

Preserving Faith Amidst Disruption: The Impact of Obama and Biden's woke Foreign Policy on Christian Values in Africa and Its Effect on American Democracy Promotion.

Abstract

In May 2023, Uganda enacted a law criminalizing homosexuality. The Ugandan parliament and President Yoweri Museveni defended the enactment of this law, arguing that homosexuality directly violates Ugandan cultural norms and Biblical doctrines. In response to this legislative action, the United States immediately condemned the law and threatened to withdraw the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), along with other forms of assistance and investments. Despite this, many Ugandans, supported by their leaders, publicly expressed their willingness to accept the aid suspension rather than repeal the law. This article will examine the promotion of LGBTQ rights in Africa, an initiative that started during Obama's administration in 2009 and has significantly shaped the perception of U.S. foreign policy towards Africa. The article posits that the perceived disregard for African culture and Christian beliefs has resulted in a diminishing influence of the United States in the region. Christian beliefs are deeply entrenched among a majority of Africans, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. The article will demonstrate how U.S. democracy has been most effective when it aligns with Christian values. It further suggests that the promotion of democracy in Africa is at risk. This risk could arise if U.S. foreign policy toward Africa fails to incorporate Christian values.

Introduction

In May 2023, Uganda enacted a law criminalizing homosexuality. The Ugandan parliament and President Yoweri Museveni defended the enactment of this law, arguing that homosexuality directly violates Ugandan cultural norms and Biblical doctrines. In response to this legislative action, the United States immediately condemned the law and threatened to withdraw the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), along with other forms of assistance and investments.

Uganda's rejection of the "woke" agenda, which has been promoted since Obama took office in 2009 and continued under the Biden administration, has attracted global attention. This stance has not only been observed but has also sparked criticism of U.S. foreign policy towards developing countries, particularly those in Africa. Uganda's refusal to compromise its culture and Christian beliefs has been widely criticized by those who promote this divisive Marxist ideology through international media, academia, and even the White House. Ugandans have been particularly shocked to see a country like the United States, which is often perceived as a Christian nation with democracy rooted in Judeo-Christian values, standing against them rather than with them in their fight against this harmful ideology that threatens to undermine the nuclear family and Christian values.

Thanks to social media, Africans, and particularly Ugandans, are becoming aware that the U.S., seen as the birthplace of modern democracy, has been continuously promoting the woke agenda through the foreign policies of both the Obama and Biden administrations. They are realizing that the U.S., which they perceive as a Christian nation and a beacon of true democracy, is slowly and systematically decaying from within. This realization is not limited to Africans; a

majority of Americans are also waking up to the fact that they are trapped in a situation that seems irreversible. As George Santayana once said, “Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it.” To find a solution to the damaging effects of this Marxist woke culture, it would be beneficial for the United States to revisit its past and learn what made it the strongest nation in the world.

The United States Christianity and Democracy

The United States was built on Christian doctrines. For decades, the interplay between Christianity and government has sparked debate among scholars. This discord arises from contrasting ideologies: while some early scholars, such as Plato, endorse the notion of natural law, others like Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocate for the total separation of Christianity from public affairs, arguing for power to be entirely vested in society. Despite these divergent perspectives, there is a shared understanding that laws and customs are instituted to achieve collective good through joint action.¹ To realize this collective good, Aquinas contended that a guiding principle is essential to attain the desired result in the most straightforward manner. He asserted that this direct path could be realized through human intellect and reason, which he believed are innate in every individual, directing their actions towards their objectives.

The United States has a rich history, with its foundation linked to Christian theologians and philosophers such as Saint Augustine (Augustine of Hippo), Alexis De Tocqueville, and Thomas Aquinas, among others. Moreover, those acquainted with the English Magna Carta widely believe that the framers of the United States were significantly inspired by the Magna Carta, which is grounded in Biblical principles. As a major influence on the American Bill of Rights and Constitution, the Magna Carta has laid a significant foundation for the Fourth and Fifth Amendments, among others.² Given the substantial contributions of these theologians and philosophers to Christianity and Christian value-based democracy³, this article will provide a brief overview of each to guide the purpose of this article.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States has served as sole exemplary model to the world, owing to its harmonized political, economic, and religious structures. Historical evidence shows that no country has been as prosperous and secure as the U.S. The monumental achievements of the U.S are often attributed to the Christian values that form its backbone. Early observers of U.S Christianity, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, noted that religion is vital for the health of modern democratic systems. He stated, “Americans intertwine Christianity and liberty so thoroughly in their minds that it is nearly impossible for them to conceive one without the other.”⁴ He reiterated that Christianity should be preserved at all costs if necessary. De Tocqueville noted that Christian beliefs ingrained in American culture were what sustained democracy in America. Lutz further expanded on the connection between Christianity

