

Popular Minister Seeks Zambian Presidency

Zambian pastor Nevers Mumba believes Christians will lead a 'wind' of political change that is coming to Africa

Although Nevers Mumba is running for president in 2006, Zambia's leading newspaper, The Post, still calls him "Pastor Mumba." It's a title not easily shaken from the man who launched Zambia's first Christian television ministry in the early 1990s called Zambia Shall Be Saved.

After Mumba completed a two-year program at Christ for the Nations in 1982, he returned to Zambia, founded 42 churches and launched a TV ministry that draws 2.5 million viewers each week.

African citizens weren't the only ones watching TV; Zambian politicians began calling Mumba for counsel and prayer.

Although Mumba was content to be Zambia's pastor, he said two prophetic encounters changed the course of his life.

During a visit to Virginia Beach, Va., to appear on The 700 Club, he received a call from someone wanting to speak with him. The young man was African evangelist Christopher Alam, who told Mumba, "The Lord is going to use you in the political process in your country."

"At that time I had no thought of becoming involved in politics," Mumba told Charisma, "and my theology totally contradicted his prophecy."

Mumba put the prophecy aside and returned to preaching. But a year and a half later, while Mumba was preaching in Canada, a South African preacher asked to meet him for lunch. The two ministers had never met before, and when they sat down to eat in a restaurant, the preacher told Mumba that God would “bring His word to pass, and you shall be in political leadership in your nation.”

Mumba never saw the minister again. But within five years he handed over his TV ministry to an associate and formed an organization now called National Citizens Coalition, which gave him a platform to run for president in 2001.

Mumba lost that election but remained in politics, focusing most of his work on outreach to the poor, orphaned and uneducated. This humanitarian work coupled with his stand against political corruption motivated Zambia’s current president, Levy Mwanawasa, to appoint Mumba as his vice president in May 2003.

Mumba’s popularity increased, and within a year and a half he surpassed Mwanawasa in Zambian opinion polls by 65 percent. While Mwanawasa was traveling internationally, Mumba exposed political corruption that was going on between Congo and Zambia. As a result, Mwanawasa dismissed him as vice president.

Despite this rocky beginning in politics, Mumba announced in March that he planned to run for the presidency as Mwanawasa’s opponent in the 2006 elections. Afterward, Mwanawasa suspended Mumba from his leadership role in the National Executive Committee of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) Party.

In April, another opinion poll showed Mumba leading Mwanawasa by a large margin. Mumba hoped to be elected as presidential candidate for the MMD Party at the convention scheduled for May 4-8.

However, President Mwanawasa postponed the May convention and then expelled Mumba from MMD Party membership, erasing all possibility of Mumba running for president under that party. Mumba's supports planned to form a new party that will give him a platform to run.

Despite the setbacks, Mumba is not deterred. "I'm convinced once we achieve our goal in Zambia, there will be a domino effect," Mumba said. "Men of integrity and morality will rise up to take positions of political leadership in countries across ... Africa. There is a wind of change, and the church is going to lead this new change that is coming on this continent."

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