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Talk to the clergy

Kivengere, Festo

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Greetings and thanks
Lambeth Congress
Church growth in Uganda
Operation Fox Fire
Pastors' conference in Salisbury - Zambia
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(...laughing) I want to, bishop to thank you very much for giving part in this lovely Diocese of Pennsylvania here, aha of course I did my training in this part of United States, in Pittsburg, and I, I was ordained initially deacon in the Episcopal church and the Diocese of Pittsburg by Bishop Thomas, so I am quite of the, of this I didn't realize. When I was ordained deacon at St. Stephen's Sewikly, in a I didn't realize that later, having become bishop in 1978, later in 1978 having become an exile, after Amin, had murdered our Archbishop and when of course wanted to eliminate a number of our other bishops, but during that time of my refugee days, when we went to Lambeth, and met the Ugandan Bishops, and Amin had sent a contingent of agents to watch them, to take photographs, to, they call themselves journalists or pressmen, but actually we knew what it was about. So he gave these bishops from Uganda, a place in his plane, and they were the only people on the plane, the rest of the plane had coffee. So the bishops turned the plane into a chapel, and they called all the staff and had wonderful time with them. It was themselves you see, so they turned Amin's plane into a kind of church between Uganda and London. But when, (cleared voice) when I went to join them, I realized that it was dangerous for me to be photographed with them, because they were going back and I was in exile. And so the Episcopal Bishops here took me in so I became then a bishop with the Episcopal church, although quietly I had, we had a House of Bishops of Church of Uganda there. But it had to be (clears voice) quietly and secret, because of those people who were running round taking snaps. Not that we were worried about the snaps because we knew Amin knew all our faces anyway, so we didn't see why, what the value of the snaps were. He knew who we were and had had confrontations with him and so on.
I am saying these words just to thank you bishop for welcoming me here, for this short time of ministry to bring people the greetings of, from my own Diocese of Kigezi, in western Uganda, which recently had another new diocese carved out of it, as of April this year, the Northern part has become another Diocese, so that we were 17, now we are 18 dioceses. And we have a growing church as you know, since the curving out of the new diocese, the old part which has remained has added on 15 new parishes in six months. There is this kind of upsurge in growth, and people wanting to know Jesus, they are not just coming to become Anglicans primarily, that is not the thing, I think their primary thirst and desire is to know Jesus Christ, for they have found, during all these times, that he is the only one who really makes sense out of this human nonsense, of these destructions and political confusions, break down of the economy, and widows everywhere, mad men like Amin getting rid of half a million precious citizens you know, these things have taught our people, but I don't think I don't like to give you the wrong impression that that is the source of the growth. I, I, all I can say is that, there was growth even before Amin. Except that during his reign of terror, it became more concentrated and more, more powerful if I may use that expression. So here is where are in that country with tremendous growth of the church, with buildings full of worshippers, new parishes in non-Christian communities springing up, and I can share two things before I give you time to ask questions.