¹ Zaborowski, H. (2010). *Natural moral law in contemporary society*. ProQuest eBook Central <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu> pp.25

² Levy, Janey. *The Magna Carta*. First edition. New York, NY: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2014.

³ Aquinas, Saint Thomas. *On Kingship: To the King of Cyprus*. Vol. 2. Aeterna Press, 1992.

⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis de, Eduardo Nolla, and James T. Schleifer. *Democracy in America*. English ed. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012.

and the U.S, stating that from the establishment of the earliest colonies through a significant part of the 19th century, Americans often identified themselves as the modern equivalent of Jews, consistently drawing upon the Bible for their foundational myths.⁵

In examining the connection between the U.S. and Christianity, one ancient theologian and philosopher stands out for his significant influence on U.S. Christianity and philosophy - Augustine of Hippo (Saint Augustine). Saint Augustine, often called the father of the church, introduced a new interpretation of natural law that contradicted the laws established by Roman emperors. He postulated that divine wisdom is the source of a universal law governing all of creation.

Saint Augustine developed a comprehensive Christian historical narrative, highlighting God's continuous efforts to execute His plan of salvation since the beginning of time. This plan encompasses states, individuals, and events. Saint Augustine noted that, in line with God's goal of guiding His people towards their ultimate destiny, God has provided his people with natural laws to serve as guiding principles during their earthly journey.⁶

Saint Augustine's approach has proven effective for adherents of Christianity, both in the context of its historical inception and in the modern era. It has fostered an ethical understanding of Christian doctrine, instilling a sense of optimism for a superior existence that aligns with their idealized vision. Moreover, it has offered world political systems an alternative model of governance. Augustine's emphasis on the concept of "lex aeterna" or eternal law, suggests that God has endowed humanity with an inherent law that serves both as a safeguard and a guide.

Another influential thinker in the U.S. Christian worldview is Thomas Aquinas. His scholarly contributions to the field of moral law, also known as natural law, are of considerable significance. His insights build upon and fulfill the intellectual legacy of numerous predecessors in this domain. A distinguishing feature of Aquinas's philosophy, compared to other contributors to natural law, is the profound influence of Christianity. His philosophical constructs predominantly advocate for the cultivation of inherent, divine potential, as opposed to adherence to human-established principles. Cicero, a notable source of inspiration for Aquinas, eloquently encapsulated this perspective by noting that a man, endowed with reason, discerns consequences, perceives the causality of phenomena, and comprehends the evolution and progression of events.⁷

In his book *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas explained the relationship between God and humans and how humans can reconcile with the Divine through Christ. His book provided evidence for God's existence and discussed God's activities and nature in detail. The book also delved into the nature of humans and angels, the union of body and soul, and the nature of sins. Aquinas' goal was to provide a comprehensive and rational view of existence. Aquinas suggested that we understand things by abstracting their essential qualities, forming ideas of universals, and

⁵ Lutz, Donald S. and Institute for the Study of Human Issues. *Documents of Political Foundation Written by Colonial Americans: From Covenant to Constitution*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1986.

⁶ Augustine, Saint. *The City of God*, Books XVII-XXII. Baltimore: Catholic University of America Press, 1954.

