beni is situated in North Kivu province, in the eastern DRC.

Back in Uganda, these two rebel groups were under the leadership of Idi-Amin, defeated by the army group of Yoweri Museveni before they joined together to form a Jihadist movement (ADF-NALU). This fundamentalist group has been directly linked to both “*al-Shabaab*” in Somalia and “Islamic State” (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq.¹⁶ The ADF-NALU has kept its allegiance and cooperation with these radical Muslim groups and has tried to expand to Goma.

¹¹ Romeo Dallier, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, Reprint Ed., (Da Capo Press, 2004), 468.

¹² Daniel E. Harmon, *Central and East Africa: 1880 To the Present: From Colonialism to Civil War (Exploration of Africa)*, (Chelsea House 2001), 105.

¹³ Filip Reinterns. *The Great African War. Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996–2006. Reprint ed.*, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 141.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁵ Ongenga Otunnu. *Crisis of Legitimacy and Political Violence in Uganda, 1979 to 2016*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 252.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 336.



As earlier mentioned, the three circumstances that led to Islam in Goma, the first entry had economic ambitions; the subsequent moves were somehow political and humanitarian, especially for the Rwandan Muslim refugees who sought security in Goma. None of these circumstances suggested, at that time, a Muslim religious ambition to settle down and Islamize the people living in Goma.

Furthermore, no one can ignore the current presence of Pakistani and Indian Muslims under MONUSCO, the largest UN peacekeeper in the eastern DRC. Beyond its peacemaking mission, it is another Muslim propagation category that arguably supports Islam's spread in Goma by building mosques and Muslim schools and supporting local economic initiatives. Since then, Islam has grown in number and social infrastructure. This factor shows how Islam has been influential in one way or another, and its effects and significance in Goma, a predominantly Christian area, deserves attention.

The Islamic Plan to Spread

The arrival of Islam and its impact on the institutions of Goma have been regarded by many as the ultimate pursuit of Islam's plan to spread in all parts of the world. Wagner states that it is a plan for complete world domination, which many Muslims believe is inevitable.¹⁷ He observes, "All Muslims shared a common faith, a confession of their belief in one God, in his book and the teachings of historical backgrounds, languages, loyalties, customs, and cultures."¹⁸ In cognisance of this global plan, the ISIS leader remarked, "Since the end of the First World War, more than one and a half billion Muslims living there were now pledged allegiance to Baghdadi."¹⁹ From the same angle, Azuay points out that even African Muslims want a sense of belonging to the global Muslim *Umma* for communication and mutual exchange of ideology, values and principles to straighten the worldwide community and reach the Islamic goal.²⁰ The fundamentalist claims Muslims must exercise power or authority in any part of God's earth. In any encounter between Muslims and non-Muslims, Muslims must dominate, *i.e.* exercise power over non-Muslims to, as they claim, "command good and forbid evil effectively."²¹

¹⁷ Wagner, 179.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁹ Robert Manne, *The Mind of the Islamic State: ISIS and the Ideology of the Caliphate*, (Prometheus, 2017), 8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 269.

²¹ John Alembillah Azumah, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam In Africa: A Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue*, (Oneworld Publications, 2001), 227.



One of the main goals of Islam since the beginning is to bring spiritual, social, political and economic change. Ribī, one of the Muslim chiefs on a battlefield, was asked why they were fighting. He answered as follows using his faith lenses, “Allah has sent us and brought us here so that we may free those who desire from servitude [*ibadat*] to earthly rulers and make them servants of God that we may change their poverty into wealth and free them from the tyranny of [false] religions and bring them to the justice of Islam.”²²

