

also requires that the government act to bring about an environment of peace in which true economic development can take place. Instead, the government, Ugandan sources report, is using the cover of counterinsurgency to physically eliminate any potential civilian and constitutional opponents. Rather than protecting populations caught in war zones, the Ugandan military has been deployed to gun down opponents under the guise that they are “supporting the rebels.”

The Prayer for Peace, as Cardinal Wamala and Bishop Ochola have made clear is their intent, raises a voice not heard from in Uganda for many years—that of the people, whose inalienable rights to life and liberty are being trampled on daily in Uganda.

A call for peace and reconciliation

by Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala

Here are excerpts of the keynote speech of His Eminence, Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, archbishop of Kampala and chairman, Uganda Joint Christian Council, to the Prayer for Peace rally in Kampala, on Nov. 2:

Distinguished leaders from the civil, religious, cultural and diplomatic sectors here present, and all of you dear brothers and sisters in God our Father, I greet you with the words of God’s peace: Peace be with you; *Salamalekum; Amani iwe nanyi; Emirembe gibe namwe; Obusingye bube naimwe. . . .*

The Peace-March we have made to this Constitution Square has a deep symbolic meaning. It has shown the unity and solidarity of the people of God in search for lasting peace throughout our country. . . .

1. Peace

We all need peace and therefore we all have a religious and human duty to be *peace-makers, peace-keepers, and peace-promoters*. This duty cannot be left to the state alone, and its security organs. It is a duty in which each person, family, community, religious organization, and each part of Uganda has an important role to play.

I appeal to everyone here present and to all Ugandans to take up this challenge seriously: to do all we can to keep peace, preserve peace, and promote peace where it exists, to restore peace, to reject armed conflicts and seek peaceful resolution of conflicts where they exist, and always to be God’s instruments of peace wherever we are. “*Blessed are the peace-makers, they shall be called the children of God.*” (Matthew 5:9)

2. Forgiveness

We all need God’s power to forgive and God’s grace to be forgiven. If God were to remember all our sins and faults,

where would we be? But with God there is mercy and forgiveness. If there were no forgiveness in our inter-personal relations, in the families and communities, where would we be? We would be at each other’s throat every day.

Forgiveness is a religious and human *must* for everyone, every leader and every community. Forgiveness restores harmony, love, and trust. It restores unity and togetherness. It is not always easy to forgive, that is why we need God to touch our hearts in order to learn to forgive, discover the power of forgiveness, and become committed agents of spreading forgiveness. We have, as a people and as a nation, to learn to love our enemies and in doing so, turn them into friends. This is the message Jesus Christ gives us:

“You have heard that it was said: You shall love your neighbor, and you shall hate your enemies. I say to you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may become children of your Father Who is in heaven, because He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5)

3. Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a fundamental requirement for our human solidarity, religious unity in God, and nation-building.

The moment we allow divisions among us to sharpen and deepen, we undermine ourselves. We need negotiations and negotiators to heal divisions among us. We need people always committed to preventing such divisions from developing into hatred, prejudice, and disunity.

My appeal to you is to be ambassadors of reconciliation wherever and whenever there are dangerous divisions among us. *Where there is hatred, let us sow love. Where there is injury, sow pardon. Where there is discord, sow unity. . . .*

5. Our common human and religious heritage

Although coming from different religious, ethnic, and regional backgrounds, we do share some common and fundamental beliefs and values which should unite us in the work of promoting peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

- The God we believe in, the Creator of us all, is the God of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
- We are all created in His image: male and female He created us.
- We share the same human nature, same equality before Him, and inhabit the same earth.
- To each one of us God has given a conscience, His inner voice in us, which tells us to distinguish the good from the evil, the right from the wrong, the just from the unjust, the peaceful from the violent.
- We share the same beautiful nation, one constitution, and one government.
- We share our joys and aspirations, and our sufferings and our problems, jointly.
- We have a common past, a common present and shall have a common future. . . .

7. Our National Constitution challenges us to peace and reconciliation

Binaisa endorses Prayer for Peace

Godfrey Binaisa, former President of Uganda and chairman of the African Civil Rights Movement, endorsed the Prayer for Peace walk called for Nov. 2 by Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, with this statement issued from New York on Oct. 31:

I salute Your Eminence Cardinal Wamala, head of the Uganda Catholic Church, for your leadership of the peace march. I also salute the leaders of the Episcopal Churches and other Christian denominations, the Muslim leaders, and leaders of African Traditional Religions who have joined in this glorious march for peace. I wish I was with you all in Kampala to march with you. You are walking the last mile to the freedom of our country. You are marching in peace, dignity, respect for the rule of law, and a yearning for true democracy that has now reached its peak by your march.

You intend to hurt nobody, but merely to pass on the message for peace, that the time has come to supplement our long march for matters spiritual, which in our history produced martyrs among Christians and Muslims, with a great concern for matters temporal, and thus confirm that

all men were created equal in the image of God, and are entitled to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These words from the American Declaration of Independence prove that the human species has no lower forms of men, who should be treated as if they were cows. By your action, you have rejected ethnic origin, caste, religion, sex, and political opinion, as a basis for opportunities in education, business, or office. This means that everybody's human rights have to be protected. Democracy is for all. Full participation in the economic development of the country is a birthright of everyone, but not a right enjoyed as a divine right by those in power, to be handed out to foreign interests, particularly the interests of our former colonial masters in their aim to control our natural resources.

Finally, military adventurism, which has now lasted 20 years, 1978-1997, must be brought to a quick end. It has been proved over and over again throughout the history of many nations, that militarism in the long run creates more problems than it purports to solve. Your peace march is the only lasting solution for a happy and prosperous Uganda.

Remember the words of a great African-American freedom fighter, Frederick Douglass, "You are the ones to put a limit to how much you can endure."

