

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON

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MODERATOR'S MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON

Fellow Presbyterians
Dear Brethren,

BE REFORMED TRANSFORMERS

Preamble

Permit me use this Pauline greeting to the Christian community of Corinth to greet you on this historic day of celebrating the great evangelistic strides of Christ's Church-our Church, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon for a period of 60 years. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:13).

The Theme of our PC Day celebration is "Be Reformed Transformers". It is a continuation of the global celebration of 500 years of Protestant Reformation of last October 31, 2017. Even though, the event is over, the reverberations continue. We continue reflection on who we are as Presbyterians, what we stand for especially in times of crisis and where we are going after our Diamond Jubilee. So the theme, "Be Reformed Transformers" is a reflection on our identity and how our identity defines our mission and our future.

"Reformation in the Church is a dynamic force that keeps calling and challenging the Church and humanity to keep on perfecting its biblical insight and divine spiritual growth on this pilgrimage to the Supreme God... Looking back into the history of our origin down 500 years is to examine whether we are still in the Reformation spirit of biblical, theological and spiritual truth... Reformation still needs a renaissance. We need a Reformation in all spheres of life" (Celebrating 500 years of Protestantism in the PCC). On this Diamond Jubilee celebration, I call on you to "Be Reformed Transformers"

Diamond Jubilee

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is 60 years old today from its birth on the 13th of November 1957 at Ntafoang, Bali. We are therefore celebrating its Diamond jubilee today 12th of November 2017- a day traditionally celebrated every year as PC Day. When we look at the ground covered amidst high and low moments, calm and turbulent moments, placid and controversial moments, we can only but continue to thank our ever-living and ever-present God that, it is true that He will never ever abandon His people. We are assured that if he leads us to the banks of the Red Sea, he must cross us over as He did the Israelites.

We had hoped and planned to do a grand celebration, but the present socio-political climate does not permit us to do so, given the pains in our hearts and minds. Let us just celebrate as we usually do our annual PC day. The wisdom of the wise says when extra-ordinary problems arise, extra-ordinary solutions are sort for.

Tribute to Our Church Leaders

A remarkable day like this one gives us the opportunity to look down memory lane and pay tribute to the movers and shakers of the faith within the PCC. This is the appropriate moment to pay tributes to some of our Church leaders from independence till date.

These Church leaders whom we term the Patriarchs and Church Fathers of the PCC include the following Moderators Emeriti: the Very Revs. Abraham Ngole (1958-1969), Jeremiah Chi Kangsen (1969-1985), Henry A. Awasom (1985-1999), the Very Revs Drs. Nyansako-ni-Nku (1999-2009) and Festus A. Asana (2009-2014). Their invaluable works and contributions and that of the nine Synod Clerks before us, has let to the growth of body of Christ, the PCC.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the enormous contributions in varied forms from our partners in Europe and America like the Basel Mission- now Mission 21, the Methodist Church, PCUSA and the World Alliance (Communion) of Reformed Churches. They have stood by us as a church from our infancy until now.

Working in the vineyard of the Most High God is like a relay race and St. Paul puts it nicely this way:

Each one of us does the work which the Lord has given him to do: I sowed the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow. The one who sows and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow. There is no difference between the one who sows and the one who waters; God will reward each one according to the work each has done (1Cor. 3:5b-8).

Yes, indeed, God has a reward for them and the so many others, both the Laity and the Clergy who toiled, sweated and sacrificed and are still doing so to make the PCC what it is today. They remain pillars of inspiration to the Christian generation of today and tomorrow.

Down Memory Lane

The PCC, an indigenous Church, can be said is celebrating its diamond jubilee with a positive track record and report of remarkable growth, though passing through all the vicissitudes of life.

Between 1854 and 1856, two independent missiologists, Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson propounded the three marks of any mature indigenous Church to be considered as such. These three-self paradigms were articulated to be self-propagating- being able to independently interpret and preach the gospel that arises from the socio-political, economic and traditional contexts of the people, addressing such; self-governing-being able to provide effective and visionary leadership to the Church, inspired by divine wisdom and the fear of the Lord; and self-supporting-being able to generate income locally to finance its evangelistic activities.

We can agree that the PCC has remained very outstanding in the first two-self paradigms for the past 60 years. The quality leadership the PCC has had over the years, both Clergy and Laity has spurred the Church to rapidly expand nationally and internationally in terms of evangelistic outreach and the provision of quality social services.

The PCC has about 1,500 congregations, 600 Pastors, 2 million Christians spread within Cameroon and in Europe, America and South Africa. The evangelistic mission of the Church is strengthened by various Movements (Christian Youth Fellowship-CYF, the Christian Women Fellowship-CWF and the Christian Men Fellowship-CMF). Many Choirs, from indigenous to classical, keep on growing; spicing and inspiring our worship life with varieties of gospel melodies.

In the domain of the provision of social services to humanity, the Church continues to deliver in the area of education-from Nursery to University, though with a waning degree because most of our Christians fail to provide the necessary patronage by sending their children to these institutions, despite the fact that their services are of tested high quality. We do hope that celebrating 60 years of maturity will change our perception and refocus our commitments to the institutions of the PCC.