The secret of this great growth, not only in Uganda by the way, Tanzania is the same, or more, there is a growth of the churches in one of the dioceses is the ten, averaging ten new parishes a year, and now Tan... the diocese of Central Tanganyika which has produced four other dioceses, a new fifth diocese is being created as of next year, and near
Mt. Kilimanjaro area. It is going to be known as the Diocese of Northern Tanzania. But you see this growth in East Africa you can say that the same in Kenya. I have been in the Sudan, I have see it the same, the churches are springing up everywhere in the Southern part of the Sudan, they want evangelists to go and conduct evangelistic missions in parishes in towns, we know what is happening in Zambia, a bishop and a team have been in Zambia with the bishop there and with the clergy of the church in Zimbabwe, which has recently become independent as you know. And there are wonderful things taking place. There are teams of young men, our, this organization called African Enterprise, evangelistic team has got a team in Zimbabwe. And young Zimbabweans after the war, ordinary simple young people, between eighteen and twenty, committed themselves, or covenanted to themselves to go into and penetrate the community, and meet the guerrillas in their camps, and communicate the Gospel to them, they are not professionals, they are just ordinary young people, in twos. And they go, they call themselves, Operation Fox Fire. They took it from Samson when he tired the tails of foxes, and burnt the Phillistines' fields you know, (laughter) and they said, we are not going to destroy, we are creative fox fires, we want to go in and you know God has honored, the commitment of these young people, they haven't got anything, they haven't hadly anything, just a blanket, something to put water, hardly any money, they disappear into the countryside they spend three weeks, then they come back for training, at the, at the center. We got some people to train them and they refresh themselves, and then they, off they go, off they go again. And when you hear the stories, and they work with existing churches. Priests take them, and bishops appreciate them, because they can do what no priest can do. In that they go into those remote areas meet people, hardly any church, start the laity by sharing their faith, they
they make the laity sort of wake up to what they can do, and beautiful things have happened, former active guerrillas have been converted, and miracles of healing have taken place in those villages. And they meet opposition of course, dangerous opposition, but they, they are so full of Christ. I took one of them into Uganda, in my town. He came with one of their leaders to preach in a mission in my town in Kabale. My! what a man! About 25 years old and what a fire! We had a great time with him with my priest preaching in that town, in schools, in prisons, in shop in stores and so forth. And we finished a week long mission with about 2,000 people who came, who came to commit themselves to Jesus and were added to the church. In fact I am telling the secret of making, multiplying the christian community. You don't just get the church filled, unless people are made hungry by the word of God, and by by the communicating to them, this message of hope, because the church has the message of hope. If we sit on it, or shy about it, remember it is, He stays there the Lord Jesus, the Head of the church is still absolutely alive. But sometimes we act as if, he was alive in the first century, he can't be alive in a sophisticated United States with centuries of christianity, He never changes. You, you we have seen it, we are not talking words, we've seen him, becoming alive in lives where, lives you would have completely given up about and you see them changed, transformed, fired, beginning to speak. And when they speak, it becomes affective. In other words, in the church, the the evangelists are the lay people. The priest is the educator, he takes the Bible, because he has studied, and educates and gives them the word, but they are the evangelists, these are the communicators of the Good News, who can fill a church in no time.
You imagine if all your laity, if you have got two hundred of them men and women in your church, all fired, and then they spread into the community, telling their little stories of what Jesus means to their homes, to their relationships, to their business, what not. The following Sunday, you will have a strange congregation. People will want to find out what is going on here, what are they excited about anyway? Are they excited about this old, old christianity, old, old christianity? The old Bible, let us go and find out. Is it just emotionalism? Is it a religious fanaticism? Is this just a mere unrealistic triumphalism? You know, words, words, words, words, words, but when people see and meet christians of this nature, Zimbabwe where I am telling you, is a tough country. You see it is a country which has known guerrilla war, which is guerrilla which had the overtones of tribalism, racialism, and political extrimism. Most of the guerrilla fighters embibed marxism, not because they were marxists but because they received guns from Russia, and China. And so somehow they thought these fellows must be the ideal, they are helping us to fight. Smith and his regime, colonialism, therefore they must be good people, so some young people begin to think, well this is what we need, you know marxism. So you see, it isn't easy, when I'm sa...when I'm telling you the sweeping love of God, don't mist... misunderstand that, that to mean there are no problems, there are no barriers, there are plenty of them. There are plenty of ideological barriers, even which you don't have much of them here, and yet these young men and their leaders and trainers have seen God do miracles. So now there is hope in the church in Zambia, let me tell you what one of our bishops came back excited about, and one of our team member, the Rev. James Katarikawe. They were there with the priests of the Anglican church alone in Salisbury. They came back with fantastic stories, and I have seen pictures of the bishop and his priests all getting so full, and yet they said, one man came from the government of Mugabe, and he came to
speak to the priests, and he himself was an ordained man. And he was addressing the priests, saying, "We no longer need Christianity in the robes of the west, we must go back to our traditional worshipping." In other words we must, we are going to encourage, you know, spirits of the dead, animism, witchcraft as part of our culture, in worship. Encouraging the church to allow this, this secretism to come, so that Christianity is all mixed up with you know Bible and witchcraft and spiritism and all that kind of thing. And you know, he was addressing the priests and some them were in agreement. But this bishop of ours told me, when they gave their testimonies to their fellow priests and shared what God was doing, said, "By the end of that conference, one after another, people were completely turned inside out, and upside down." And they saw what they had not seen. They saw that they had actually bypassed the power and the essence of the Christian faith. For which they are ministers, they didn't see anything exciting about the Lord Jesus Christ. He remained a historical figure in a book. He was not changing lives, he was not transforming relationships, and you know those priests went back absolutely fired. And now they are working encouraging those young people I told you, called Fox Fire Operation, and, and so we don't know but we feel that Zimbabwe, after the wounds of 14 years, 14 years of war needs that message, this is the only possible healing that can take place in that you see community and bridge gaps between racial tensions. So that is Zimbabwe, you can repeat that in Zambia, our team has been in Zambia, recently, Copperbelt area, depressed, strikes, overdrunkenness, because these people come to, to work there, they leave their families in different, in neighbouring countries, masses of them, they spend most of the afternoon at beer halls drinking. And hardly any hope, they become thugs some of them, and the team went there to minister to these Copperbelt towns of Zambia. They didn't go
to Lusaka, they just went to the Copperbelt far towns. When these men
some of them lay, laymen, some of them but most of them were laymen this
time who went from Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. And they
were all mixed, some whites, some Asians; predominantly African blacks and
they tell stories of what God did in that Country, and they worked within
the churches, within the established churches, invited by bishops and
clergy and archdeacons and Methodists and others. And they saw
just wonderful movement of God in 8, 8 days alone.

