

34. German Protestant Kirchentag in Hamburg International Reception, 3 May 2013

**Address by Rev. Dr. Ibrahim Yusuf Wushishi
General Secretary of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN)**

The General Secretary of German Kirchentag, Rev. Dr. Ellen Ueberschär,
The President of Bread for the World, Rev. Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel,
Sisters and brothers from Germany and
all participants from all over the world gathered here.

Ecumenical greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! I also would like to put it on record that I am most honored and delighted to be attending Kirchentag and for this rear opportunity giving to me to present this address on this 34th Kirchentag. I am indeed grateful to the organizers and all inviting organizations. May I on behalf of the international visitors thank you for the privilege to be part of this important gathering. Since my arrival I had been having a great time, a testimony to the hospitality of the German people this they have demonstrated by opening their doors to host the international visitors. And because you have opened your doors for us, God will also open His door of blessing to you all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Kirchentag has become a unique forum where people come together to have an encounter as members of one family in God. It is a Church on the move. It is the Church taking her rightful place in today's world. Kirchentag shows that it is possible to be Church in an ecumenical perspective. This gathering offered us the opportunity to listen and interact with other sisters and brothers from another part of the world about their joys and sorrows.

Most Christians are not really living the lives God desired for them in fullest especially our brethren from the developing Countries not with them having to combat all manner of corruption, wars, hunger, oppression, killings and new forms of terrorism.

The usual outcome of all these disasters is acute food shortage, poverty and hunger which affect mostly children and women. The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa and the Christian Council of Nigeria have embarked on an advocacy program. It focusses on

- Food Security,
- Corruption Free Schools and Churches,
- Peace building and conflict prevention.

This campaign seeks to engage the Church and political leaders at all levels of governance on ways to deal with these challenges in the sub-region. The security and economic development of the members as well as the society must be the priority of the Church. The Church has to strive for human dignity, and remain in the front line of a lively battle against hunger and injustice. Starvation is unacceptable and a complete violation of the covenant of economic, social and cultural rights and God's divine purpose for humankind. Food is a basic human right that must be for everybody at any point, and in time. The Church is aware of the fact that hunger makes people to be angry (a hungry person is an angry person), suffer defects, mental deficiency, blindness, and even death which contravene God's creation. God charged the Church to endeavor in fostering conditions that ensure sustainable access to sufficient, affordable, and safe food.

Permit me to use this medium to appreciate the churches in Germany and Bread for the World for their support in this giant stride. The collaboration and partnership between the Churches in Germany and Churches and civil society groups in our countries grows as we work together to free our communities from corruption, poverty, insecurity and hunger.

The Church is a living, dynamic community which is part of the society. The Church shares in all the challenges society experiences. It cannot remain silent and indifferent in the midst of growing concerns of humanity. The Church has a responsibility to respond to the wounds, the uncertainties, and hopeless situations. We must assure the society that amidst these challenges, God remains the hope to the hopeless, the father to the fatherless and the supporter to the oppressed.

A challenge to the Christian faith in Nigeria is the issue of terrorism and wanton killings especially in the Northern part of the Country. The Church leadership has really taken proactive steps and organized several relief committees to comfort and give solace to victims of the unnecessary violence. I would like to state categorically here that the leadership of the church in Nigeria stands for peaceful co-existence, and warm and cordial Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria and Africa. The Churches and the Civil Societies are rising to this new challenge by speaking out against the shedding of the blood of the innocents and lobbying government to take her duty of security of lives and properties as stated in the constitution seriously and also setting signs of hope to overcome social, ethnic and religious divide and campaigns against violence.

One of our heritages in God is Life in abundance – it is the Christian Hope: a world without starvation, under nutrition and any form of poverty. As enunciated in Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech 50 years ago, it remains the dream of every one and pathetic enough citizens of developing nations as a beacon of hope, and we must keep this hope up and not be satisfied “until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream”.

I encourage us all that as Christians we are free to be relentless, relentlessly pursuing our God given dreams and purposes, relentlessly loving, relentlessly showing the light of God by being our brother’s keeper, relentlessly playing our assigned part well on the stage of life, as we do this the blessing of God will pour down on all of us and our earth will be what God designed it to be.

God bless you for listening.

REV. DR. IBRAHIM YUSUF WUSHISHI
SECRETARY GENERAL
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