

Mutundwe Christian Fellowship (MCF) and Pastor Tom Mugerwa

Disclaimer: We have undertaken this research in response to many questions about MCF from pastors and Christian leaders across Uganda. Our description and critique of certain doctrines and practices should not be misunderstood as an attack on Pentecostals or Pentecostalism in general.

Founding Date/Place: Founded as a home-based fellowship in 1992 by Tom Mugerwa, it is now located in Kabaawo Zone, Rubaga Division, Kampala, Uganda.

Website: mutundwechristianfellowship.org

Publications: Mugerwa has authored at least six books in English and Luganda: *Taking the Battle to the Devil's Territory*, *Functions of the Holy Spirit*, *God's Covenant* and *To Be Perfected in Christ*, *The Lord's Second Coming*, and *How to Become a Good Shepherd*.

Radio: MCF Radio reaches “almost 80%” of central Uganda via 98.7 FM and 100.7 FM.¹ Programs are primarily in Luganda, with some in English.

Television and Video: Live services can be viewed at mcftv.live. Eternal Life TV (YouTube) is a channel for Mutundwe Christian Fellowship Broadcasting Ministry Ltd (MCFBM).

HISTORY

Pastor Tom Balaba Mugerwa, the founder and senior pastor of MCF, was born in Uganda. He claims that in 1990, while he was a migrant labourer in London, he received God's call to return to Uganda and “build Him an army that will fight the battles during the end time periods.” Initially resistant, Mugerwa recounts that his disobedience led to personal hardships until he yielded five months later.²

Upon returning to Uganda, Pastor Mugerwa teamed up with “five of his other colleagues” who “had a common spiritual calling of restoring God's Kingdom on earth and preparing the perfect church of Christ for eternity.”³ They started a cell group on Friday nights in Mugerwa's home along with Mugerwa's wife (now known as Pastor Justine).

The group grew quickly, leading them to build a papyrus shelter in 1992 that they called Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, soon to be followed by a larger wooden structure.⁴ The current main structure “can accommodate about 7,000 people.”⁵ Interestingly, MCF has no formal membership. Exact attendance statistics are not available, but one researcher notes that MCF “welcomes several thousand visitors every day.”⁶ Some of these visitors stay at the facility not just for overnights, but for days—and even weeks. Observers have noted a disproportionate presence of women attending MCF.

MCF operates as an independent ministry, unaffiliated with other denominational bodies. This autonomy allows Mugerwa to shape its theology and practice without external limitations or accountability. Unlike traditional churches that have a main meeting on Sunday morning, MCF runs programs Monday through Saturday, often beginning at 8:30 am and sometimes lasting until 2:30 am.⁷ MCF's Facebook page claims that it is “always open.”⁸ On Sundays a team of evangelists engages in door-to-door outreach.

¹ MCF Radio, “About Us,” <https://mcfradio.co.ug/about-us/>, accessed February 26, 2026.

² “Pastor Tom,” Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, <http://www.mutundwechristianfellowship.org/pastor-tom/>, accessed February 25, 2025.

³ “Who We Are,” Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, accessed May 4, 2026, <http://www.mutundwechristianfellowship.org/who-we-are/>.

⁴ Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, “Pastor Tom.”

⁵ Alessandro Gusman, “Deliverance Centres, Spiritual Insecurity, and a Pragmatic Approach to Healing in Ugandan Pentecostalism,” in Sandra

Fancello and Alessandro Gusman, eds., *Charismatic Healers in Contemporary Africa: Deliverance in Muslim and Christian Worlds* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), p. 41.

⁶ Ibid., p. 40.

⁷ Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, “Pastor Tom.”

⁸ Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, “Home,” Facebook, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/mutundwechristianfellowship>.

Mugerwa enjoys a reputation among his followers as modest, humble, prayerful, and spiritually authoritative. His emphasis on practical deliverance resonates with a society where witchcraft, curses, and generational struggles are widely perceived as real and pressing.

