

Ugandan Capital's Christian Life Church Reports Remarkable Growth

Jackson Senyonga's congregation in Kampala has grown from seven people to 22,000 since 1995

Jackson Senyonga was left to die in a garbage heap when he was 3 months old. Today he pastors the 22,000-member Christian Life Church (CLC) in East Africa and is a key leader in a nation that has turned from the destruction of tyranny to the stability and peace of Christianity.

Senyonga told Charisma that although his native country of Uganda was birthed out of witchcraft and controlled by demon worshipers, it is being transformed by prayer, the Bible and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"The Lord called Uganda as a nation to tell other nations about the simple message of Jesus Christ," Senyonga said. "But we had to pay a terrible price to carry that message."

The 35-year-old pastor referred to the horrific acts of violence and death suffered by many Ugandans from 1971 to 1979 at the hands of now deposed and exiled Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. During Amin's "reign of terror," he was responsible for the deaths of thousands of people—including Senyonga's father. Tortured, beaten and run out of their homes, people across the country were forced to their knees to petition God for mercy.

Uganda is now reaping the benefits of a nationwide prayer movement that began after the country had suffered at the hands of another tyrant in the 1980s, Milton Obote. "We became

too comfortable when God moved on our behalf the first time, and that's why we had to go through it again with another cruel leader," Senyonga explained.

And when AIDS swept through the country, the people cried out to God, and once again He moved. Today, Uganda is experiencing spiritual and community transformation in political circles, the marketplace and in the church. Many of Uganda's politicians are acknowledging God in political

affairs as they seek Him for wisdom. Prayer has been initiated in state-

government offices, and some judges pray before they convene for court, Senyonga said.

In a historic move, the nation's president, Yoweri Museveni and his wife, Janet, issued a proclamation in 2000 rededicating the nation to God and renouncing its sins.

God moved on Senyonga's heart 8-1/2 years ago to do His work, Senyonga said. The Lord told him that He was tired of his "small mind" toward His work. The young church-planter continued in prayer until God instructed him to start a church in the bustling city of Kampala, the capital.

"The Lord told me that if I would obey, He would use my obedience to touch my city, my nation and the nations around me," he said.

As a result, Senyonga and his wife, Eve, saw CLC grow from seven people to 2,000 people during two weeks of 1995. Within its first 10 months, the church had swelled to 7,000 people. Located in one of the worst neighborhoods of Kampala, the church grew because thousands of unbelievers began to see

God's power at work in their own lives.

When a local witch doctor came to CLC to place a death curse on Senyonga, people in the community flocked to watch the pastor drop dead. After three days had passed and Senyonga was still teaching and preaching the gospel, the witch doctor and others quickly gave their lives to Christ. That demonstration of God's might prompted thousands of others to accept Christ and join CLC.

CLC's 22,000 members support its radio and TV stations. Church members minister to the community with food, clothing, counseling and educational training.

Pastor Daniel Nkata, founder of Reach-out Village Ministries, which helps underprivileged children, said Senyonga is a godsend. "He's helping churches come together in unity because he's a man for the people," Nkata explained.

He praised Senyonga's commitment to help indigenous churches and missionaries in his role as leader of the 300-member National Fellowship of Born-Again Churches.

For Senyonga, preaching to thousands of people is a good thing, but he said it's more important to see people's lives changed forever by the Holy Spirit.

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