

In the Garden of Eden – I: Creation and Community

Zac Niringiye

Introduction: What Went Wrong? Is There Hope?

Headline news in Uganda, Friday, July 10, 2009:

Over two million people in North, Eastern and West Nile are at risk of starvation, the Uganda Red Cross has announced.

The agency yesterday stated that Kitgum, Katakwi, Bukedea, Kumi, Soroti, Amuria, Koboko, Adjumani, Nebbi, Arua and parts of Kibaale [districts in the Northern and Eastern parts of Uganda] are the worst hit areas.¹

The area described in the newspaper story constitutes about a sixth of the area mass of Uganda. How can this

¹ *New Vision*, Kampala, Saturday, July 11, 2009. The *New Vision* is the best-selling national daily newspaper in Uganda.



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be for a country that is known as a well-watered country with close to 17% or 51,000 square kilometers of its area dedicated to swamp or open water, a country that lies in the interlacustrine region (between the lakes) of Africa—a region that receives abundant rainfall and is rich in tillable land?

The *New Vision* story continues:

Michael Nataka, the Uganda Red Cross secretary general, yesterday attributed the famine to prolonged draught, out of season planting, the ripple effect of the 2007 floods that ravaged Eastern Uganda and changes in weather patterns. The statement follows an evaluation tour of the affected areas.

“In some areas where farmers planted early, the crops were thriving. But you find in the same village crops are withering in other gardens because people planted late,” Nataka stated.

“The region has never recovered from the flooding, which affected the cycle of storing seeds. There is also lack of adequate information about the weather. People are relying on seasons that have since changed.”

Famine of this magnitude in a well-watered country with abundant rainfall and tillable land is a contradiction in terms. We ask: What went wrong? The answer is short and simple: distortions in climate patterns. In short: Two million people in Uganda face starvation as a result of climate change!

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The subject of climate change raises very critical issues and questions, matters of life and death for many in our world today. Millions upon millions in the world, not just in Uganda, face starvation and death as a result of unpredictable climate patterns that have resulted from the abuse of nature