

## Looking at church's impact on Africa, Ghana archbishop says: 'We have failed'

John L. Allen Jr. | Oct. 14, 2009 NCR Today

By JOHN L. ALLEN JR.

Rome

*Here's an exercise to try sometime: Find any random cross-section of twenty people who know something about Catholicism in Africa, and ask them to tick off five names of the most impressive African bishops they know. The odds are fairly good that the name of Archbishop Charles (?Call me Charlie?) Palmer-Buckle of Accra, Ghana, will surface with some frequency.*

*Palmer-Buckle, 59, is taking part in the Synod for Africa as a papal appointment. A leader in peace efforts in Ghana and a veteran of the international Catholic scene through his work with groups such as Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Relief Services, Palmer-Buckle is widely considered to be among the heavyweights of his generation in the African hierarchy.*

*He sat down for an interview with NCR on Wednesday, over lunch in a restaurant near the Vatican. Palmer-Buckle is known for both candor and good humor, and both were on display as the conversation ranged across a wide range of topics: women in the church, tribalism in the appointment of African bishops, the surprisingly ferocious talk within the synod about a perceived ?assault? on the family in Africa from Western NGOs (including Palmer-Buckle's claim that faulty condoms are being dumped on Africa), and the strong spirit of self-criticism percolating among the African bishops.*

*On that score, Palmer-Buckle pulls no punches; looking at an Africa in which practicing Catholics are often as guilty of corruption and violence as everybody else, he says simply, ?We have failed.?*

*Palmer-Buckle also put an intriguing proposal on the table: Instead of a synod of bishops, why not hold a ?pastoral congress of the universal church,? in which laity, especially women, would be full participants?*

Read the full interview here: [Ghanaian archbishop says church has failed Africa](#) [1]

---

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/25/2017 - 20:00):** <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/looking-churchs-impact-africa-ghana-archbishop-says-we-have-failed>

### Links:

[1] <http://ncronline.org/node/15343>