⁷ Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Cicero De Officiis*. England: Harvard University Press, 1968, 1913.

proposed that theology, the rational study of faith's truths, is completed when human thought gives way to the experience of God's enlightening presence.⁸

Aquinas' observations suggest that God, as the architect of nature, has orchestrated His creation in such a profound way that human lives are fulfilled. Aquinas noted that humans are naturally inclined to live together. Therefore, since humans are designed by nature to coexist, a system should be in place to govern them. Without governance, they might harm each other, much like other animals. Aquinas proposed that a suitable individual should be chosen to rule. If a government is unjustly executed by a single individual who seeks personal gain from his rule rather than the welfare of the subjects, such a ruler is considered a tyrant. Aquinas advised that humans should follow their natural reasoning, which God has instilled in them. He believed that whatever aligns with nature is optimal, as nature always strives for the best.⁹

While Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Alexis de Tocqueville are not the only influencers of the United States' foundation, their significant contributions to American Christianity and democracy are undeniable. Their philosophies have laid a solid foundation that has supported the United States for over two centuries. Therefore, it is clear that when the Founding Fathers were drafting the United States Constitution, a pivotal document in history, they were guided by several key principles. These included the supremacy of God as suggested by Saint Augustine, the governmental structure proposed by Thomas Aquinas, and Alexis de Tocqueville's concept of a harmonious blend of Christianity and God-given liberty. This blend fosters a resilient and harmonious democratic system of governance, which has been instrumental in shaping the United States as we know it today.

Africa and Christianity

The continent of Africa has recently returned to the global spotlight, primarily due to competing ideologies, hegemonic rivalry, and the struggle of its nations to overcome poverty that has claimed and displaced millions of lives. In addition to these factors, Africa has once again resisted a destructive Marxist ideology recently introduced to the continent. A recent event that sparked global criticism was the rejection of homosexuality, an ideology that had not been pushed onto the continent until Obama took office in 2009. Africa's rejection of homosexuality is a protective measure for African families and their future, and by extension, the world from rampant divisive ideology. As Isichei noted, "Christianity in Africa is of global significance, and the direction it takes is important to Christians everywhere."¹⁰ This statement was based on statistics showing that more than 393 million people were Christians in Africa in 2000, not including small local churches that were not assessed.

There is no consensus on when Christianity was introduced in Africa. Some scholars argue that Christianity was brought to Africa by the Portuguese explorers in the fifteenth century,

⁸ McCosker, Philip, and Denys Turner, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to the Summa Theologiae*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

⁹ *Ibid*, 3

¹⁰ Isichei, Elizabeth. *A history of Christianity in Africa: From antiquity to the present*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995.

while others contend that Christianity was present in Africa before it began in Europe.¹¹ Historians and archaeologists have found substantial evidence that Christianity was present in Africa since the first century after Christ's birth.¹² The Bible mentions several individuals from Africa, such as Simon of Cyrene (currently Libya), Zipporah (an Ethiopian woman married to Moses), Tirhakah (an Ethiopian King who fought King Hezekiah of Judah and prevented him from destroying Jerusalem), and the well-known Queen of Sheba who sought King Solomon's wisdom.¹³ These individuals are believed to have laid the foundation of Christianity in Africa.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Africa experienced a significant influx of American evangelists who supported Africa's quest for independence and helped introduce the American idea of democracy and human rights. Billy Graham, a well-known and influential evangelist, had a significant impact in Africa. In 1960 and 1976, he evangelized thousands of Kenyans, leading many to Christ.¹⁴ Billy Graham held large crusades in South Africa, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, and many other African countries.¹⁵ His message was simple: repentance of sin to enter the kingdom of God. Billy Graham's message transformed thousands of Africans, teaching them to leave their sinful lives and turn to Christ. Billy Graham influenced not only citizens but also many African leaders in the 60s and 70s who held him in high regard. In 1960, the Ethiopian Emperor invited Billy Graham and honored him with a medallion.¹⁶ Billy Graham is also credited with significantly influencing Pentecostalism in Kenya, along with other missionaries from Norway, Scotland, and other Scandinavian countries.¹⁷

Prior to the arrival of American Evangelicals, missionaries from the Catholic and Anglican churches of Great Britain significantly influenced both the Christian and political arenas since the 1890s, in Uganda. They were involved in the social organization of the Baganda.¹⁸ In the 15th century, around 1491, following the journeys of Diogo Cão, the King of Kongo, Nzinga Nkuwu, accepted the baptism proposed by the Portuguese clergy.¹⁹ Since then, Christianity has been a dominant religion in the Kongo, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

From the time the Portuguese set foot on the African continent to the 1960s, when African countries were gaining independence from their European colonizers, Christianity spread across the continent.²⁰ After independence, the expansion of Christianity was further propelled

¹¹ Oden, Thomas C. *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. 1st ed. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2007.