We all pray that this time the Uganda government will enter into negotiations with the rebel groups seriously, and fully committed to abide by the decisions reached by all parties to the conflict.

Dear brothers and sisters in God, we should reflect on the challenges contained in our National Constitution which relate to our commitment to peace and reconciliation. This reflection will enable us to visualize the aspirations of the people of Uganda in this respect.

Both the Preamble and the National Objectives pay much attention to peace and nation-building among all people.

"We the people of Uganda

"Recalling our history which has been characterized by political and constitutional instability,

"Recognizing our struggles against the forces of tyranny, oppression, and exploitation,

"Committed to building a better future by establishing a socio-economic and political order through a popular and durable national Constitution based on the principles of unity, peace, equality, democracy, freedom, social justice, and progress. . . ."

These paragraphs recover the sense of bitter history we have lived and offer the vision and hope for the future. Our aspirations are to change from a history of instability to stability, from a reality of war to a reality of peace, unity, and social justice. . . .

8. National Objectives paragraph III. National unity and stability

This paragraph is at the center of the theme of our prayer service today. I strongly urge every Ugandan to read, study, and reflect on it in order to find the challenges it gives to all of us:

- "All organs of State and people of Uganda shall work towards the promotion of national unity, peace, and stability.

- "Every effort shall be made to integrate all the people of Uganda while at the same time recognizing the existence of their ethnic, religious, ideological, political, and cultural diversity.

- "Everything shall be done to promote a culture of cooperation, understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and respect for each other's customs, traditions, and beliefs.

- "There shall be established and nurtured institutions and procedures for the resolution of conflicts fairly and peacefully.

- "The State shall provide a peaceful, secure, and stable political environment which is necessary for economic development."

. . . My prayer is that all of us, and each one of us should take up this constitutional challenge most seriously in order to have peace in all parts of the country, peace which can only be achieved with forgiveness and reconciliation. . . .

13. Call to action

... Let us be committed to peace in our whole nation, search for solutions to end war and insecurity, then we shall live together joyfully as a nation and fully embrace genuine development. (Isaiah 2:3) "Let us hammer our 'swords' into ploughshares, 'our spears into sickles.'"

The greatest treasure we can leave to the next generation is the culture of peace. It is the precious gift with which we should plan to enter into the new millennium.

Interview: Macleord Baker Ochola

Ugandan bishop: Time is running out

The Right Reverend Macleord Baker Ochola of the Kitgum Diocese of the Anglican Church of Uganda, was interviewed by Linda de Hoyos, via telephone, on Nov. 5:

EIR: Could you tell us why the Prayer for Peace in Kampala on Nov. 2 was called, and what your aims are?

Bishop Ochola: The Prayer for Peace was mainly to sensitize the people of Uganda, to be aware about peace. The aims of the Prayer for Peace are:

1. To make all participants and all Ugandans fully aware and convinced that God Almighty is the God of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. God wishes all his children to live in peace and harmony.

2. To proclaim to all that all religions in Uganda share the common and fundamental belief in peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Religious leaders and all their members should always be united in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace promotion.

3. To implore God to empower us and the entire nation in finding peaceful means and initiatives to end the war in the northern and southwestern parts of Uganda, so that all parts of the country can enjoy peace, happiness, and development.

4. To make a united religious cry and appeal to all those who are behind these conflicts to heed the voice of God and of the people, to stop acts of violence, and seek ways of peace and reconciliation.

5. To make an appeal in the name of God to all those groups which have abducted Ugandan children and citizens, and those who are keeping them prisoners or are abusing them in any way, to be moved by the sufferings of the parents and relatives and the entire people of Uganda, and release them unconditionally. Anyone who has information regarding

these abducted Ugandans and children has a moral and religious and human duty to reveal that information which can lead to the freedom of these people.

6. On this day, when the Christian churches are focussed on All Souls, we want to remember all Ugandans who have met violent deaths in the current insecurity in parts of our nation. May they rest in peace. We want to pray for all their parents and relatives to have God's courage and consolation.

The expected results:

1. To have continued, strengthened, and more committed collaborations among all religious leaders and their members to peacemaking and peacekeeping and promotion through joint action and strategies.

2. To be committed to promotion of peacemaking, the religious and ethical values of the non-violent method, and peaceful resolutions of conflicts and strategies for prevention of conflict.

3. To begin a joint religious effort for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation from the grass roots for purposes of regular reflection, prayer, information-gathering, and education.

4. To continue to sustain the hope that peace is possible throughout Uganda if only Uganda became a peace lover, peace maker, and peace keeper.

So, in brief, we are actually trying to help the people of Uganda to become aware of the cry of the people who have been crying for peace, especially in northern Uganda, for more than 11 years now.

We are also appealing to the international community, which has been so much aloof for more than a decade now, when the children of Uganda were being abducted, being killed, and people's properties were being looted and destroyed. The international community kept quiet all this time. So, we are appealing to the international community to become aware of our situation, so that altogether we can join hands to bring about peace in Uganda.

EIR: If there were peace inside Uganda, do you think this would result in a decrease in the external deployments of the Ugandan forces that we have seen in Rwanda, eastern Zaire, and other places?

Bishop Ochola: Yes, I think the global dimensions of the war in the Great Lakes region are there, simply because there are some people who are not for peace, and there are others who would like to promote their own interests. But, we are saying that God has created people to live in peace. People have been created in the image of God; that is why we have community. We live in community. Living in community means peace. So, we are discouraging our government and other governments in the region from pursuing these violent attitudes that will destroy the peace of others in the region. That is what we are trying to do as a church, and also to discourage the international dimension of it. We are aware that it is not just something that is done within the Great Lakes region, without the great powers from outside Africa.