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Africa

Christian fundamentalism: a reactionary crusade in Africa

- IV Online magazine - 2023 - IV581 - June 2023 -

Publication date: Monday 12 June 2023

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The Christian Right in the USA is using millions of dollars to influence African policies on the rights of women and sexual minorities, by relying on the evangelist churches that have emerged on the continent.

Recent events in Uganda, where President Museveni enacted a law against homosexuals, highlight the role of Christian Right organisations in the USA, which have consistently supported homophobic campaigns in that country. An investigation by the "openDemocracy" website shows that, since 2007, these organisations have spent 280 million dollars funding activities outside the USA.

Evangelical churches and the American right

Nearly \$53 million has been devoted to African countries, most of which have a profusion of so-called evangelical churches. Deeply reactionary, they are opposed to equality between men and women, sexual relations outside marriage, contraception, abortion and, of course, homosexuality.

Based on this ideology, ultra-conservative circles in the United States and these churches worked together. In the 2000s, Janet Museveni, the wife of the Ugandan president, led a campaign for sexual abstinence, presented as the solution to the spread of HIV. At the same time, President George W. Bush launched his President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Ultra-conservative elected representatives successfully campaigned for sexual temperance to be one of the plan's central strategies, citing Uganda's alleged successes. In 2005, two-thirds of PEPFAR funds were used to promote abstinence.

Moral activists

Experts believe that the March 2009 meeting in Kampala on "The Gay Agenda. The Whole Hidden and Dark Agenda" was responsible for Uganda's first anti-homosexuality law. It was attended by the American leaders of Exodus International and Defend the Family, anti-gay organisations.

Some organisations, such as Human Life International and Heartbeat International, intervene directly in African countries. Under the guise of humanitarian aid, Heartbeat has developed maternal health centres. Their aim is to persuade young girls and pregnant women to give up abortion. In Uganda, these centres discourage young girls from using contraception by advocating abstinence.

Family Watch International is leading campaigns in at least ten countries on the continent to ban sex education. This association organises training courses for senior government officials in African countries to teach them how to negotiate projects aimed at restoring moral order.

Political agenda

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Ultra-conservatives in the USA rely on African evangelical churches to maintain the patriarchal order. These churches do not care that certain organisations such as the World Congress of Families have links with the European far right.

In countries where a growing proportion of the population is faced with poverty, insecurity and a lack of prospects, evangelical churches serve as spiritual and sometimes material refuges. They attract millions of people and are becoming a political issue for the African governments in power. Many of the continent's governments are influenced by evangelical churches through ministers or even presidents who are members.

While the harmful role played by Islamic fundamentalists supported by the Gulf States in Africa is rightly highlighted, the role of evangelicals supported by the extreme Christian right in the USA, with similar political agendas, should not be forgotten.

8 June 2023

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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