They told me stories which you could hardly believe, of seeing almost
half congregations flooding forward in a, in an established church, many of
them in tears, others taking their witchcraft, witchcraft and putting, putting
them before the church, later to be burnt and destroyed with their testimonies,
now you may not have that, but you have got other things which actually you
know hold people down into captivity. And then, in I remarked about those
areas and so this to help you, this is to help you to see where we are, and
what we are trying to do, and what God is doing and then the case in which
we seem to be serving. The political chaos, that we serve in, like in
Uganda, like those people in Sudan, The Archbishop Elnana who spent 12 years
as, in exile in Uganda. And crossed back into Sudan to find the colleges
had burnt down, the churches had been destroyed by the Arabs, and yet he,
when he went back, the excitement of this bishop! He used to go from
Uganda quietly through the bushes to Sudan. And he used to come back and
would share, he would tell me about the exciting church in the bush. He
would go into the bush quietly, if he was arrested, he would be shot dead
and he would go where those people are and he would baptize literally
hundreds, in the, in the bush, no church just in the middle guerrilla
warfare. And when Sudan opened, what happened, a mighty church is there.
Buildings are packed out, there is a break through of renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, the people are excited about sharing their faith, again here we are in the Sudan, the Moslem country. So brethren, I am just sharing to encourage you, because you here in America and, you are still a little bit better, than Europe.

I have just been in England, conducting mission through the Anglican churches in there, and see these great big churches, most, which most of them are empty. And others, other good churches have been sold, and yet you look round in the community, those churches which are sold are in the midst of a building estate, people are there, it isn't that people are not there, but only they are not coming into the church, but they are there. They are wondering, and and going to other things, and the church doesn't have them, so the church sometimes has to get rid of the building. And sometimes you wonder why, but you here, you are still a little better because your congregations are much better then congregations in Britain.

But we have seen something very hopeful. I mean we have seen these big Gothic Cathedrals packed out in the evening, recently, not just well, not just by people who come traditionally, but by people who feel this is what we need.

I believe that the church needs to recover, the essence of its message.

If we are going to minister today, to tired people, not people who are starving like the ones in Karamoja, with about whom we have been sharing. And by the way I hear the good news that the rains have come, and our, there is sorghum, may bring a good harvest, so perhaps in, in sixteen, eighteen months we may be out of that thing, of of starvation, we have got a missionary there, full time. Who is a, who has been experimenting with grains, to see which grains can survive the drought and become ripe within the shortest possible time. And I think he has succe... succeeded, we work with him, in fact we, he needs help, because he needs a what it takes to
dry grain, you know when you dry, if the grain is not properly dried, the rains come then it is, it can also be destroyed. So he needs to be helped to equip himself and equip the people teaching them how to keep, to dry the grains they harvest properly.