The ministry has sometimes attracted controversy and criticism. For example, in 2021 reports surfaced that Mugerwa lost hundreds of millions of shillings in cash to a thieving personal assistant but underreported the extent of the loss publicly.⁹

Mugerwa's teachings have also drawn ridicule. For instance, in 2024 he advised women to bathe and feed their drunken husbands as an expression of humility, sparking debate in Ugandan society about gender roles and pastoral counsel.¹⁰ He was also involved in a dispute with Grace Lubega of Phaneroo over the use of the Kololo ceremonial grounds for holding end-of-year prayer meetings.¹¹

DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES

Salvation: In his writings Mugerwa often refers to the initial phase of salvation as being “born-again,” but never precisely defines the new birth. For example, in his book *God's Covenant* he explains that some people have become born-again by repenting of their sins.¹² In another book he recounts, “I first became born again in Primary three. I didn't actually confess; I merely followed my mother who was saved.”¹³ Note that he doesn't explain what “born-again” means, and confession (Romans 10:9–10) was not required for him to achieve it.

Mugerwa teaches that after becoming born again one must next seek deliverance (see below) and attain moral perfection. “As a believer, the Lord does not only want you to stop sinning, he also expects the desire of that particular sin in your heart to die...if a person is still harboring evil thoughts in his heart, then this person is not a born again Christian (saved).” Two pages later, Mugerwa says that if you “claim to be [a] born again Christian, but still harbor evil imaginations and thoughts, the Lord will not hear your prayers.” Such a person is left “in the sphere of general grace” which is “share[d] with nonbelievers.”¹⁴

Mugerwa's teaching on achieving sinless perfection also connects to his focus on deliverance. For example, when confronting the devil you mustn't have “impurity in your heart.” If your heart is pure, then God will fight with you; otherwise, you will fight alone and “you're gonna be beaten seriously.”¹⁵ He also says that “If you do not live a holy life, demons will come back.”¹⁶

(See the Appendix on pp. 7–8 of this profile for a detailed description of the two-stage process required for spiritual purification at MCF.)

Word-Faith: Mugerwa aligns with the false belief promoted by Word-Faith (prosperity gospel) preachers that human beings are actually gods. Though he doesn't state this directly, the implications are evident. For example, he reasons that because “God is a spiritual being” who “created man in His image, we are, therefore, also spiritual beings.”¹⁷ He concludes that “The only difference between man and God is that we possess a body that was extracted from the ground.”¹⁸

Mugerwa also embraces the equally distorted Word-Faith teaching that Christians have divine power and authority to control reality by using words. He states: “Fire should not only be in your heart but also in your mouth. You must speak words that will burn the demons and create the works of God (Jeremiah 5:14).”¹⁹ However, the typical Word-Faith emphasis on material prosperity is not a major focus for Mugerwa. Instead, he emphasizes other Word-Faith concepts, asserting that God

⁹ “BIG STORY: Pastor Tom Mugerwa Loses 100s of Millions to His Thieving Personal Assistant, Reports Only UGX8M as His Loss,” *The Investigator*, November 15, 2021, <https://theinvestigatornews.com/2021/11/big-story-pastor-tom-mugerwa-loses-100s-of-millions-to-his-thieving-personal-assistant-reports-only-ugx8m-as-his-loss/>.

¹⁰ Hillary Lisimba, “Ugandan Pastor Advises Wives to Bathe, Feed Husbands When They Come Home Drunk: ‘Be Humble,’” *Tuko.co.ke*, August 30, 2023, <https://www.tuko.co.ke/people/relationships/519349-ugandan-pastor-advises-wives-bathe-feed-husbands-arrive-home-drunk-humble/>.

¹¹ “Born-Again Pastors Tom Mugerwa, Phaneroo's Grace Lubega Bitter Fight Over Kololo Venue,” *Daily Express* (Uganda), November 24, 2023, <https://dailyexpress.co.ug/2023/11/24/born-again-pastors-tom-mugerwa-phaneroos-grace-lubega-bitter-fight-over-kololo-venue/>.

¹² Tom Mugerwa, *God's Covenant* (Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, 2016), p. 76, Kindle edition.

¹³ Tom Mugerwa, *To Be Perfected in Christ* (Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, 2018), p. 47, Kindle edition.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

¹⁵ Delivered to Serve, “How to Win Spiritual Warfare // Pastor Tom Mugerwa // Full Sermon - August 23, 2023,” YouTube video, 1:37:22, August 24, 2023, 1:00:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4d-uNnDYQ>.

