

Some overlooked points on Cardinal Turkson, aka NCR's 'Papabile of the Day'

Jamie Manson | Feb. 19, 2013 NCR Today
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With all due respect to John Allen's "[papabile \[1\]](#)[profile](#) [1]" of Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson, those who have commented on his piece are right to raise the concern that Allen does not highlight Turkson's disturbing beliefs about homosexuality.

Last year, the [National Catholic Register](#) [2][reported](#) [2] on Turkson's response to a speech that U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's offered to 54 African nations at the African Union Summit. Ki-moon asked government leaders to honor the U.N.'s Universal Declaration by protecting women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination and by decriminalizing gays and lesbians.

According to the *National Catholic Register*:

Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said some of the sanctions imposed on homosexuals in Africa are an "exaggeration," but argued that the "intensity of the reaction is probably commensurate with tradition."

Referring to the issue of stigma surrounding homosexuality in Africa, the cardinal said it is important to understand the reasons behind it. "Just as there's a sense of a call for rights, there's also a call to respect culture, of all kinds of people," he said. "So, if it's being stigmatized, in fairness, it's probably right to find out why it is being stigmatized."

Moreover, the cardinal called for a distinction to be made between moral issues and human rights.

"We [the Church] push for the rights of prisoners, the rights of others; and the last thing we want to do is infringe upon the rights of anyone. But when you're talking about what's called 'an alternative lifestyle,' are those human rights?" the cardinal said. "He [Ban ki-moon] needs to recognize there's a subtle distinction between morality and human rights, and that's what needs to be clarified."

Turkson's problematic opinion of gays and lesbians became more apparent in the wake of Benedict XVI's resignation. In an interview with Christiane Amanpour on Feb. 12, Turkson even went so far as to [link homosexuality with sex abuse](#) [3]. The cardinal is under the impression that Africa is "protected" against the problem of sex abuse because many of the continent's cultures and traditions do not "countenance" same-sex relations.

Turkson told Amanpour:

African traditional systems kind of protect or have protected its population against this tendency. Because in several communities, in several cultures in Africa homosexuality or for that matter any affair between two sexes of the same kind are not countenanced in our society.

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Links:

[1] <http://ncronline.org/node/45521/>

[2] <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/cardinals-responds-to-u.n.s-criticism-of-africas-social-policies>

[3] <http://amanpour.blogs.cnn.com/2013/02/12/meet-the-man-who-could-be-the-first-black-pope>