

## **THE GOD'S KINGDOM SOCIETY (GKS) AND VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATION**

For spiritual reasons, the God's Kingdom Society, (GKS) the Church of the Living God, is opposed to Valentine's day celebrations. The celebration is contrary to Christian morality and is based on paganism.

It is ungodly for people who were not married to be, as it were, given the license to be hugging and kissing each other in the streets or even to be engaging in sexual relations with each other. Previous polls show that several teenage students were "willing to have sex on Valentine's Day if their boyfriends asked" ..

In this age when many lives are being lost to AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, when several governments around the world are battling to contain the scourge of teenage pregnancies, it is sheer vanity fair for anyone to be promoting a celebration that encourages sexual promiscuity. The Bible warns that those who indulge in immorality would be punished by God Almighty. Those who aid and abet them by profiting from such practices as Valentine Day celebrations would also not escape judgment, according to 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 and Romans 1:32.

It is unfortunate that Africans like to copy the negative rather than the positive aspects of Western culture. This celebration is one African countries ought to discourage, if not ban entirely, as it is an imported custom that debases Africa's moral values and compounds the poverty crisis facing most African countries.

Valentine Day celebration has nothing to do with Christianity as it was originally a pagan tradition celebrated every February by the Romans in the third century. Unfortunately, it is increasingly being seen as a Christian celebration. The fact is that it was the priests of the Church, who, in the name of Christianizing the ancient pagan celebrations of the Feast of Lupercus, changed the name to St. Valentine's Day". Christians are warned to keep away from pagan customs and practices and Valentine Day is no exception. The Bible says, "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, ... For the customs of the people are vain..." (Jeremiah 10:2, 3) And Christ told the Jews, their religious leaders in particular, "...Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" - Matthew 15:3.

The commercial and even religious interests who are promoting Valentine Day celebrations do not have the wellbeing of the people at heart. They are only interested in the monetary gains they reap from it. It is advisable that governments, institutions and people of goodwill should, instead of promoting Valentine's Day, channel their energies towards encouraging abstinence and fidelity in marriages in order to protect the millions of people around the world who are being exposed to physical and emotional trauma due to sexually transmitted diseases, abortions unrealized expectations, and so on.

It is commendable that some have taken steps to restrict the Valentine Day celebrations in their countries. These include ordering shops not to sell goods marking Valentine's Day and banning the display of red roses in their shops while instructing teachers to warn pupils not to wear red, the colour associated with Valentine's Day. The Bible says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of old concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:" - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.