

INTERACTION WITH THE CLERGY IN GHANA

SPEECH

BY

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DE ICON, EAST LEGON

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My dear fathers and mothers in the Lord, I am deeply humbled and grateful for the chance to address you once again on matters concerning the progress of our beloved Ghana.

Your presence here reflects your unwavering commitment to the values that unite us as a people and your dedication to steering our nation onto the right path.

I sincerely appreciate the audience and wise counsel you offer me whenever we discuss the future of our country.

The people of Ghana are grateful for your steadfast prayers and guidance, which have helped hold our nation together, even during its most challenging moments.

Distinguished members of the clergy, our country Ghana is at a critical juncture of its history.

Faith in our democratic system of governance is fast eroding, especially among the youth. Young people in Ghana no longer believe that the state cares about them or is committed to providing opportunities for them.

A recent Afrobarometer survey revealed that more than 80% of Ghanaians believe our country is headed in the wrong direction. We need an urgent change and, of course, an urgent reset.

We need a reset of our governance, our economic models, and our attitudes and values. Unfortunately, the current leadership is blissfully unaware of the abyss into which they are plunging our nation.

Arrogance and impunity continue to be the order of the day. Systematic looting of state resources and rampant nepotism and cronyism have become a normal way of life.

The harsh reality is that our economy has been disastrously mismanaged, leaving us in the severest economic and debt crisis our country has ever experienced.

We are all feeling the consequences of this leadership failure, yet those responsible refuse to acknowledge their role and instead blame everything and everybody but themselves.

Human rights violations and the deliberate undermining of state institutions have undone the progress made under the previous NDC government, bringing immense hardship to Ghanaians.

The soaring cost of living has plunged many into poverty, with countless businesses on the brink of collapse. Bank closures have rendered many banking professionals jobless.

Debt exchange haircuts have eroded the incomes and savings of the Ghanaian middle class and pensioners.

Our natural resources, including water bodies and forests, are under severe threat from illegal mining driven by the greed of our leaders. This poses a grave danger to our survival.

Today, many of our children no longer see a future for themselves in their homeland. The collective dream of a prosperous nation is fading fast.

You would expect that, at the very least, our leaders would listen to wise counsel and correct their course when heading down the wrong path.

Unfortunately, that humility is absent in those who have governed us for nearly eight years.

Ghana urgently needs leadership that is inspiring and compassionate, rooted in integrity, truth, justice, and accountability.

We must steer the country back onto genuine progress and transformation.

This is the kind of leadership the NDC offers to the people of Ghana in the upcoming December 7 elections.

Leadership that will be honest with the people, reject extravagance, tackle corruption, and invest the nation's resources wisely to create prosperity and opportunities for all.

I understand that this will not be easy, but I have unwavering faith in God's ability to use me as a vessel to guide our nation through its current challenges.

Since I started my political journey, God has guided my steps and given me the privilege of experiencing every level of political leadership.

My odyssey in leadership has imbued me with the experience, insights, and modesty to help my nation in a time of crisis such as this.

That is why I stand before you today, humbly seeking your prayers, counsel, and blessings as we join hands with the Church of Christ to rescue and renew our nation.

We are at a time of crisis in our nation, as described in the book of Genesis. Genesis 47:15, when "money had failed", and all hope seemed lost, it took Joseph, the servant of God, to rescue Egypt and his family from the famine.

This biblical story resonates deeply with our current reality. We live in a time of great uncertainty, but the church remains the world's light—a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

As a son of the Church, I come before you in humility, seeking your intercession and counsel as I lead my party in our mission to rescue our nation from nearly eight years of leadership failure.

Hosea 12:13 tells us that by a prophet, the Lord led Israel out of oppression in Egypt and by a prophet, he was preserved.

You, as the spiritual leaders of this land, are prophets who must provide the guidance to lead Ghana out of this crisis and preserve our peace, prosperity, and progress.

My dear fathers and mothers in the Lord, your wisdom and dedication to truth are what Ghana desperately needs right now.

In these difficult times, we need spiritual leaders committed to righteousness. Like the leaders of the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:2, who could not tolerate evil and exposed false apostles, you are called to stand against deception and lead the people on the right path.

As Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:10: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."

I pledge to work tirelessly with my team to address our nation's unprecedented crisis and bring about the socio-economic transformation we so desperately need.

I will continue to seek your invaluable counsel and rely on your wisdom as we navigate these challenges together.

As President, I commit to upholding truth and integrity. I will always be transparent about the state of the nation and remain humble enough to admit my mistakes.

National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving

In a recent engagement with church leaders in Ho, I committed to establish a National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving, should I be elected President by the grace of God in the upcoming elections.