(Interruption: Question: This is where?) Jim Rolland in Karamoja. Karamoja has been in the news, the area of starvation northern Uganda. (northern Uganda) Yes, right in the border with Northern Kenya, South of the Sudan, where this horrible famine has cost lives in that country. I just mentioned that because, we are still involved in there as a church, but we hope, we are now hopeful, even Bishop Johah Okoth, said to me, "We have had good rains," and some of these areas in his diocese which is Eastern Uganda he said, "We have had a good harvest." Which is very encouraging to hear in those parts of Eastern Uganda.

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QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

Q. You are going to take the questions now?

A. Yes now, yes.

Q. I have one, I have never been in Uganda, but I assume that, many people come out of ..... background. (definitely)
I assume that they are also (animists)

A. It is the animists who you know the traditional worshippers, I I was one, before I was converted to christianity, my parents were animists. And this is an area where, most of the converts are coming from, we have a few moslem converts, but moslems are hard to break through, and they are few also in Uganda, they number about 6% of the population. And, but the Ugandan moslems are not fanatical, they come to church from time to time, when I am preaching somewhere, you find them coming and sitting in the front row, with their turbans and so on. They love
They love to hear what we are saying. It may not necessarily mean that they are converted, but they just come and sit and listen to the Gospel and go which is wonderful really. I had one experience of preaching in a mosque, in 1976, under Amin, and one of my clergies, the dean of the Cathedral was invited by a moslem group we were in a mission in one diocese, of one of our bishops invited us to go and do some evangelism in his diocese, in the town. And when they were going round, we were all located areas to evangelize, because we were about 60 of us. And then I went with bishop and we went to the mosque to meet the sheik. And the sheik had invited us, so we sat, he called all his sheiks, we went to the mosque, we sat with them, and we shared with them about Jesus. They were very very open, very ameekable, in fact he got an envelope, he gave us some money for the mission in town. (laughter) Then we said to the sheiks, will you want to stand and pray, and they all stood up, we prayed in Jesus name, and they said amen.

Then the dean of my cathedral a priest took him round in his parish, and they were visiting homes, then they landed at a funeral, and the funeral was a funeral of a moslem family. But you know in the African way, all the people in the community, we come when a person dies, not only relative but will the whole community come and be there. And so the dean and the priest came. And they greeted the people sympathized and then the priest said to the dean, let's go on visiting the homes, and so the dean who is a remarkable evangelist said, no no, we won't find them, they are all here. (laughter). Why don't we speak to them here. So he asked the sheik, wether the sheik would like him to say a word to this community at the funeral. So the dean said oh yes, said oh, so he got up, took his New Testament, and gave them a message on the resurrection, on the hope after death, and they clapped and when he finished, the sheik said, "Please this is on a funeral, do you mind coming on Friday, (laughter) to the mosque, and tell us this same thing?" And so the dean came
and found me, I was in another area, and he said, "Shall I go?" And I said, "By all means, why not." Bless him, I mean, he never really knew, he did not know what to do with a moslem, in an Islamic setting of a mosque. So he got there, and he told me, he said, "I was really lost." He said, "I took off my shoes of course and I went where they were about 600 moslems who came for worshipping on Friday." and he said, "As I stood up, I remembered the Old Testament, so I said, In the name of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob I greet you" and they said, "Amen". (laughter) And so he gave them a beautiful message and when he finished, the sheik said, "would you mind coming back for few days, and then speak us a little more, we didn't have time?" It was a unique thing, which had never happened before, and so the moslems are not fanatical in Uganda, they are more open to us as friends, and once in a while, you get a few who have been converted. But in Tanzania more than 60 came to Christ, and as you know moslems are supernaturalists. Therefore, when christianity presents the power of God, that one they understand, they are open to power beyond the human. They haven't got many problems with supernatural aspect of faith. They usually they fight over the death of Christ and Christ as Savior, you know the doctrine of things. Yes.