¹⁶ Mugerwa, *God's Covenant*, p. 89.

¹⁷ Tom Mugerwa, *Taking the Battle to the Devil's Territory* (Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, 2011), p. 7, Kindle edition.

¹⁸ Mugerwa, *To Be Perfected in Christ*, p. 6.

¹⁹ Tom Mugerwa, *Functions of the Holy Spirit* (Mutundwe Christian Fellowship, 2012), p. 106, Kindle edition.

“created man [so] that he [man] could have dominion over this world,” but because of sin, the devil started reigning in His place.²⁰ Thus, he reasons, Satan became the owner of everything, and we must reclaim it from him. Mugerwa explains that “everything the Lord has promised us is still in the hands of the enemy (the devil). Therefore, we have to fight if we are to possess them.”²¹

Deliverance: According to Mugerwa, “after you have believed Jesus, there is still [a] need to come to know the truth so that the truth will make you free (John 8:31–32).”²² In Mugerwa’s framework, this “truth” refers specifically to identifying any demonic activity in the believer’s own life.

How are Christians in bondage to demons? Mugerwa explains, “when you sin, sin brings a curse, and a curse brings a legal right for the demons to work in your life.”²³ Other entry points for demonic activity come through your eyes, your dreams, “negative confessions,” “listening to foul language,” “ancestral worship,” “car accidents,” and more. Also, “some spirits, like the spirit of lust, will pass through your eyes right into your mind.”²⁴ Such demonic activity will manifest in many types of problems common to all people. All types of sickness and problems at work or in marriage are symptoms of demonic activity. To be free of these demons, one must seek deliverance.²⁵

Many of Mugerwa’s key claims are objectively unverifiable. For instance, he says that “There is a controlling demon of every family,”²⁶ but fails to disclose the source of this claim. If this is a biblical teaching, he offers no support. The reader is left to wonder if the statement rests solely on his own perceived divine authority. This pattern is also evident in the way he attaches demonic agency to ordinary creatures and events. For example, he often speaks of demonic “spying” on a believer’s life through lizards, insects, and other creatures commonly seen in and around people’s homes. He calls these *kalondozi*, a Luganda term that may be rendered as “monitoring spirits.” Such claims move beyond biblical categories and place the believer in a world where ordinary household sights are reinterpreted as signs of hidden demonic surveillance. Mugerwa’s reliance on subjective experience extends to his views on the supernatural significance of dreams. He insists that dreams reveal demonic influence, arguing that a sleeping person “enters the spiritual world [and] can be attacked and wounded in a dream” which can then be manifested in one’s physical body.²⁷

According to this view, dreams are literal reflections of spiritual reality; for example, dreaming of being naked “represents the spirit of lust or unrighteousness.”²⁸ Paradoxically, Mugerwa declares that God can speak through your thoughts, imaginations, dreams, revelations and visions.²⁹ He fails to explain how someone can know for sure whether the one speaking is a demon or God.

Mugerwa writes: “When you are seeking deliverance, repent first of the sins you committed, and those of your forefathers (Proverbs 28:13; Nehemiah 1:6–7). Then denounce the covenants and the family ties.”³⁰ This establishes a covenant between you and God. The purpose of repentance is not about recognizing one’s guilt in sin and thus reconciling one to God in the eternal state, but to break what Mugerwa describes as the Devil’s “legal hold over you”³¹ in this life.

Even if a Christian succeeds in casting out all of his or her demons, the work of deliverance never ends. Mugerwa warns that you must “consecrate everything you buy, be it clothing, edibles or any other product, before beginning to use or eat it.”³² Also,

Before starting the day, a believer is expected to dedicate all his/her properties and workplaces in the blood of Jesus. A believer must denounce all other covenants and whatever blood witchdoctors might have dedicated you to, so that those demons will not have any legal right over you. And now, in Jesus’ mighty name, you have the authority to command and expel them from your business and your life. You must also be strong in God.³³

²⁰ Delivered to Serve, “How to Win Spiritual Warfare // Pastor Tom Mugerwa // Full Sermon - August 23, 2023,” YouTube video, 1:37:22, August 24, 2023, 9:52, 14:12, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4d-uNnDY0>.