This initiative stems from my belief in the power of prayer and reverence for God as essential elements for the success of any nation. I reaffirm this pledge to you today.

The National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving will serve as a day of intercession, promoting national unity and cohesion, which are vital for our country's growth and development.

Promoting Respect for Religious Freedoms

We will prioritise religious freedoms, recognising that churches are not only places of worship but also centres for social upliftment, compassion, and moral leadership.

By fostering a supportive environment for faith-based institutions, we are investing in the moral strength of our society.

Under a John Mahama presidency, the freedom of religion will be protected as specified in our constitution. Leaders of faith and their works will not be subjected to harassment or attack.

Our goal is to create communities where worship and learning can thrive in peace, meeting our people's spiritual and educational needs with dignity.

Partnership with the church for investment in the economy

A key component of the next NDC government will be to partner with religious organisations to invest in income-generating activities for their congregations or the churches themselves.

An NDC Government will prioritise investments in agriculture and agribusiness, and we believe that, just as the church has a healthy partnership with the Government in education and health, we can create space for the church to invest in this priority area for the benefit of the church and the nation.

The government will seek partnerships with the church in poultry production, oil palm, cashew, rice, cassava, vegetables, cocoa, livestock, and agro-processing, among other key areas.

Enhancing cooperation between church and state in Education/Health/Community development

As I said earlier, we would seek to achieve cooperation between a new NDC government and the church in managing faith-based schools.

We will increase the Church's representation on these schools' governing boards and give the church a greater say in choosing the headmasters and managing the schools.

The NDC will work with the church on curriculum development to strengthen its moral education content.

We will introduce a government-church partnership program to incentivise faith-based organisations to engage in community development projects, such as health services, education, clean water initiatives, and youth empowerment.

Stance on LGBTQ+

The current legal impasse created by the Akufo Addo/Bawumia administration on the "Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Act" passed by Parliament sets a dangerous precedent for our governance.

The constitutional directives for action by the President are quite clear and need not result in this stalemate.

As I have publicly stated, I am a proud Assemblies of God Church member.

My faith does not permit same-sex marriages or relationships, nor does it endorse human-animal relations or gender changes. This is a fundamental belief that I hold, grounded in my faith.

I, therefore, assure you that the promotion of LGBTQ++ activities will have no place in our schools and communities under my government.

OTHER KEY POLICIES

In addition to the above, the next NDC/Mahama government will undertake sound policies and programs that will ameliorate the people's suffering, reset the economy, and restore our nation to the path of transformation and progress.

At this juncture, please permit me to briefly enumerate a few of the policies that my government will implement as part of our agenda to reset our country for shared growth and prosperity for all.

1. The next NDC government, under my leadership, will implement an urgent home-grown economic recovery program to ensure fiscal prudence, debt sustainability, macroeconomic stability, and restore investor confidence.
2. I will hold a National Economic Dialogue to discuss the state of the economy in the interest of transparency and consensus building.
3. To address the country's high unemployment and low productivity crises, we will introduce a 24-hour Economy policy to encourage and support businesses and public organisations to operate 24/7 in three shifts of eight hours each. Participating businesses in the 24-hour economy programme, will be given tax incentives, financing support,

cheaper electricity and security support services to reduce their cost of production and enhance their competitiveness.

This will boost production, promote productivity and generate well-paying jobs.

Through a ‘Made in Ghana Agenda,’ the next NDC government will deliberately use its spending power to stimulate demand by patronising made-in-Ghana goods under the 24-hour Economy policy.

4. The National Apprenticeship Programme will generate self-employment by providing free technical and vocational training for young people in various crafts.
5. Trained apprentices will be issued with appropriate certification and supported with start-up capital and equipment to set up their businesses.
6. The Women’s Development Bank – a special-purpose bank run by women to support women-owned and women-led businesses with low-interest loans and other tailored financial services on very flexible terms.

This will financially empower millions of Ghanaian women across the country and create many decent and well-paying jobs.

7. We will roll out a \$10 billion ‘Big Push’ policy for rapid infrastructure development to continue our legacy of massive infrastructure development for job creation.
8. We will introduce a Digital Jobs Initiative. This will be a three-billion-dollar investment in partnership with the private sector to leverage ICT to create jobs through the One Million Coders Programme and the construction of zonal ICT parks and Regional Digital Centres (modelled on the Accra Digital Centre).

We will also establish a \$50 million FinTech Growth Fund to promote the growth of digital entrepreneurs and support indigenous FinTech companies.