Q. (I can't hear the question)

A. It is true, but you have to realize, when Dr. Obote was voted into power in December, there had already been three Governments which fell, which means, the Uganda after Amin was a country full of problems. The economy which couldn't easily be picked up, the security which was absolutely in shambles in that you didn't have trained police force, you didn't have a trained army, and you didn't even have time to train them, or or even finances to make that training possible, so you see, whoever inherited the government inherited problems, and then the government itself is not strong
because of the fact that it wasn't popularly voted, there were a lot of raging secretly but we of the christians well raging has always been going on, in different elections but we want the man to take over and perhaps help to bring the broken pieces together, but then there are other Ugandans who don't think like that, who think no, and therefore they make it more difficult for the government to pick up this security problem. It is really security which is causing a lot of problems and security you must remember is problematic because the economy is not there. There isn't anything to fall back to. It is in shambles, and of course we usually get aid, from Britain, United States, Canada all these western countries, and that aid stopped for 10 years. And now the western countries because Dr. Obote and his government are leaning more to the west than to the East, many countries have promised good aid, but they haven't given it. By the time they want to let it go then security problem, then some bad reports come out, people have been murdered, and so they, they hold back you see, and the Asians have gone back to Uganda since the fall of Amin. Not all of them, some, and they have been given their businesses back, some prominent Asian businessmen who had sugar plantations, tea plantations, coffee have been back, are back now in Uganda.

Q. Do they become citizens of Uganda?

A. They are citizens; they were citizens when Amin kicked them out. There were those who were non-citizens trading, but many of them were citizens but they were scared. Amin said, "Okay, citizens can stay." But they knew that if they stayed they would be massacred, so they had to run and they left their businesses and their homes and everything.

Q. The question came up in our parish when we were giving some money to Uganda, for relief, for the church, the question one of our lay people asked is, "How do we know it is going to be well spent?" What are the means
by which it is received and used, on the Uganda end?"

A. Well the Uganda if the money is given to the church, ear-marked for relief, and rehabilitation, it goes into the external account of the church of Uganda. Our church has got a board of finance, and it has got a committee responsible for relief, rehabilitation planning of the church. It is not one man spending the money, it spent and accounted for properly by our church. Because, relief money is not the only money, the money that we receive for relief does not run our church, we have our own money which runs our church which pays, bishop which pays clergy, so we have got a treasurer, we have got accountants to do this kind of job, in other words, this is on the church side.

The same speaks for African Evangelistic Enterprise. We have a board of finance, we have got accounting systems which are internationally accepted, our books are open for people to come and see where the money has gone, reports are sent back, so there is a whole lot of systems of accounting for the money that comes, that it has gone in the right place.

Q. The system then is still intact, in Uganda.
A. The church system?
Q. Yes.
A. Never was dismantled, the government system was dismantled that's why the church can run when the government cannot run. Because because the infrastructures of the government were completely smashed, whereas the infrastructures of our church remained. (laughs, yes)

Q. (I can't understand the question)
A. Ahaaa, repeat your question, (laughter) you put me in a preaching situation and therefore if you want me to do that kind of investigation, that will take me a little (that will take me a little) while, but I think
A. the church, any established church and yours is no exception. Any established church suffers from being weighed down by its own heritage and tradition. And which means, that's why we need God to renew his people. The heritage is not bad, but we are human, we tend to enjoy things until they become heavy weights on our shoulders. And then we say if my tradition is here, therefore all is well. You may have a tradition but all may be far from being well, that's why we need God to blow through the tradition, again, and again and again, in renewing power so that he save people. I think here you are not using your lay people, you have plenty of material, in the Episcopal church, first class people, men and women, whom if you gave them to me, to take to Uganda, and rub shoulders with my lay people, I think we would blow the entire country. But I think you have got tremendous material in the Episcopal church. You imagine the training, the professionalism, the know how that you have, if these people are set on fire, this church would, is a giant sort of. But I think, I don't know how many of you clergy use your lay people to preach for you on Sundays, as you sit back and have a little break. I do that in my diocese, if you come you find the bishop and a number of clergy sitting back and a lay man is absolutely on fire giving us, I mean, I don't mean that his theology is going to be correct, who cares about that. But his, many times he gives you a living word, a refreshing power of Jesus Christ in his simplicity. And, and you see people responding. So we are blessed by our laity, God's people. Yes.

Q. In 1963, ............... 

A. Much tradition of Anglicanism, Patience was suffering from what we all suffer, if you grow in a church situation, daughter of a bishop, daughter of a clergy, you can become easily a sort of anti traditional. And when you are helped to, your eyes are opened, then you begin to resent