²¹ Mugerwa, *Taking the Battle*, p. 84.

²² Mugerwa, *God’s Covenant*, p. 74.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 101–103.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 28.

²⁶ Mugerwa, *Taking the Battle*, p. 48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁸ Mugerwa, *God’s Covenant*, p. 38.

²⁹ Mugerwa, *To Be Perfected*, p. 27.

³⁰ Mugerwa, *God’s Covenant*, pp. 84–85.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

RESPONSE

The most immediate impact of MCF's teachings is on the daily spiritual life of ordinary Christians. Many sincere believers are drawn to the fellowship in hoping to find lasting freedom, healing, and "breakthrough." Instead the movement's teachings often leave them with a seriously distorted view of Christ, salvation, and discipleship.

Mugerwa's teaching not only diminishes biblical sufficiency but easily creates fear, as members become obsessed with interpreting every life event as demonic attacks. Even dreams are seen as demonic infiltration or ancestral bondage. These distortions are not merely theological errors; they represent pastoral dangers. They foster dependence on the leader as a mediator between the believer and God, creating a fear-driven spirituality that ultimately diminishes the sufficiency of Christ's atonement.

While Scripture describes God as occasionally using dreams (e.g., Gen. 37; Matt. 2:13), the New Testament consistently points believers to the sufficiency of God's written Word (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 1:1–2).

As evangelical theologian John Stott has noted, "The Word of God is the test and touchstone of all supposed revelations. Without it, the church is at the mercy of every whim and fantasy."³⁴ Or, as Eddie Ssemakula succinctly puts it, "Dreams are not inspired; Scripture is."³⁵ By contrast, in MCF dreams often function as diagnostic tools for curses, demonic activity, or hidden sins—mimicking African traditional religions (ATR) by creating a reliance on dreams as spiritual barometers.

Salvation: By teaching that born-again Christians can still be demon-possessed and require perpetual deliverance, MCF eradicates the assurance of salvation. Believers are left unsure of their standing in Christ, trapped in cycles of fear and ritual. As Paul warned in Galatians 3:1–3, returning to works and rituals after receiving the Spirit by faith is a regression, not progress.

Mugerwa's requirement of sinless perfection confuses justification and sanctification, suggesting that salvation is incomplete without the believer's attainment of moral perfection. This contradicts the Bible's teaching that justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8–9). Also, the Bible is clear that nobody can achieve sinlessness in this life. To the contrary, John writes that anyone who claims to have no sin is deceiving themselves and makes God a liar (1 John 8–10).

Word-Faith: In MCF, prosperity is framed as the inevitable fruit of deliverance, guaranteeing that the believer who is "set free" will succeed in life. Biblically, while God promises provision and blessing (Phil. 4:19, Matt. 6:33), the New Testament consistently calls believers to contentment, endurance in suffering, and a cross-shaped discipleship (1 Tim. 6:6–10). MCF's prosperity emphasis risks shifting hope from Christ's eternal promises to short-term earthly benefits.

The Bible depicts an all-powerful God (Psalm 115:3)—not a weak deity who lost control of His world to Satan. It also does not teach that Satan has authority over believers. He is called "The ruler of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11) and "the God of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), but his authority is delegated, limited, and temporary. It is delegated in that anything Satan does in this world is under the supreme authority of the sovereign God. Satan was unable to afflict Job unless God granted permission (Job 1:12). Even when granting Satan access to Job, God limited what Satan could do.

Deliverance: MCF's theology reflects a deeper cultural struggle in African Christianity—the syncretism between biblical faith and African traditional religion (ATR). Mugerwa's teachings on ancestral covenants and dream revelations exemplify what Bolaji Idowu observed decades ago: "Concepts of God are transferred from African Traditional Religion to Christianity by the converts."³⁶

This blending has far-reaching consequences. It reinforces the fear-based spirituality of ATR instead of liberating believers through the gospel. It displaces Jesus, fostering dependence on

³⁴ John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), p. 15.

³⁵ Eddie Ssemakula, "A Christian's Dream Always Means Something, Right?," Gospel Coalition Africa, November 10, 2020,

<https://africa.thegospelcoalition.org/article/a-christians-dream-always-means-something-right/>.

