Pentecostals pray for Museveni



UPDF Political Commissar Felix Kulayigye praying for a Christian with other believers at Namirembe Diocese Gardens. Photo by Norman Katende

BY VISION REPORTERS

Some Pentecostal churches have prayed for presidential candidate Yoweri Museveni, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) flagbearer to win next month's presidential elections with a landslide victory.

Despite a long day of campaigns on New Year's Eve, President Museveni joined Born-again Christians to welcome the New Year.

According to the pastors where Museveni joined the faithful in prayer, the country has registered development, peace and security.

"We thank you for the good work you have done for this nation. We pray to God to give you more years and victory in the 2016 presidential elections," prayed Pastor Imelda Namutebi of Liberty Worship Centre International, Lugala.

At the church, where some believers clad in yellow T-shirts with a portrait of candidate Museveni welcomed the President, Pastor Namutebi pledged the church's support towards Museveni's candidature.

President Museveni, who arrived at the church at 11.30pm, spent about 20 minutes before he left to join other worship centres in prayer to welcome the New Year.

At Mandela National Namboole Stadium where thousands of Born-again Christians gathered for the end-of-year Passover prayers, Pastor Dr. Joseph Serwadda of Victory Christian Centre Church Ndeeba, the Pentecostals commended him for recognising them as an independent faith.

The Pentecostals also hailed the President for giving them permission to conduct weddings and also standing firm on the issue of homosexuality in Uganda.

"*Balokole* (Born-again Christians) are aware of those who opposed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. We shall punish them through the ballot paper whether at the presidential, parliamentary or local government level," vowed Pastor Serwadda.

President Museveni arrived at 2:24am amidst ululations from believers. After the National Anthem and the Balokole stanza of *Tukutenderezza Yesu* had been sung, Pastor Serwadda ordered for a replay of a 2006 audio recording of Museveni's remarks about the Pentecostal churches being distinct.

Serwadda later called out the pastors and the congregation to raise their hands and pray for the President to have strength, good health and security.

About an hour into the New Year, President Museveni joined the believers in prayer at Kololo Airstrip amidst tight security.

Just like other pastors, the Christians at Kololo led by Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga of the Christian Life Ministries also asked God to grant



President Yoweri Museveni waving to congregation at Liberty Worship Centre International, Lugala, Kampala. Left is Pastor Imelda Namutebi during prayers at the church. Photo by Oyet Okwera



Worshippers praying as fireworks illuminate the sky at Nakivubo Stadium. Photo by Ronnie Kijjambu



A woman praying at Namirembe



Namirembe diocese bishop Wilberforce Luwalira (left) and Archbishop Stanley Ntagali (second right) greeting Christians after the New Year service



Pastor Robert Kayanja preaching during New Year prayers at Miracle Centre Cathedral Rubaga. Photo by Roderick Ahimbazwe



Pastors led by Jackson Ssenyonga praying for President Museveni to win next month's elections at Kololo Airstrip. Photo Benjamin Sebagala

to win elections next month

victory to Museveni.

"I ask you to consider your options wisely and vote for Museveni who has granted the country freedom of speech and press," stated Ssenyonga.

Museveni is facing seven opponents including former prime minister Amama Mbabazi and three-time presidential contender Dr. Kizza Besigye.

■FUNDS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

At Namboole, Museveni promised that his Government would fund religious institutions to compliment the Government in transforming the lives of Ugandans.

He revealed that when he had just captured power, some people asked him to ban Pentecostal churches, but he refused.

"I refused because I was aware of a scenario in the Bible when Jesus's disciples attempted to stop a man who was casting demons in Jesus' name. Jesus told them 'whoever is not against us is for us,'" Museveni explained.

At different worship centres, Museveni commended the pastors for keeping the youth on the right track by attracting them to God and nurturing them spiritually. "I want to thank the pastors for the good job. It feels good seeing many young people here celebrating Christ in a spiritual dance. I would feel bad if I found the youth in *ekikeesa* (overnight clubbing) and taking alcohol. You are doing a good job keeping the youth in church," said Museveni.

Adducing examples from the Bible, Museveni asked the youth to emulate the industrious life of Jesus Christ and engage in wealth-generating activities and also take initiative to acquire skills.

The President also joined believers at Synagogue Church of All Nations led by Samuel Kakande among other churches around town.

At Nakivubo stadium, where the President arrived at 3:40am, Bishop Livingstone Kiganda of Christianity Focus Centre Kisenyi asked Museveni to scrap taxes against equipment such as radio and TV imported by churches.

Compiled by Henry Sekanjako, Moses Mulondo, Betty Amamukiror, Michael Odeng and John Masaba



Bishop David Kiganda and wife assist President Museveni in cutting a tape to launch Kingdom TV during the overnight prayers at Nakivubo Stadium, Kampala. Photo by Ronnie Kijjambu



Fireworks display at Serena and Sheraton hotels, Kampala. Photo by Richard Sanya



Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala blessing believers at St. Peter's Catholic Parish Gardens, Nsambya. Photo by Mathias Mazinga



Christians raising their hands in thanksgiving to God for the New Year at St. Peter's Nsambya, Kampala. Photo by Juliet Lukwago



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