

A Call to National Repentance



Ugandans dedicate their nation to God in 50th year celebration.

Peter Berger says the world is now experiencing “two particularly powerful religious explosions” – resurgent Islam and dynamic evangelical Protestantism.¹ The news media commonly reports the passionate rise of the worldwide Islamic movement. This rise, led mostly by murderous Jihadists, is almost entirely within already entrenched Muslim strongholds. The seldom reported truth is that Evangelical Protestantism now penetrates into parts of the world previously unknown to it. Mass conversions in Asia, South America, and especially in Africa mark this move of God. Christianity is the fastest growing religion today and the only one with a global reach. As they learn the whole counsel of Scripture, Christian believers not only receive eternal salvation, but also receive, at least in seed form, the biblical principles needed to align their culture to receive God’s blessings.

¹Professor Peter Berger has written extensively on the “myth of secularism” and the global expansion of religion.

Uganda, like most African tribal nations, was founded upon and lingered for thousands of years in a state of intertribal warfare, the constant theft of private property and the tyranny of tribal chiefs. Yet God intervened. In the nineteenth century, missionary David Livingston opened up Central Africa to Christianity. After 1890, Uganda became an English Colony and Christianity began to spread. In 1962, Uganda won its independence from Britain. But by then the forces of radical Marxist guerrillas funded by Russia, and Islamic jihadists funded by Saudi Arabia, began to ravish the nation and its 85% Christian population. In 1971, Idi Amin Dada, a brutal military general and mass murderer, devastated the land, killing perhaps over 300,000 of his own citizens in cold blood.

Now, over the past three decades, Uganda has made major progress toward becoming a viable republic, with citizen rights and elections. All during this time, numbers of Christian missions, some with historic vision for godly nation building, have effectively worked to rebuild Uganda. A leading force in this restoration has been President Yoweri Museveni, a professed evangelical believer. During the recent celebration of 50 years of Ugandan independence, President Museveni, following in the footsteps of leaders like the godly king Josiah (2 Kings 22-23), stood before the people of Uganda and publically repented of his sins and the sins of the whole nation. Here are his words:

“Father God in heaven, today we stand here as Ugandans, to thank you for Uganda. We are proud that we are Ugandans and Africans. We thank you for all your goodness to us. I stand here today to close the evil past and especially in the last 50 years... I

stand here on my own behalf and on behalf of my predecessors to repent. We ask for your forgiveness."

Museveni then said. *"We confess these sins, which have greatly hampered our national cohesion and delayed our political, social, and economic transformation. We confess sins of idolatry and witchcraft, which are rampant in our land. We confess sins of shedding innocent blood, sins of political hypocrisy, dishonesty, intrigue, and betrayal. Forgive us of sins of pride, tribalism, and sectarianism; sins of laziness, indifference, and irresponsibility; sins of corruption and bribery that have eroded our national resources; sins of sexual immorality, drunkenness, and debauchery; sins of unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred and revenge...."*

Then the President asked God for a new start: "Lord forgive us and give us a new beginning. Give us a heart to love you, to fear you, and to seek you. Take away from us all the above sins..."

As you read the conclusion of President Museveni's prayer before all of Uganda, imagine similar prayers earnestly prayed by leaders of our nation at all levels of government, and from the pulpits of our churches.

"We want to dedicate this nation to you so that you will be our God and guide. We want Uganda to be known as a nation that fears God, and as a nation whose foundations are firmly rooted in righteousness and justice to fulfill what the Bible says in Psalm 33:12: Blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord. A people you have chosen as your own. I renounce all the evil foundations and covenants that were laid in idolatry and witchcraft. I renounce all the satanic influence on this nation. And I hereby covenant Uganda to you, to walk in your ways and experience all your blessings forever. I pray for all these in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

How is it that Uganda remembers the pattern for godly life, when Americans have largely forgotten? For students

of providential history, President Museveni's speech should ring familiar. His speech traces the same path our forbears followed in founding America. For example, the Pilgrims first repented of their personal sins. Then they established their church covenants, committing themselves to live together in obedience to Christ. When they founded Plymouth in 1620, they made the world's first governmental Compact (or Covenant) with God to found their colony. The Pilgrim influence quickly expanded to their neighbors.

Later colonists in Massachusetts and Connecticut built upon the Biblical foundations of Judeo-Christian covenantal local self-government. I call this era the *lost century* because so many have forgotten the power of its legacy toward building the future United States. The 17th century settlers founded all of their towns, colonies, and charters upon a covenant with the God of the Bible to walk in all His ways. Over eighty of these covenants provided content and structure for the great national covenant—the Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4th, 1776. This pattern of Covenant-building, lived out in early America and now emerging in Africa, provides the strategy for our own national renewal. This renewal may begin in your town, your city council, your county commission, your local pastor's prayer breakfast or your kitchen table. In that sense, the course of liberty and our children's future are in our repentant hands and hearts.

We must not despair. Just as God hears the prayers of the Ugandan President, we believe God will also bless the prayers and actions of American believers who return to the covenants of their fathers. "Know, recognize, and understand therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps covenant and steadfast love and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations (Deut. 7:9)."

-Marshall Foster