In the same view, Mansoor notes that “prophet Muhammad came to change that reality and to make people return to worshipping Allah . . . Those believers had become *Khurana* [solitaries] in their homeland, and among their people or relatives. So the prophet and the believers struggled for the sake of Islam, to bring more people to Islam, and to establish the Islamic state . . .”²³ In addition, Hussein emphasises the effects of the dynamic Islamic culture; for Him, it makes “the trials of change, social justice and the elimination of oppression and evil. It encourages learning, education and the search for knowledge.”²⁴ Kaptein underlines the idea of Islamization of a people, evolving from the family as a social unit to the injection of Islam into the whole community. From one family to another to live under the teachings of Islam, society was respectfully integrating Islamic values and culture.²⁵ Regarding this, however, it is undeniable that Islam in Goma exchanges ideas with the global Muslim *Umma*. Islam in Goma holds to the tenets of Islam such as social service, worship, respect for Islamic norms and codes, pilgrimage to Mecca, the building of mosques and its links with the Islamic bank, among others.

Effects of Islam on Institutions in Goma

Adani has studied the influence of popular customs within Islam and writes, “The Arab-Muslim world has become plagued with nationalism. Arab nationalism has veered from the path of social justice and political responsibility, creating tyrannies, abuses of authorities, and a resurgence of despotic traditions of the worst form instead.”²⁶ Reilly underlines the current

²² Kennedy Hugh, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In*, (Da Capo press, 2008), 112.

²³ Mansoor Jassem Alshamsi, *Islam and Political Reform in Saudi Arabia: The Quest for Political Change and Reform*, (Routledge, 2010), 80.

²⁴ G. Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, (Routledge, 2015), 9.

²⁵ C. van Dijk and N. J. G. Kaptein, eds., *Islam, Politics and Change: The Indonesian Experience after the Fall of Suharto*, Debates on Islam & Society (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2016), 48.

²⁶ Mohammad R. Salama, *Islam, Orientalism and Intellectual History: Modernity and the Politics of Exclusion since Ibn Khaldun* (I.B. Tauris, 2011), 7.



different crisis of Islamism that has produced a dysfunctionality of the culture in the Islamic world. As grounded in a “spiritual pathology” rooted upon a “theological deformation.”²⁷

For Baar, looking at it from a Christian standpoint, Islam is becoming more intense in its bid to dominate the world. As the “end times” approach, they are increasingly becoming hostile to God and persecute Christians, the people of Israel.²⁸ Bennett also emphasises classical and contemporary Christian polemics, which state that; “Islam is a religion of violence, spread mainly if not exclusively by the sword, that it is intolerant of minorities and of dissent, and suppresses women and freedom of speech.”²⁹

On the one hand, the Islamic culture of violence is rooted in the very birth of Islam when “Muhammad stood in Mecca and proclaimed the message of God. He warned the unbelievers of the terrible punishment awaiting them on the Day of Judgement. He called on the Meccans to submit to God’s will through preaching. The majority of the Quaiish received Muhammad’s message with open hostility. Muhammad and his followers were tortured and persecuted.³⁰ Kateregga states, “Muslims were commanded, from the very beginning, not to start aggression or hostilities against other people. They were, however, to stand firm in resisting aggression and oppression directed against the Umma and humanity.”³¹ Qur’an 8:30 states, “Allah is Lord of abounding bounty. (8:30) And recall how those who disbelieved schemed against you to take you captive, or kill you, or drive you away...” According to Plander, “Islam is a religion that attracts people by force or by worldly gain.”³² Maryam Jameelah, an American converted to Judaism living in Pakistan, also shares the same perception, describing Christianity as a Western idea intrinsically inhospitable to Islam. She writes, “While the Christians of western Asia and North Africa were quick to embrace Islam, Europe by contrast evinced ‘hostility’ and resistance to the spread of Islam, and since then the interests of Islam and Western civilisation have always conflicted with each other.”³³

²⁷ Robert R. Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis*, (Isi Books, 2011), 175.

²⁸ Marius Baar, *The Unholy War* (Worthing: Henry E. Walter, 1980), 81.

²⁹ Clinton Bennett, *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2008), 186.

³⁰ Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, Repr (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1997), 74.

³¹ Kateregga and Shenk, 75.

³² Bennett, *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations*, 87.