³⁶ E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 242.

earthly spiritual leaders who function as mediators of deliverance. And it distorts discipleship into cycles of ritual rather than growth in Christlikeness.

Biblically, Jesus “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame” by his death on the cross (Col. 2:14–15). Because of Christ’s work, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). The teaching that Christians remain in spiritual bondage undermines assurance and shifts attention from Christ’s finished work to ritual processes mediated and invented by the leader.

Nowhere does the New Testament instruct Christians to cast demons out of their own lives; in every scriptural instance of deliverance, the individual needing such deliverance doesn’t know Jesus. While the New Testament frequently warns believers about demonic activity, its focus is on discernment rather than deliverance. For example, Paul warns Timothy that “deceitful spirits” promote false doctrines described as “teachings of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1–3). Similarly, John cautions against believing every spirit, noting that false spirits are closely linked to false prophets (1 Jn. 4:1). In 2 Corinthians, Paul further warns that Satan and his followers—disguised as “false apostles” and “deceitful workmen”—will preach a false Jesus, spirit, and gospel (11:3–4, 13–15).

Collectively, these passages demonstrate that the primary goal of demonic influence is to erode the believer’s confidence in biblical truth. False teachers, false prophets and demons seek to divert our attention to themselves and away from Christ and His finished work on the believer’s behalf. Mugerwa’s teaching clearly crosses this line. Instead of confidence of God’s love and grace, Mugerwa instills what one author describes as “spiritual insecurity”³⁷ in the lives of his followers, who are thrust into a world of unending fear and a need for deliverance in every area of their lives. Sadly, this type of teaching will clearly lead people “astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:4).

Mugerwa’s ministry also reflects a deeply superstitious approach to the Christian faith. The concern here is not merely that he believes in demons, curses, witchcraft, and spiritual warfare; the Bible and historic Christianity affirm the reality of the spiritual realm. The problem is the way he interprets ordinary human suffering and life struggles through a diagnostic system that closely resembles African traditional religious practices. In many traditional settings, especially in the Ganda culture, a person goes to a witchdoctor with barrenness, unemployment, sickness, family conflict, repeated failure, bad dreams, or conflict. The witchdoctor then claims to identify the hidden spiritual cause behind the problem, often linking it to ancestral spirits, curses, witchcraft, offended spirits, or family bondage. Pastor Tom’s approach functions in a similar way, only with Christian vocabulary. His teaching connects common struggles such as unemployment, barrenness, broken relationships, anger, bitterness, sickness, and financial difficulty to demonic possession and/or oppression, curses, witchcraft, or ancestral powers. He also gives significant attention to identifying spirits—sometimes using ancient Luganda names—and teaches that dreams can reveal the specific spirits troubling a person. In this sense, his ministry offers a spiritual diagnosis of their problems in a way that echoes the diviner’s role in African traditional religion.

This is why it is fair—though it must be stated carefully—to say that Mugerwa functions as a modernized religious version of the traditional witch doctor. Although he does not present himself with the objects, shrines, and visible symbols of traditional divination. Instead, this worldview is dressed in Pentecostal language: “deliverance” replaces ritual cleansing, “breaking altars” replaces appeasing or confronting ancestral powers, “prophetic revelation” replaces divination, and “dream interpretation” becomes a means of uncovering hidden spiritual forces. The result is a Christianized superstition in which believers are taught to fear invisible family powers, generational spirits, demonic names, dreams, and curses more than they are taught to rest in the finished work of Christ. Rather than correcting the traditional fear-based worldview with the sufficiency of Scripture and the victory of Christ, this approach baptizes those fears and gives them a place inside Christian practice. This

³⁷ Alessandro Gusman, “Deliverance Centres, Spiritual Insecurity, and a Pragmatic Approach to Healing in Ugandan Pentecostalism,” in Sandra Fancello and Alessandro Gusman, eds., *Charismatic Healers in*

Contemporary Africa: Deliverance in Muslim and Christian Worlds (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), p. 35.

makes the ministry attractive to people already shaped by ATR assumptions, but it also keeps them trapped in the same bondage of fear, only now under church language. The biblical problem is serious: Christ becomes functionally insufficient, Scripture becomes practically secondary to revelations and dream interpretations, and the pastor becomes the necessary spiritual specialist who can diagnose, interpret, and prescribe deliverance for problems that the New Testament calls believers to bring directly to Christ in faith, prayer, repentance, wisdom, and the ordinary means of grace.