¹² Shaw, Mark and Wanjiru M. Gitau. *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A History of African Christianity*. Revis and update ed. Carlisle, Cumbria, CA: Langham Global Library, 2020.

¹³ Ibid, 10

¹⁴ Gathogo, Julius M. "The Shifting Landscape of African-Pentecostalism in Kenya." *Theologia Viatorum (Sorenga)* 46, no. 1 (2022): e1-e11.

¹⁵ Stanley, Brian. *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott*. 1st ed. Vol. 5;5;. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

¹⁶ Aikman, David. *Billy Graham: His Life and Influence*. Large print ed. Detroit: Christian Large Print, 2010.

¹⁷ Ibid, 13

¹⁸ Hansen, Holger Bernt. "Church and State in Early Colonial Uganda." *African Affairs* 85, no. 338 (1986): 55-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/722216>.

¹⁹ Almeida, Carlos. "Christianity in Kongo." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. 2021.

²⁰ Ibid, 9

by American and European evangelicals. They served not only as missionaries and humanitarians but also assisted these new governments in shaping democratic institutions.²¹ As Dowd once noted, “Sub-Saharan Africa is arguably the most religiously vibrant region in the world. More people spend more time gathered in religious communities in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else on earth.”²² This statement underscores the dominance and influence of Christianity in Africa.

Obama - Biden and homosexuality ideology for Africa.

In December 2011, Mike Pflanz reported in the Christian Science Monitor and an online newspaper that President Obama had instructed government officials to ensure that American diplomacy and foreign aid protect and uphold the human rights of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, and transgender worldwide.²³ This was a novel approach not previously introduced by any U.S. president before Obama. Consequently, African countries became wary, sensing a significant shift in ideology from the leader of the United States. When Obama began his visits to Africa, gay rights were consistently at the forefront of his agenda.

During his 2015 visit to Kenya, Obama openly advocated for gay rights, a stance broadcast to millions of Kenyans and Africans via national television.²⁴ In an attempt to persuade African leaders, Obama drew parallels between the discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community and the historical injustices of Jim Crow laws and slavery. However, many African leaders responded by emphasizing the unique challenges facing their continent that needed to be prioritized. For instance, a survey in Kenya found that nine out of ten respondents did not support gay rights, but they would support other agendas that would help them build their economy and military.

In response to what they perceived as an imposition of foreign values, African countries began implementing stringent anti-homosexuality laws to protect their sovereignty. A notable example is Uganda’s 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Act,²⁵ which sparked controversy between African Christians and cultural conservatives, and the growing progressive movement. As leaders resisted this perceived imposition of foreign values, citizens also voiced their opposition to any ideology that contradicted their cultural, traditional, and Christian beliefs.

²¹ Ranger, T. O. *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, edited by Ranger, Terence O. New York; Oxford;: Oxford University Press, 2008;2006;

²² Dowd, Robert Alfred. *Christianity, Islam and Liberal Democracy: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190225216.001.0001.

²³ Pflanz, Mike. “Africa Reacts to Obama’s pro-Gay Rights Foreign Policy.” The Christian Science Monitor, December 8, 2011. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2011/1208/Africa-reacts-to-Obama-s-pro-gay-rights-foreign-policy>.

²⁴ Reed, Betsy. “Barack Obama Tells African States to Abandon Anti-Gay Discrimination.” The Guardian, July 25, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/25/barack-obama-african-states-abandon-anti-gay-discrimination>.

