

June 26

A Day to Consider

The East African Revival

Resources for Parishes



The East African Revival was and still is a move of God in East Africa and beyond.

In Rwanda great things were happening, everywhere the Lord was at work. Dr Joe Church reported that on 26th June 1936, in Gahini; in huts, in church, in the school, and in the hospital, occurred visitations of the spirit in a way they had never seen before.

"When self is on the throne, it is conspicuously out of place... Revival begins by putting a line through the 'I' which is at the Center, and turning it into a cross." - Festo Kivengere.

Revival Characteristics

Some of the hallmarks of the East African Revival included repentance and confession, restitution and a strong emphasis on a life that is lived “walking in the Light” as per 1 John 1:6-7. The revival Christians walked in the light with each other, sharing spiritual victories and blessings, confessing failures and weaknesses, sharing plans and aspirations; and seeking counsel and support. They also sought to live in humility and brokenness, and not to be “stiff-necked,” as Stephen declared the Pharisees to be in Acts 7. They went on to pray with converts for the power of the Holy Spirit to give them victory over sin and an ongoing passion to know Jesus more and more.

According to another historian, the East African Revival “was characterized by a deep remorse for sin, a desire for holiness, and a close relationship with God, and treating other people with sincere love and honesty.” Charles V. Taylor, an Australian Bible scholar and linguist who experienced the revival in Uganda firsthand, **explains** that there was a real difference between those whose spiritual lives had been revived and others, even other Christians: “Worldly businesspeople would employ ‘saved’ East Africans in their homes and businesses, because they could completely trust them and rely on them to work hard.”

This revival spread through Holy Spirit-touched Christians compelled by Christ’s love to share Him with others. But they were not content to see them only saved from sin. They went on to pray with converts for the power of the Holy Spirit to give them victory over sin and an ongoing passion to know Jesus more and more.

A Prayer by Dr Joe Church 1936

Lord bend that proud and stiff necked
Help me to bow the neck and die
Beholding him on Calvary
Who bowed his head for me

Bible References Often Used by East African Revivalists

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Deuteronomy 10:16b ¹² And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

¹⁴ To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. ¹⁶ Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

1 John 1.7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Galatians 2.20 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Revival Chorus

One of the most distinctive features of the Revival is the song “Tukutendereza”, which is still sung joyfully across East Africa.

Tukutendereza Yesu	We praise You Jesus
Yesu Mwana Gw'endiga	Jesus the Lamb
Omusaayi Gwo Gunaziza	Your Blood has cleansed me
Nkwebaza Omulokozi	I thank You, Savior

Results of the Revival

- Millions of Christians had been touched by the revival and it was influential in raising up a new generation of leaders to carry the church forward—with African leadership.
- The revival, though having started with the Anglican Church of Uganda and Rwanda, spread to all the denominations.
- The African Rwanda Mission alone had 20,000 converts by 1942. That was in 700 village congregations.
- Today, 36% of the 30 million people of Uganda are Anglicans, and 56% are eighteen years old and younger.
- The public confession of sin was one of the pillars of the revival. Stolen goods were returned, ranging from money, hoes, and even razor blades.
- The revival went global in its influence. Beginning in 1946, and through the 1950s, revival teams began making ministry trips to various nations, sharing about what they witnessed during the East Africa Revival.
- Few observers expected the revival to last a generation, yet in the 1950s it triggered even more awakenings in Burundi, Sudan, Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Revival Today

The revival ran into the 1980s, but now a new revival is being prayed for.

Prayer

Lord thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit who brought fire and faith into Gahini early 100 years ago. Thank you for fanning the fires of revival that spread around the world, transforming lives.

We ask that you continue the that work both in Gahini and Gippsland strengthen our faith and the bonds of our companion relationship. Breath of Life, pour out your Spirit of Grace and love, that our lives might fully reflect your Glory that all in Dioceses might believe in your name, to the honour of your name. Amen