9. We will reduce government expenditures by introducing the leanest but most efficient government in the history of the fourth republic and demand the highest standard of accountability from my appointees.
10. We will launch a strong anti-corruption fight and allow the anti-corruption institutions unfettered space to do their work. We will launch an “Operation-Recover-All-Loot” (ORAL) to investigate, prosecute, and recover the proceeds of corruption. No person found culpable will be spared.

The sword of accountability will cut both ways against past and present governments.

11. My government will establish a State Assets Registry to keep records of all state assets and prohibit government officials from purchasing state assets.
12. We will introduce new legislation to streamline government scholarships and ban political appointees from accessing government scholarships.
13. The government I will lead will tolerate dissent and respect the human rights of all persons, including media freedoms.
14. Small-scale mining is recognised by law and must be done in a manner that does not harm the environment. We will audit all concessions issued and identify the beneficial owners of such concessions.
15. Concession owners will be held responsible for illegal mining within their concession areas. We will promote responsible mining but wage a ruthless war against illegal mining, Galamsey.

This will involve an aggressive programme to reclaim our polluted water bodies, degraded lands and devastated forest reserves through a Tree for Life and Blue Water initiative.

In this endeavour, I shall ban the grant of new mining leases and activities in forest reserves and amend the Mineral and Mining Law to impose stiffer punishment on mining in water bodies.

Under my government, all officials will be prohibited from engaging in legal or illegal mining.

Small-scale miners will be compelled to undertake skills training in modern responsible methods and land reclamation techniques as a required component of their operations to minimise their adverse environmental impacts.

16. Through a consultative approach, I will improve the implementation of the Free SHS programme to enhance quality by providing a dedicated source of funding for the program, scrapping the double-track system, and decentralising the procurement of food, among other things.

VAT and Tax Reforms

We will also undertake comprehensive reforms of Ghana's VAT system to ensure fairness and uniformity, providing much-needed relief to households and businesses.

These reforms will be part of a broader tax policy overhaul designed to create a more business-friendly environment. To alleviate the plight of Ghanaians, I will scrap the draconian E-levy, COVID levy and emissions levy.

Social Interventions for the Vulnerable

In addition to economic reforms, we will introduce a series of social interventions to protect the poor and vulnerable. These include:

No-Academic-Fee Policy: To improve access to higher education, first-year students in public tertiary institutions will benefit from a "No-Academic-Fee" policy.

Free Tertiary Education for Persons with Disabilities: We will ensure that persons with disabilities can access higher education without financial barriers.

Ghana Medical Care Trust (MahamaCares): This special fund will cover treatment costs for people with chronic illnesses such as kidney failure, cancers, Sickle Cell disease, diabetes, hypertension, and other heart conditions.

Free Sanitary Pads for Female Students: Female students in basic and secondary schools will receive free sanitary pads to ensure dignity and promote education for girls.

Free Primary Health Care: We will offer free primary health care from the CHPS to the polyclinic level, easing families' financial burden.

Agriculture Modernization and Agribusiness

Agricultural modernisation will be a cornerstone of my government, aimed at making Ghana self-reliant in food production.

Through the **FEED GHANA PROGRAMME**, we will boost food production, ensure food security, and supply raw materials for industries, fostering import substitution and export growth.

We will establish **Farmer Service Centres** in all districts to provide farmers access to modern agricultural equipment, technologies, and inputs.

Additionally, **Farm Banks** will be created in agricultural zones to improve access to land and irrigation, encouraging young people to enter farming.

We will set up **Agro-Industrial Zones** in each region, leveraging regional strengths for food processing and value addition under a **Rapid Industrialisation for Jobs Programme**.

This will enhance industrialisation and create employment opportunities across the country.

These initiatives, along with many others, will be implemented with a spirit of patriotism, sacrifice, and urgency to achieve the socio-economic transformation that Ghana needs.

Conclusion

By faith, I can confidently say that I have glimpsed the promised future for Ghana.

I believe that Ghana holds a special place in Christ's plan and has a prophetic destiny to fulfil.

However, I am reminded of Romans 9:16, which teaches us that success does not come by human will or effort, but by the mercy of God.

I stand before you today, not as a former President, but as a son of the church—someone whose public and private life has been deeply shaped by Christian values.

I remain fully committed to the church's upholding of the principles of integrity, humility, justice, and accountability.

As I pursue this righteous cause and seek the highest office of the land, I humbly ask for your prayers.

Let us call upon the God who confirms His servants' words, fulfils His messengers' counsel, and knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

May He look favourably upon me as we approach this election, just 68 days away.

The road ahead will not be easy, but we are ready. With your prayers, counsel, and support, we can guide our country into a new era of shared prosperity and progress. This is my solemn pledge to you and a charge I intend to fulfil.

Thank you for your attention.