³³ Lloyd V. J. Ridgeon, ed., *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 180.



On the other hand, however, in such circumstances, it is more normal than ever to think that the Islamist effects are a reaction from a certain number of Muslims who suffer from a feeling of rejection. Bodansky remarks, “Osama bin Laden has emerged as a key leader, not only the deniable instrument of the terrorism-sponsoring states and the willing perpetrator of the most outrageous strikes but a popular hero whose mere involvement builds grassroots support for the strikes and willingness to endure retaliation. As a result, bin Laden has come to symbolise the Islamist surge against and confrontation with the West.”³⁴ He adds, “Bin Laden’s Islamist forces continue to patiently consolidate their capabilities and further their preparations for spectacular and has already expanded the network of organisations and groups following both his own theological teaching and the Zawahiri’s military-terrorist plans...”³⁵ The fearest fundamentalist in Beni is one of its branches. The current events of terrorism in Beni have affected people and the government and consequently caused the massive displacement of the inhabitants of Beni and Butembo towards Goma. The Congolese and Ugandan armies are engaged in the war against ADF-NALU. This is one of the factors that has led people, especially some pastors in Goma, to judge and reject Islam, for it is just a local branch of the universal Muslim brotherhood.

The Response to the Effects of Islam Extremism

Globally, the understanding of Islam has been influenced by Islamic extremism. Reilly argues that a solution must be articulated at the same level the problem exists. In other words, the Western efforts to improve the economy for the well-being of the Middle East to drain terrorism without considering the worldview of the people in this area is like wasting time.³⁶ For Baar, the effects of Islam are greater than imagined. He points out that; “For several hundred years, the West has been trying to create a new society, but it is losing the ability to continue. The West will realise what power it possessed only when that power has been totally taken away.”³⁷ Concerning the *September 11 Commission* report which concluded that “to eliminate the danger posed by AlQaeda is to dominate in the long term the ideology that gives

³⁴ Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, 1. ed (Roseville, Calif: Forum, 2001), 337.

³⁵ Bodansky, 387.

³⁶ Reilly, 175.

³⁷ Baar, *The Unholy War*, 206.



rise to Islamist terrorism in the world,”³⁸ Sookhdeo and Gorga argue, the ideological battle is, therefore, in many ways more important than the kinetic battle. It is easier to kill radical Islamist jihadists than to eliminate their Islamist ideology. Ideology gathers resources and recruits new fighters to replace those killed. The ideology must first be addressed.³⁹ A Nigeria Catholic priest, in an interview, responded on how Christians would react if Muslims launched a jihad against them. He replied, “What we have, therefore, in this situation of a population which is roughly half-Christian and half-Muslim, is essentially a competition for not only religious but also political influence. If the Christian can get to 51% of the population, then they will be able to set up a Christian state...”⁴⁰ Even in Goma, the fear of Islam is real because of what is happening worldwide.

Methodological Approach

The study to understand the effects of Islam in Goma utilised the qualitative approach. The qualitative design holds that a full understanding of phenomena depends on the context and hence uses theories after data collection to interpret the observed patterns.⁴¹ One of the critical elements of this approach, however, was that it involved participant observation and interviews as a method for data collection. The researcher design used a phenomenology approach to design a philosophical research plan that describes lived experiences to understand them more profoundly, given events or phenomena. It is an indispensable approach to establishing the meaning of a phenomenon from the participants’ viewpoints; “Phenomenological studies are also a common qualitative approach. They try to capture the ‘essence’ of the human experience. Like other qualitative researchers, phenomenologists are interested in recording the individual perspectives of the participants in the study.”⁴² The population of a study refers to all individuals in the study.⁴³ This research was focused on institutions in Goma (churches and district offices) represented by their leaders. It comprised a

³⁸ Patrick Sookhdeo and Katharine Cornell Gorka, *Fighting the Ideological War: Winning Strategies from Communism to Islamism* (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2012), 15.