RELATED RESOURCES

The following are helpful articles dealing with spiritual warfare, “deliverance,” and related issues. The inclusion of an author or website here does not necessarily mean that ACFAR endorses all of the materials they produce and distribute, or all of the positions they may take on a variety of debatable issues.

The Gospel Coalition Africa

Conrad Mbewe

- [A Trojan Horse in the African Church: Deliverance Ministry](#)
- [What If It’s Not Evil Spirits? \(and Deliverance Is Not the Answer\)](#)

Rodgers Atwebembeire

- [Deliverance Ministry: Learning from Jesus’ Example](#)
- [Exorcism & Deliverance: What You Need to Know](#)
- [Fear or Faith? Exorcism & the Role of the Church](#)

Other authors

- [Why Deliverance Ministries Fail to Deliver](#)
- [Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed?](#)
- [Prayer, the Problem of Evil, and the Place of Tradition](#)
- [Back to Sender: A Flawed, Dangerous Spiritual Practice](#)

Additional Sources

- David Powlison: [Envisioning Spiritual Warfare as Paul Did](#)
- David Powlison: [Deliverance Ministry in Historical Perspective](#)
- Selian Meoki: [Yes, Generational Curses Are Real. No, They Don’t Mean What You Think](#)
- Critical Issues Commentary: [How Deliverance Ministries Lead People to Bondage](#)
- Marketfaith Ministries: [Deliverance Ministry and Worldview Beliefs](#)
- PubMed Central: [Contending with Spiritual Reductionism: Demons, Shame, and Dividualising Experiences Among Evangelical Christians with Mental Distress](#)
- Servants of Grace: [Deliverance Ministries, a Biblical Critique](#)

APPENDIX

Excerpts from “Deliverance Centres, Spiritual Insecurity, and a Pragmatic Approach to Healing in Ugandan Pentecostalism” by Alessandro Gusman in *Charismatic Healers in Contemporary Africa: Deliverance in Muslim and Christian Worlds*, Sandra Fancello and Alessandro Gusman, eds. (London: Bloomsbury, 2023)

<https://iris.unito.it/retrieve/20b05426-a734-4dd2-9ae6-14ec60128180/2023%20-%20Charismatic%20Healers%20-%20Chapter2.pdf>

...The [Mutundwe Christian Fellowship] is organized into two prayer sites, as well as other buildings dedicated to administrative offices and individual sessions. The division between these two places reflects the philosophy of deliverance preached by Pastor Tom. The first building, small in size (it can accommodate about 300–400 people), is the space dedicated to ‘beginners’, people who are at MCF for the first time and who need to ‘purify themselves’ before they can enter the main building. This is the phase of the so-called ‘interior deliverance’, a necessary condition to redeem oneself before being able to obtain liberation from demonic oppression.

In this first space, prayer is continuous, from early morning to late at night, with only a break between 5:00 and 8:00 pm. Different pastors take turns leading the prayer phases and imparting Pastor Tom’s teachings on deliverance. Once the believer has spent at least one to two days in this building (where people often stay continuously, with brief moments of rest on makeshift beds interspersed with long prayer sessions), he is ready to enter the main church, the services held there and the teachings that Mugerwa gives in the Saturday session. MCF’s schedule is a continuous alternation of deliverance and intercession sessions, from Monday morning through Saturday afternoon, culminating between Friday night (overnight prayer) and Saturday. The weekly activities end around 5:30 pm on Saturday, leaving the faithful to go to their respective churches for the Sunday service. In fact, the MCF does not have Sunday services and is not configured as a congregation with a stable composition, but as a centre where people can go to ask for the solution of problems related to the presence of demonic forces, or to pray for intercession. [...]

