



GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE & CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA



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COMMUNIQUE

ISSUED BY THE
CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA (CCG) AND THE
GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE (GCBC)
ON WEDNESDAY MAY 5, 2021

GREETINGS

Dearly beloved citizens of goodwill resident in Ghana, please receive warm greetings from the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PREAMBLE

We, the leaders of the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, held our annual Joint Meeting at the Saint James Catholic Church, Osu, Accra, on Wednesday May 5, 2021. We used the opportunity to hold an Ecumenical Service to pray for Christian unity, the wellbeing of the Government and people of Ghana and reflected on how to abide in Christ as a nation in order to have sustainability of strength and not wither away (John 15:1-10).

In our joint meeting, we discussed matters of both Church and National interests. We deem it appropriate as Christian Leaders to speak to and bring the following issues to the attention of the Government and people of Ghana, especially to members of our Church communities.

COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF CONDUCT IN MISSION SCHOOLS

We, the leadership of the CCG and GCBC, have followed with keen interest the discussions about the authorities of Wesley Girls Senior High School, who allegedly prevented a student from fasting in the ongoing Ramadan. We have discussed the issue prayerfully and have studied the various press statements that some stakeholders have released on the matter.

We wish to endorse the position of the Methodist Church Ghana, which they succinctly outlined in their May 4, 2021 Press release, and reiterate that the decision of the Wesley Girls Senior High School authorities on fasting is purely in the interest of the students.

The leadership of CCG and GCBC, therefore, wish to state that we took strong exception to the directives of the Ghana Education Service issued in their press release on May 1, 2021, which stated that:

"The Ghana Education Service therefore directs authorities of Wesley Girls High School... to allow any such student who wishes to fast for any religious reason to do so.

The Parents of any such student are also directed to write to the School indicating that the school shall not be held liable for any health condition of the student as a result of the fast."

From their inceptions in our country, the academic and non-academic rules and regulations (Codes of Conduct) of the Mission Schools have been guided by the religious traditions of our respective Churches. Even in the more advanced democracies in the world, such a space is granted the various Churches in the running of their respective Mission Schools. Therefore, we respectfully wish to state that the Ministry of Education, GES or any other stakeholder must not undermine the Codes of Conduct of the various Mission Schools, which have ensured their discipline and high academic standards for almost two centuries in Ghana. Furthermore, then, we expect all who attend our Mission Schools to comply with the Codes of Conduct of the schools, so that the discipline and high academic standards can be upheld.

In the interest of peace and harmonious nation building, the leadership of CCG and GCBC calls for dialogue by stakeholders on matters that affect the administration of Mission Schools in our country. To this end, we would like to seek audience with the Minister of Education at his earliest convenient time to build consensus on these matters to prevent future occurrences.

ACTIVITIES OF SPIRITUALISTS AND THE GET-RICH-QUICK SYNDROME

We wish to express our concern about the 'get-rich-quick syndrome' in our nation for which reason individuals believe that they have to make money by any means. We have observed that the activities of spiritualists who promise to make people rich through their TV, radio and other social media platforms have contributed to fueling the 'get-rich-quick syndrome.'

We, the Leaders of CCG and GCBC believe that it is important for the Government and all citizens to see the moral, psychological, social and economic havoc, which these spiritualists are causing our nation. We, therefore, appeal to the relevant state institutions and agencies to act speedily to deal with these worrying developments. Furthermore, we call on all stakeholders, especially the Regulators of our media space, to clamp down on the activities of fraudulent spiritualists and their agents who through their audio-visual content continue to propagate evils and their 'get-rich-quick' activities on our television stations and social media platforms.

We call on Ghanaian citizens to appreciate the need for hard work, honesty, values, integrity and the desire for genuine acquisition of wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18).

ILLEGAL MINING (GALAMSEY)

We wish to commend government and the president of the Republic, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for their renewed determination against illegal mining in our nation.

It is sad to know that illegal mining, also known as “galamsey”, is going on in some parts of the nation, notwithstanding the efforts of stakeholders against this destructive act. On our various pastoral and social visits to some localities, we see the destruction of forests and the cutting down of cash crops for the purpose of galamsey. The galamsey menace has polluted our land (soil) and water bodies with chemicals like mercury, chlorine, cyanide and arsenic (which are harmful to human).

We, therefore, call on government, concerned agencies and institutions, and all Ghanaians to be bold and courageous to sustain the campaign against illegal mining. We demand that any individual, security service personnel, politician or chief found to be working to thwart the fight against illegal mining should face the full rigors of the law.

We encourage pastors to continue their advocacy against illegal mining. We also call on Traditional Leaders to use their authority to ban galamsey in their jurisdictions to avoid further destruction of our natural resources.

COMMENDATION AND SUPPORT FOR GREEN GHANA PROJECT

The devastation caused to Ghana's forests leading to its rapid depletion is not a good story for our country. Reports indicate that between 1990 and 2010, Ghana lost about 33.7% of its forest cover to galamsey, farming and illegal logging. Yet we also know that the country's forests provide livelihoods for over 2.5 million rural people.

It is in this context that we wish to commend the President's initiative to plant five million trees through the Green Ghana Programme. We also commit to the Green Ghana programme and encourage our Member Churches to set similar targets for planting trees. We encourage the Forestry Commission to be supportive and facilitate the execution of this agenda. It has the potential to reverse the dreadful loss to our forest cover while contributing to mitigating climate change impact in Ghana.

COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND VACCINATION

We have observed with much concern, the non-adherence of some Ghanaians to the COVID-19 protocols. We wish to appeal to our fellow citizens to observe religiously all the COVID-19 hygienic protocols. Let us all stay safe by wearing our face masks, observing social distancing, washing our hands regularly under running water with soap and also use the hand sanitizer frequently.

We wish to commend government for procuring the first dose of vaccines for our country. We urge government to do everything possible to get the needed vaccines for the various target groups of the nation as planned and to secure the second dosage for those who have had their first vaccinations to complete the process.

We believe that vaccination is an act of good neighborliness, which is a mark of good Christian spirituality. When one accepts the vaccine, one does not only protect oneself from getting the disease but also protects others by stopping transmission. We, therefore, encourage all Ghanaians to avail themselves for their vaccination when the time comes.

2021 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

The 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) will take place from June 28-July 11, 2021. The leadership of CCG and GCBC humbly appeals to all citizens of our country to avail themselves for counting.

Population and Housing Census is significant for the growth and development of every nation. The data captured is important to plan the national, regional, district and local development of our nation.

We, therefore, call on all Christians not to shy away from the Census but to see it as an opportunity to exercise their civic responsibility and to help in the developmental planning of the nation. We request that pastors continue to educate their congregants on the need to get counted during the period of the Census.


We also encourage all citizens to receive our brothers and sisters who will be coming to our homes in peace and assist them with the needed information to make their work easy.

We, the leaders of CCG and GCBC, join the clarion call of "leave no one behind." It is our prayer that everyone will be counted, enumerated once, and at the right place.


CONCLUSION

The Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference wish to assure all Ghanaians that we will continue our public education, Christian advocacy and prayers for peace, harmony, and justice in Ghana.

In so doing we will continue to be non-partisan and be guided by the principles of the Holy Bible. We wish all Ghanaians well in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Rev. Dr. Cyril G. K. Fayose
General Secretary
CCG



Rev. Fr. Lazarus Anondee
Secretary General
GCBC