

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA: EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

OUTDOORING

16TH JULY 2020

SPEECH BY THE RT. REV. PROF. JOSEPH OBIRI YEBOAH MANTE, PhD (CHAIRMAN)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Protocol Greetings: Chairman of Christian Council, members of this Eminent Group of Religious Leaders, our Special Guests, our dear friends of the media:
2. I believe I speak for all of us (Eminent Persons Group) when I say that we are happy to be called upon to serve our religious groups and our country in this capacity, particularly during this year of Presidential and Parliamentary elections. We are indeed grateful and honored.
3. Thanks to Star Ghana. We are also grateful to Star Ghana for supporting the Christian Council in this endeavor so that we can have peaceful elections this year that are free and just.

II. OUR PURPOSE DEFINED

Persons of the Eminent Group, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: to make peace is holy work. To make peace is hard work. It is a call to every human being, particularly to those who have a

responsibility to lead their nations. Religious Groups and their leaders have a call from God to be the voice of the people who need justice and peace. It is our responsibility to support and facilitate processes that make for peaceful co-existence in the context of a just society.

III. OUR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

The Bible offers no description for definitive political systems. However, it indicates that every system we dream of must provide avenues for justice, love and righteousness that eventually lead to shalom (peace).

For Christians, as well as for Moslems, our prophetic traditions offer the reminder that people of faith must embrace the responsibility to be engaged in the civil political systems of which we are a part, and must also embrace the responsibility to advocate for justice, love and morality. As people of faith, we are called upon to be salt and light in society. It is important to note that salt and light both season and enlighten any system in which they are placed. This is what we Religious Leaders are positioned to be and to do.

IV. A CHRISTIAN COUNCIL TRADITION

In recent times it has become the tradition of the Christian Council of Ghana to always activate its Eminent Group of Persons during every

election-year in this country. Elections serve as a way for people to confer legitimacy on a participatory democratic political system. What we try to do is to ensure that elections reflect the true will of the people. In this vein we pay serious attention to the periods before, during and after elections, as periods where justice and high moral standards are brought together in peace. We will therefore commit ourselves to effective monitoring systems that will engage the powers that be to make sure that in the name of God, our elections are truly fair and transparent and just.

V. *OUR METHODOLOGY*

We will therefore engage the political leaders, the media, the security agencies, the electoral commission and the ordinary citizens, in a humble but serious manner, all with the intention of making sure that we have free, fair and just elections void of any intimidation or violence.

VI. *SOME FOUR DEMONIC FORCES IN GHANA'S POLITICS*

I have observed some four demonic forces in Ghana's politics that must be exorcised. We may in future make time to break them down and expatiate on them more carefully, but for the sake of time, I will only touch on them briefly. These are:

1. The demon of wishing the downfall of a ruling government just to gain political points. We should note that anytime this demonic trait is triggered we all lose as a country; we never progress in our development as a country in that kind of environment. This spirit must be exorcised.
2. The demon of ethnic or tribal polarization. There are people in this country who sometimes give the impression that some tribes are more Ghanaian than other tribes. The worse thing is that they use it politically during elections period. This is a demon that must be exorcised. This position can be held by either the ruling government or opposition parties. It can be concocted and exaggerated by the opposition or it can be fueled by the government in power. Ghana does not belong to any particular ethnic or tribal group; it belongs to all of us – Dagombas, Kusaasis, Bonos, Asante's, Ewes, Fantes, Kwahus, Akyems, Akuapems, etc, we are all one people. The politics of tribal polarization during electioneering campaign is demonic and it must be stopped immediately and exorcised from our growing democracy.

3. The demon of Uncultured and Hate Speech and Lies. Just because of elections people insult other people's character and personalities; some very young men (small boys and girls) just insult others who are far older than them to even be their fathers and mothers. Sometimes one wonders who nurtured such people. This attitude is a disgrace in Ghana's politics and it must be eschewed. Do we want to teach the younger generation that politics is a dirty game? Is that what we want to leave with our children? This is a shame and a demon that must be exorcised.
4. The demon of violence and abuse of power. There are people who talk violence and act violent. They exhibit these characteristics during electioneering campaigns. Sometimes their leaders acquiesce and support them by not saying anything. When those who speak and act violently are supported by those in power then there is no country but an anarchy. This is definitely evil.

VII. A CALL TO SOBER REFLECTION

Let us think of three main things as a nation:

1. Sub-saharan Africa is already behind in development so let us not destroy the few strides we have made in development. There are

times when, I believe, we in Africa sound and look very ridiculous in the eyes of some people in the developed world. One of such times is when we use childish and uncouth politicking to keep ourselves under-developed. Let us keep focused as a nation towards higher development and intentionally renounce any act that will move us backwards in our endeavor to develop.

2. Let us as adults leave a better and civil democratic system for our children and eschew any political disgrace that is catapulted by uncultured speech, hate, lies, violence, tribal and ethnic polarization and a pull him down spirit.
3. We have only one Ghana so let us cherish it. Let Ghana be known as the Black Star of hope for Africa and not the Black Star of disaster. Let us not think only of ourselves during these times of elections. Let us know that the world community is watching how we as a nation have matured in our politicking. Oh let us be wise as Ghanaians.

VIII. TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

1. I have all hope in God that Ghanaians will be wise during this year's elections and show the world that we have developed beyond

childish politics and that we are developing towards political maturity.

2. The third verse of the current lyrics of Ghana's national anthem should be our guide and banner during this period of elections. It reads: "Raise high the flag of Ghana, and one with Africa advance; Black star of hope and honor, to all who thirst for liberty; where the banner of Ghana freely flies, may the way of freedom truly lie; Arise, arise, O sons of Ghana land, and under God march on forever more".
3. We as an eminent group of religious leaders in this country have taken a vow to serve God and make sure that Ghana moves forward under God Almighty in true peace and justice towards good socio-economic, political and technological development. May the Lord God Almighty help all of us to help ourselves to achieve this goal.
4. Ghana is a peaceful country. Let us keep Ghana peaceful and not destroy it by cheap and childish politicking. Thank you and God richly bless us all.