

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON

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**The Moderator of the General Assembly
The Clerk of the General Assembly
The Directors
Delegates to the Annual General Assembly
Other Distinguished Personages
My Abiding Brethren in the Faith of the
Presbyterian Church of Ghana,**

TOGETHER WE CAN SHINE THE LIGHT

Permit me borrow this heart-warming greetings of the Apostle Paul to the Christian community at Ephesus to inspire my goodwill message to you from your brethren of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC).

"Peace to the brothers (and sisters), and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love." (Eph 6:23-24).

It is an honour for me to be given this privileged to address the 21st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana on the theme "Jesus Christ: the Light of the world" drawn from John 8:12.

This theme to me has been carefully selected at time as this when it seems darkness has covered our continent. It is now more than half a century since most of our African countries had their so-called independence, but, the painful truth is, we Africans are yet to be freed from the

agonizing economic shambles and shackles we have been going through for ages; and the fact of the matter remains that there isn't much hope that we will get anywhere better soon under the circumstances.

Is there a role African Churches can play to change the narrative? The answer is a big yes, With Jesus Christ as the light of the World shining through the churches in Africa we can change our darkness into light. This needs the concerted efforts of the Churches in Africa to make Africa shine.

Our stories as Africans are common. Even contextually our situation in Cameroon is mirrored in yours in very similar manners. Perching on this feeling and thought, I am inspired to caption my goodwill message to you during this year's General Assembly as: TOGETHER WE CAN SHINE THE LIGHT.

The wisdom of my people say that, "no one tells the rooster that it is dawn. It knows it even more than human beings because it starts the countdown of the hours leading to daybreak from about 2am at the time human beings are sound asleep."

Given the global perspectives of the Christian faith and other global and national trends, we must act like the rooster before it is daybreak. We must take proactive and positive actions, that is, closing our ranks and working together in the race of faith in the midst of varied and complex challenges around us and far away from us, most especially because we are identical in nature in a vast ocean of brothers and sisters called the ecclesiastical family.

It is important that I give you a panoramic view of the PCC. The PCC has 2000 congregations and 2 million Christians spread across our country and in the diaspora, pastored by about 531 Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. We own and run a Seminary since 1957 that trains our Pastors from Bachelor's to Master's degrees in

theology. We have a University, 230 Nursery and Primary schools, 21 Secondary and High schools; besides 22 Health Centres and 10 Hospitals, a Central Pharmacy, a convent with branches spread all over the country, 2 Agricultural training centres, 3 vocational training centres, 5 Youth centres for youth activities and other establishments to contribute to the transformation of the society and the propagation the gospel through the divinely inspired services we render to humanity. This is just a skeletal exposure of the PCC to you at your General Assembly so that we can begin to see possible areas of a South-South cooperation or partnership.

For a very long time African Churches have hung on the stripes of Western Churches and partners for survival, until they are now mounting pressure on us to accept certain deviant human sexualities that are repugnant, according to our biblical interpretations and African cosmology. Time has come and the time is now for us to keep the dignity and values of our people. We must not compromise our Christian values to some carnal interpretation on human sexuality that does not tie with the Word of God.

Actually the PCC is an Anglophone Church and has its headquarters within one of the two Anglophone Regions of our country that have been in a crisis that began in October 2016 and became a war by end of November 2017. More than 5.000 Cameroonians have been killed in this senseless and wicked war, both civilians and the military. More than 60,000 have been externally displaced and about 95% of this population is in Nigeria and most of them being administered to by our Brothers and Sisters of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. Internally, there are about 200.000 that have been displaced and about a hundred villages burnt down. More than 60% of our Church has been affected. Human blood is flowing everyday and life is ebbing away. When I grew up as a young man, family disputes were revolved by the fire side in the evenings with some good palm wine and kola nuts.

Even if there had to be a fight, our people used clubs to fight out their differences. But today Children of one family have raised the gun against each other. No one seems to see the consequences of this action. Our continent has become a jungle of manslaughter and survival of the fittest. Unfortunately it has become a source of income to many. What a wicked humanity and what a terrible world! I get passionate because these are God's children being wasted away because of human greed.

I bring this to you because our traditional wisdom and life teaches us that when a neighbour's house is on fire, the neighbours, even the whole community comes out to aid the one in trouble whether invited or not to put out the fire. Where has this African virtue gone to? We have sold our souls to greed, and individualism has overtaken our people. We either work together in order to survive together or live as individuals and die alone.

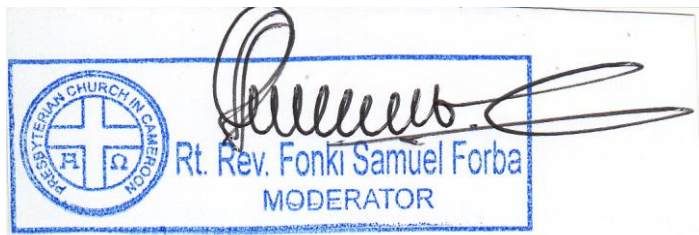
Ghana's current image of peace and stability is worthy of attention. Compared to Cameroon, Ghana seems to be going through a period of relative stability. I pray that the current stability will enable you to use the moment to build a united strong Presbyterian Church of Ghana. I know you have your own problems but they can never be matched with the pain and humiliation we are going through. We need your prayers to survive the times.

With these painted pictures in our minds, we must seek common ways to free our people from the shackles of life. It is my wishful thinking and hope that your General Assembly would give a thought to this need of standing for each other for the common good of our people. Declaring some common days for prayers on certain topics can be the beginning of a new dawn in our continent.

My abiding brethren in the Lord, Jesus the Christ, I wish you a fulfilling and inspiring General Assembly Meeting in the power and anointing of the Most High God. He who has

called you and us at these trying times to lead His Church knows why and so will not leave you and us alone. When He calls, He equips and strengthens, protects and directs. May we be one as He and His Father are one.

Yours for the Sake of the Faith,



Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel Forba
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President of the Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon
President of the Cameroon Inter-Religious Dialogue and
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