



UGANDA JOINT CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2016

Fellow Ugandans,

“Glory to God in highest heaven and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” Luke 2:14

On behalf of the members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), the Most Rev. Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese and his Eminence Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga, the Archbishop of the Uganda Orthodox Church, I bring you greetings.

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

Christmas is an opportune moment when we are reminded to reflect on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Family of Nazareth. Joseph and Mary cooperated and worked hard to bring the baby Jesus up in good health of mind and body. (Luke 2:52) So as we prepare to receive the new borne child, may the presence of God continue to manifest itself in our midst as we keep our hearts clean so that they can be a dwelling place for our Savior Jesus Christ.

As we prepare to celebrate this year’s Christmas on Sunday 25th December, I take this opportunity on behalf of my colleagues mentioned above to give this message of goodwill to all of you under the following highlights;

- a) 2017 - The Year of the Family
- b) The Kasese Situation
- c) The Closure of Makerere University
- d) The misuse of small arms and light weapons
- e) Corruption
- f) Rule of law and respect of life.

2017 The Year of the Family

You may be aware that on Saturday 8th October 2016, our President His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni declared the year 2017 the 'Year of the Family'. The family is the nucleus of the society. So when families are good it is more likely that the society is good as well. The family comes from the marriage institution which was started by God Himself in the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 1:26-28) However, this institution is under attack from different corners ranging from increased domestic violence and proposed laws which are at times anti-family. We invite all Ugandans to support the President's call as we use the year to uplift our family values for the good of the communities in which we stay. We appeal to all the Church Leaders, both ordained and lay plus parents and children to engage in activities that will enhance family values so that we are able to redeem our children and the future generation from the afore-mentioned attacks.

The Kasese Situation

We express our profound regret for the events that culminated into the loss of lives of the security forces, the royal guards and the men and women because they are all citizens of Uganda and children of God. We take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt condolences to all those who lost their dear ones during the crisis. We appeal to the government to expeditiously conduct their investigations and identify the culprits. We appeal to all the parties involved to be open, transparent and cooperate to restore peace in the region. We also know that for sustainable peaceful co-existence all those involved are urged to give room for dialogue, reconciliation and forgiveness so that a lasting solution is found.

The Closure of Makerere University

It is regrettable that our oldest University had to be closed. We express our concern for those who have been affected directly and indirectly. Fellow Ugandans, we appeal to you to be responsible citizens. The sin of omission by those who were responsible has caused tremendous suffering to many. We pray that the team selected by the President investigates the circumstances that have bedeviled the Institution. We hope that the truth will come out and that they will find a lasting solution to the problems and challenges Makerere University has been facing. We appeal to the team to be able to publish the report of their findings as soon as possible to mitigate the challenges that may result from delayed action. Any move to re-open the University is highly appreciated so that the students' rights to quality education are respected.

The misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Once again we express our concern on the continued killing of people and suffering arising from careless and irresponsible use of small arms and light weapons. We appeal to the security agencies to investigate and bring to book people who are illegally holding these arms or misusing them so that no more lives are lost due to irresponsible use of these weapons. We express our condolences to all the bereaved families and those who are suffering as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Corruption

We cannot stop to speak on the suffering and deprivation many people have and are still experiencing as a result of the evil of corruption. There is too much crying and uneasiness that culminates from stealing or misusing public funds and other resources by those who are given the responsibility. We appreciate some efforts the Government Institutions which are responsible for fighting this vice, but we at the same time urge them to do all it takes in their power to make sure that justice is practiced without fear of favour of any kind.

Rule of law and Respect for life

Laws are put in place to govern our lives in society. They are means through which conflicts are resolved for the good of everyone. A society in which law abiding is obvious development becomes a reality in a short time and everyone grows and finds meaning in life. Likewise where law is despised and so not kept, such a society cannot develop socially, economically nor politically. Slowly by slowly people in such a society lose the meaning of life and may not contribute fully to for the welfare in life.

Conclusion

In conclusion one may ask himself /herself that where are we going as a country. Much of what we have shared in this document seems to be negative only. God gives people a chance for repentance and return to God. We call upon each Ugandan to examine one self and put his/her house in order so that the original intention of Christmas of letting God be born in our hearts and lives may be our gift to God at this year's Christmas.

We wish you a very Peaceful and Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2017 as you celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Yours in the Lord,



The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali

Chairman/BOT UJCC & Archbishop of the Church of Uganda.