²⁵ Bill No. 18 was submitted by Honorable David Bahati, Member of Parliament, Ndoorwa County West, Kabale. Bill No. 18, Anti-Homosexuality Bill, 2009 (Uganda Gazette No. 47, Vol. CII Sept. 2009) [hereinafter AHB]. The AHB states

The leftist agenda did not end with the Obama administration. The Trump administration, with Mike Pompeo's emphasis on displaying only American flags at all U.S. embassies, managed to slow its progress. However, following Trump's term, the Biden administration revived this agenda by permitting U.S. embassies to fly LGBTQ+ flags during Pride Month. Policies related to gender identity were reintroduced by the Biden administration through its regulatory and enforcement powers. Yet, these policies often overlook the diverse interests or rights of women, children, and religious institutions and individuals.²⁶

Despite countries like Uganda not endorsing homosexuality, U.S. ambassador Natalie E. Brown, in her remarks on July 21, 2022, stated, "In line with guidance from the Biden Administration, I displayed the Rainbow Flag just below the U.S. flag at my residence and at all of the Embassy's facilities."²⁷ She further stated that, "Hate is not a religious value, yet it is unfortunately often propagated by religious leaders and other members of society who do not recognize the dignity and worth of all human beings."²⁸ This speech left Ugandans and a majority of Africans perplexed by the U.S. foreign policy under Democrats, which seems to prioritize social imperialism over respect for other cultures and beliefs. This disregard for Ugandan culture and their Christian values has led to a belief that the U.S. is not different than other authoritarian countries such as China and Russia. Consequently, Africans are turning to China and Russia for economic development and military support, rather than being lectured by U.S. Democratic policymakers on sexual matters while they are still grappling with poverty alleviation.²⁹

Major media outlets like CNN and BBC have repeatedly questioned African presidents about their stance on homosexuality. The common response has been that it is not a priority issue for Africans and is contrary to African culture and beliefs. President Museveni of Uganda, for example, described it as un-African and unbiblical.³⁰ As the U.S. continues to promote LGBTQ+ rights in Africa, African leaders and their citizens are gradually distancing themselves from not only the U.S. but also its democratic ideology. Simon Hankinson encapsulated this sentiment by stating, "Rather than allowing countries like Kenya and Botswana to move freely through social change (or not) at their own pace and inclination, the U.S. is excessively promoting leftist sexual identity agendas, and thereby—to its own detriment—appears to such conservative societies as overbearing and intrusive."³¹

²⁶ Morrison, Rachel N. "Gender Identity Policy Under the Biden Administration." (2022).

²⁷ Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Natalie E. Brown, <https://ug.usembassy.gov/lgbtqi-religion-diversity-and-inclusion-dialogue-with-universal-coalition-of-affirming-africans-uganda-july-21-2022/>

²⁸ Ibid, 25

²⁹ Maru, Mehari Taddele. "Why Africa loves China." *Al Jazeera* (2019).

³⁰ Kuloba, Robert. "Homosexuality is Unafican and Unbiblical": Examining the Ideological Motivations to Homophobia in Sub-Saharan Africa - the Case Study of Uganda." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* no. 154 (2016): 6-27.

³¹ Hankinson, Simon, "Woke" Public Diplomacy Undermines the State Department's Core Mission and Weakens U.S. Foreign Policy." December 12, 2022. <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/woke-public-diplomacy-undermines-the-state-departments-core-mission-and#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWoke%E2%80%9D%20diplomacy%20does%20not%20fit,it%20reflects%20America's%20national%20interests.>

Conclusion

The United States is globally recognized for its significant contributions to modern society. Its balanced political, economic, and religious systems have attracted worldwide attention. When Obama assumed the presidency in 2009, he adopted an ideology often associated with “woke” Marxism, focusing on issues such as radical feminism, sexuality, and race.

During Obama’s visits to African countries, he emphasized homosexuality, rather than prioritizing democracy, good governance, food security, and poverty eradication policies. This approach met resistance, particularly from the Ugandan president and his constituents, who argued that it conflicted with their cultural and Christian values. Following Uganda’s lead, other African countries began to resist not only the American “woke” ideology but also other aspects of U.S. influence, including democratic governance.

The U.S. now stands at a crossroads, where it needs to reassess its foreign policies and focus on issues of global importance rather than imposing values that may conflict with other countries’ local cultures and beliefs. The U.S cannot promote Democracy while pressuring countries like Uganda to instill ideologies they perceive as dangerous to their families and their Christian beliefs. As De Tocqueville said, “Christianity should be preserved at all costs if necessary.”³²

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³² Ibid, 4

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