³⁹ Sookhdeo and Gorka, 16.

⁴⁰ Ridgeon, *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, 234.

⁴¹ Marguerite G. Lodico et al., *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice* (Jossey Bass, 16, 2006)

⁴² Ibid., 16.

⁴³ Geoffrey Marczyk, David Dematteo, and David Festinger. *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*. Wiley, 2022), 32.



group of twenty people, ten pastors and ten district leaders. There were older participants whose ages ranged from 25 to 50 and whose education was limited to a secondary school diploma or higher.

Data Collection Techniques

This researcher used observation as a method and ethnographic interview guide questions as a technique for data collection to achieve the study’s purpose. The essentiality of these methods, according to Creswell, is that they involve discussion and the researcher can take detailed notes, write, and record relevant descriptions.⁴⁴

Data Analysis

Fetterman defines qualitative data analysis as “an approach that requires coding the data and interpreting the patterns that emerge within the context of the cultural setting.”⁴⁵ Data analysis is a critical point of the study because the raw data from the field has to be communicated clearly.⁴⁶

Findings And Discussion

In this study, male respondents were the highest percentage of the population (65%), and female respondents were 35%. The first question examined the Islamic role in community development and the pastor’s perception of Islam in Goma. In response to the spread of Islam in Goma, 45% of respondents who were the chief communities acknowledged Islam’s positive role in community development initiatives. They agreed that Muslims have been involved in building schools and healthcare centres and creating job opportunities for the youth.

However, 55% of respondents see the spread of Islam in Goma as a threat to the gains of Christianity in the region. The pastors thought that Islam represented a security danger to the area. They believe Islam has a connection with terrorist activities in the neighbouring Beni region. They also think Islam has spread false teachings, destroying the local African culture. They use “danger” and “menace” to describe their perception of Islam in Goma. One of the respondents even said, “Islam in Goma is very dangerous because of their plan to Islamize the

⁴⁴ John W. Creswell. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd ed., (Sage Publications, 2008), 169.

⁴⁵ David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step-by-Step* (Sage Publications, 2010), 125.

⁴⁶ Edgar J. Elliston, *Introduction To Missiological Research Design*, Illustrated edition. (Pasadena, Calif: Wasiyam Carey Library, 2011), 81.



whole DRC and impose the sharia against the other religions.” Thus, one can understand the radical perception of Islam in Goma.

Islam as a Religion of War?

The factors behind the description of Islam by church leaders in Goma clearly explain their rejection of Islam. First, Christians describe Islam as a religion of war and behind the current terrorist attacks in the north of Kivu. Respondent 11 pointed out the 2014 recruitment of young Muslims by some members of the Islamic community in Goma to support ADF-NALU. This fundamentalist group has killed thousands of people in the eastern DRC. Links to groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria also draw on the history of holy wars. The participants repeatedly suggested the possibility of Islam in Goma having links with the Muslim extremists committing crimes and massacres in the name of Allah.

The Qu’ran as a Magic Book?

Besides, the rejection of Islam is based on Christians’ view of the Qu’ran. Christians in Goma have not examined the Qu’ran’s image in Goma. Muslims claim that Qu’ran is a divine book, supposedly a revelation that leads to peace. Christians, on the one hand, suspect it is a magic book. It has been accused of being used in witchcraft scenarios.⁴⁷ It encourages polygamy and violence. Its teaching denies the crucifixion and the divinity of Christ. Many Christians thus consider Muslims to have lost the right path. There is a broader view of historical and world Islam that would prevent Islam in Goma from being seen in its proper context. This view of Islam is based on two historical pillars: the crusade story and the myth of the Qu’ran.

Christian Perceptions of Islam in Goma

As observed earlier, there are some mixed viewpoints concerning Islam in Goma. Some Christians and African traditionalists link it with existing terror groups, while others do not see any link with the ADF-NALU movement. Those who link it with radical groups believe that Islam should not be allowed to spread in Goma.