From Pastor Tom’s writings and sermons emerges a conception according to which deliverance proper—the resolution of ties with demonic forces and the resolution of the problems they cause—is preceded by a phase of inner purification and liberation. It is in the first transit space of the faithful that this process takes place. In the rituals that take shape in this building, the bodily expression of deliverance is particularly central.... Prayer centres aim to objectify this experience of malaise as an experience of liberation from spirit possession, led by a person who considers himself or herself endowed with the charism of spiritual discernment, thus capable of revealing which evil spirit possesses the person.

Repentance, both with respect to one’s previous life and for ‘family faults’ that date back to a more remote past, is a fundamental requirement to make deliverance possible. For this reason, in the first building, the sessions are repeated following a fixed pattern: an initial moment of prayer (called ‘spiritual warming up’) is followed by a teaching about inner deliverance; at the end of this section, the fundamental part of the ritual begins—the repentance, which lasts about an hour, with the pastor scanning the different moments of the session, speeding up or slowing down the rhythm of the prayer, raising or lowering the tone of voice, encouraging to increase the rhythm of the drums that accompany the prayer. During this time, the faithful present in the room (usually between 300 and 400), walk in the space praying fervently, some loudly and with their arms raised to the sky, others whispering; some lean against the wall, others kneel with their faces resting on a chair. After a few minutes of prayer, many begin to weep softly or raise lamentations. Those who walk—the majority—often do so in a convulsive manner, waving their arms or obsessively shaking an object they hold in their hands (a sort of metal book containing seeds or small stones is frequently used, producing a noise that facilitates the induction of a trance state).

The session, with the guidance of the pastor and the musicians, is marked by an ascending climax; after about half an hour of this intense prayer, an increasing number of people begin to manifest behaviours that are interpreted as a sign that the demon by which they are possessed is annoyed

and feels threatened. Some are screaming, some are jumping in an uncomfortable manner and some are writhing on the floor. It is at this moment that the pastor leading the prayer, along with some assistants, begins the war against the spirits that have manifested. The struggle lasts several minutes, during which the possessed person struggles, screams, writhes and twists, always guided and supported by one or more of those leading the session; finally, he falls to the ground, exhausted, immobile often for long minutes, as if emptied by the spiritual warfare that has been fought through his body.

At the end of the ritual, no less than half of the people present have been 'liberated' from the spirits that possessed them; this operation can be repeated several times, in successive sessions, until the believer feels purified and ready to enter the main building, where the path of transformation of the self continues, intertwining with the spiritual struggle conducted at a collective level. ...

...the chain of deliverance defined at the MCF is built by the interweaving of four elements: repentance and confession; breaking covenants; casting out demons; praying for others who are oppressed. It is therefore necessary to first dissolve the bonds one has with the forces of evil in order to remove them from oneself and finally move into the main building of the MCF, where the main activity is that of intercession, prayer for the liberation of others, to continue the work of deliverance in society. (pp. 41–45)

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The spirits of the Ganda religion belong to three main categories: the *lubaale* (spirits of ancestral heroes); the *mizimu* (spirits of ancestors); and the *mayembe* (spirits that reside in animal horns or other receptacles) (Roscoe 1911; Welbourn 1962). In turn, the *mayembe* are divided into two subgroups: the *ag'ekika*, spirits linked to the clan (*ekika*), which are transmitted from generation to generation and evoked to obtain wealth, fertility and protection against disease; and the *ag'akifaalu*, carriers of negative energies and used in witchcraft attacks to cause nefarious effects, disease and death. The *mizimu* are particularly influential at the level of intra-clan relations, while the *lubaale* are considered the spirits of the ganda nation, linked to the power figures of the kingdom, in particular to the sovereign, the *kabaka*. However, these are fluid categories that have undergone transformations over time. According to Rigby (1975), in particular, in urban contexts the *mizimu* have become more linked to the family sphere, and people turn to them in an attempt to solve everyday problems of various kinds. (pp. 37–38)

It is interesting to note...that the Baganda classified diseases according to three principles that distinguished: diseases that have exogenous causes from those caused by witchcraft (*eddogo*); 'strong' diseases from 'weak' ones; finally, local diseases from those 'that come from outside'. While the latter could be cured by Western medicine, it was powerless against witchcraft and local diseases, for which we turned to *omusawo omuganda*, the 'ganda doctor'. (pp. 180–181)

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<https://ageneteasa.wordpress.com/members>