In the sphere of providing physical health to God's children besides spiritual health, the Church runs many Hospitals, Health Centers and Clinics in both the rural and urban centers, with the goal to provide quality healthcare

delivery to the sick. Again, despite the high standard and quality of the services provided, many of our Christians would not utilize these services. Sometimes it is shocking to hear the negative comments some of our Christians make concerning what is theirs!

We can only forge ahead and become who we want to be if we change our negative attitudes and feelings towards what is ours, for no one can protect what belongs to you more than you yourself. While the Church is there to give us spiritual protection, we the Christians are there to give her physical protection and support.

With the growing opportunities for the Church to impact lives and transform them positively, she has been empowering youths with training in agricultural activities at our Rural Training Center, with the availability of some thrift loan schemes for graduates to start up their own farms. We remain worried because not many youths are exploiting this opportunity given them.

The PCC has maintained a long sustained effort to reform and transform the youths of our Church and nation through our Youth Centers' activities which are tailored to empower youths with various skills, ranging from embroidery, sewing, training in computer skills and many more.

Of the three-self-paradigms, while the PCC can be seen and said to be thriving in self-propagating and self-governing, the same thing cannot be conveniently said of self-supporting. The Church had engaged a visionary and aggressive path to self-supporting, but the present socio-political stalemate has put her in a very difficult situation.

We had studied all the resources that the Church possesses and concluded that she can re-launch herself and participate in the business world in the provision of Insurance and Banking services, besides printing and distribution of books, stationery and didactic materials. We see a very bright prospect in this sector if our Christians will patronize these institutions. Presbyterians, insure your property with Presinsurance, using the code 6125 at any Zenithe Insurance branch.

The PCC cannot be celebrating 60 years with still cap-in-hand before our partners abroad begging for financial assistance. We are too mature and old enough to be a donor and not a beggar.

I believe that if we reform and transform our perspective towards our Church, our commitment to our Church, our sacrificial love to our Church, and rise up in the defense and promotion of our Church and its institutions, glory and honour will be given to God and the pride and blessings will be ours. Yes, you can do it and together we can all do it!

Justice and Peace

No Cameroonian, especially those of the two English speaking Regions can pretend that all is well. We are passing through a very serious socio-political crisis that is shaking the very foundation of our country.

Our society is passing through a very serious socio-political crisis and is sick to its very foundation. No one should pretend on this! I describe the crisis our country is passing through as a crisis of injustice that threatens and has punctured the peace of the nation.

Many people are calling and praying for peace, but forget that there can be no peace without justice. Martin Luther King Jr. remains right to have said,

One of the most persistent ambiguities that we face is that everybody talks about peace as a goal. However, it does not take sharpest-eyed sophistication to discern that while everybody talks about peace, peace has become practically nobody's business among the power-wielders. Many men cry Peace! Peace! But they refuse to do the things that make for peace

Peace does not have an independent existence; it cannot stand on its own right and merit. Peace does not have legs to stand on; it does not have a mouth to speak. The legs and mouth of peace is JUSTICE. In a society where justice is absent, peace flees away and anger, tension, conflict and violence set in.

The kind of justice we have in our country is the type described by Plato in his dialogue **The Republic** as, "rewarding one's friends and punishing one's enemy," and justice being the "interest of the stronger party."

Justice is a call for fair and objective practice, dealing, relating and treating of people in thought and word irrespective of their language, region, race, tribe, colour, nation and status.

It is true that where JUSTICE rules, PEACE reigns. Therefore, like prophet Amos says: "Let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry."

Like Martin Luther King Jr., I will say, let JUSTICE rule from the North to the South, let it rule from the East to the West, let it rule in every heart and mind from the highest personality to the least person in our society.

When human abilities are no longer sufficient to stem the floods, and when we are overwhelmed by a thick cloud of darkness and uncertainty, and

sparks of danger glow to the full view of everyone, and we begin to doubt where to put our trust and hope. John Newton in his lyrics raises our hope in these verses:

**Though troubles assail and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us the Lord will provide.**

I remain convinced and convicted that the Lord will provide us with the way out of these prevailing socio-political challenges that are plaguing this nation right down to the marrow. Our God is one who identifies with His children in times of need and uncertainty like ours. We can keep trusting Him for a brighter tomorrow, born out of the gloomy today.

Our 60th anniversary celebration is to give us hope in the midst of adversities, pains, anger and frustration that God is with the oppressed to give them strength, he is with the mourners to wipe their tears and comfort them, he is with the abandoned as their ever-present Help in times of need and he is with the vulnerable as their Refuge. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil; God is with us! Happy celebration and keep trusting God!

Yours for the Sake of the Faith,



The image shows a blue ink signature of Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel Forba over a rectangular official stamp. The stamp contains the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon logo on the left, which features a cross and the Greek letters alpha and omega. To the right of the logo, the text reads "Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel Forba" and "MODERATOR" below it.