Christians should look at the situation differently. The case presents an opportunity for the church to strengthen Christians in the faith and to spread the gospel. The present pastor’s view is problematic because it builds a barrier for church members to understand Islam, thus

⁴⁷ Bill A. Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims*, 1st ed (Marc Evangelical Missionary Alliance, 1989), 278.



leading them to accuse Islam and distance themselves from Muslims. Christians should not succumb to fear because some Muslims in Goma were formerly Christians. The pastor's perception and attitude toward Muslims can be attributed to a lack of information about Islam and, thus, has been a barrier to the mission toward Muslims in Goma.

District Chiefs' Perception of Islam in Goma

Most district chiefs' perception of Islam in Goma significantly differs from the pastor's. Most of the chiefs (45%) think that the spread of Islam in the city has established charitable works such as schools, hospitals, orphans and development projects. For them, Islam has the right to spread like other religions in DRC. Muslim and Christian leaders all acknowledge that the government supports Islam. It supports Islam by offering it access to public spaces during its religious celebrations, and it builds partnerships. One of the interviewees, a Muslim district chief who also works in the municipality for the public administration, says she wants to see Islam expanded. For her, "Islam helps the sick to pay their bills, visits the prisoners, and pays the school fees of orphans and those from underprivileged families. Many people love Islam in Goma and are converting. So the government should support Islam to increase the number of schools in the region." This declaration, however, links to Islam international politics or the Islam outreach plan. Alkat cites the leader of the Islamic world at a conference in Nigerian looked at the gains since 1963 and the new funding models that prioritise funding to the member countries of the Islamic State, Islamic research centres, development and trade, and for the support of Islamic institutions in the missionary field.⁴⁸

The Right of Religion Freedom

The DRC's laws allow freedom of religion for all. Although Ahmed argues, "any selected cultural, ideological or religious group can serve as an alternative to a national model when politicised as the foundation for systems of affirmative action in which some citizens are privileged over others."⁴⁹ This is how the public administration recognises Islam among many other religions and ensures the freedom of its faith and culture. It values religious and cultural expressions in all their diversity through dialogue with a view to a culture of peace, development and democracy. Thus, the liberty of religion reveals an indispensable aspect in

⁴⁸ Nura Alkali, etc, and Adamu Adamu, eds., *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference* (Ibadan: African Books Collective, 1993), 306.

⁴⁹ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam, Globalization, and Postmodernity* (Routledge, 1994), 63.



the context of high tension and instability that is increasing in the DRC. The role of the district chief chefs, as opposed to the pastors, is also part of the government’s vision to maintain stability among people in the region. In this way, the district chiefs and the public administration have the mission to protect and promote the achievements of “secularism” to reinforce peace among the Congolese.

Conclusion

This article traced the Christian heritage in Goma and examined the increasing conversions to Islam and other cults in Goma, the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It reviewed the history of Islam in the Goma region in the previous centuries. The study indicated that district chiefs support the spread of Islam, while on the other hand, most pastors in the region hold a negative perception of Islam. This was attributed to a lack of knowledge of Islam and a missiological outreach strategy by the church. The church should organise basic training on world religions for believers to respond to emerging challenges. It argues for the need for Christians to live out their values and participate in mercy ministries in their communities. This situation provides the need for the promotion and appropriation of Christian values to prepare and allow the church to respond not only to Islam but also to all kinds of change and to continue to be as such.

Recommendations

The study offers the following recommendations:

First, the study recommends the church in Goma emphasise “works of piety.” This involves bearing witness to salvation in Christ by living out Christ’s teachings. It must be a personal discipline before being a collective discipline. Second, the study recommends the practice of works of mercy, which may involve visiting prisoners, caring for the sick, giving financial aid to the poor and speaking out against the exploitation and social injustice prevalent in the region. By doing this, Christians are obeying the greatest commandment of Jesus Christ: to love our neighbour as oneself. Finally, the church should develop a framework for the mission work based on contextual needs.



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