

## **“Uncle Joe” Gbaba Speaks on Issues in the Press Reloaded on TMZ Radio International: A Must Listen Event!**

International scholar and artist and playwright Dr. Joe Gbaba will appear on Issues in the Press on TMZ Radio International on Saturday, August 17, 2013 at 2 p.m. Central Standard Time and 3 p.m. Eastern Standard time. Co-guest will include Honorable Oblayon B. Nyemah, Director-General of the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) who will be in studio during the interview. Other participants of the broadcast include Al-Jerome Chede and James Qualah (moderators); Ramie Gray as political commentator, and project manager Duana Siryon. **The live call in number is: 763-400-4615 or you may call 762-400-4615 to participate** in the live discussions.

### **Purpose and Details of Dr. Gbaba’s Discussion on Issues in the Press Reloaded on TMZ Radio International**

“Education as a Common Denominator for National Peace and Reconstruction in Post Conflict Liberia”



**“Give children books to read and write and not guns to kill” (Dr. Gbaba)**

First of all, Dr. Gbaba commends the officers and staff at TMZ Radio International for the great efforts they have made to establish a communication system that provides everyone the opportunity to air out his or her opinions and concepts and to contribute meaningfully toward the

overall development of the Liberian and international communities, irrespective of race, creed, ethnicity, religious, and political persuasions and sexual preferences. The professor acknowledges that this is indeed a good way forward in confidence and consensus building among persons of varied cultural and historical descent, especially those traumatized by bloody civil strife over the past two decades.

Against this backdrop, Dr. Gbaba has suggested to the management of TMZ Radio International to please feel free to contact him at any time to contribute toward their projects in terms of providing cultural awareness programs in education, culture, and history, as well as radio drama series that will foster peace education, conflict resolution and national reconciliation in Liberia and around the world. In this respect, Dr. Gbaba is requesting the cooperation of all stakeholders in the Liberian peace process to set aside their political differences and work in the best interest of lasting peace and national unity in Liberia. One way the scholar sees this process taking root and benefiting all Liberians is what he terms: **“Education as a Common Denominator for National Peace and Reconciliation”!**

### **Summary Background of Dr. Gbaba’s Contributions in Education and Culture around the World**

For four decades Dr. Gbaba commonly known as Liberia’s “Shakespeare” engaged in diverse scholarly and cultural activities in theatre, playwriting, acting, directing, and teaching in Liberia and the United States, and other parts of Europe and Africa, respectively. Also, he worked as a social work services manager II at the Philadelphia Department of Human Services for the past ten years until his recent retirement in July, 2013. In addition, he worked briefly (one and a half years) at the School District of Philadelphia as a special education teacher in learning support classrooms in schools located in violence prone communities.

Further, Dr. Gbaba has many years of teaching experience as a K-college educator. He is popularly known as “Uncle Joe” by the youth of Liberia and his students. For an example, Professor Gbaba previously taught English, Literature, Drama, Composition at St. Patrick’s High School, St. Teresa’s Convent, College of West Africa, A.M.E. Zion Academy, Cuttington University, University of Liberia, and served as Principal of Zwedru Multilateral High School.

Further, he briefly worked as Acting Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of Liberia and as local consultant to UNICEF prior to his flight into exile in the late 1990s.

During his brief tenure at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Dr. Gbaba oversaw the revival of the National Museum of Liberia and the now demolished National Cultural Center that were destroyed and ransacked during the Liberian civil war. He also promoted the retrieval of stolen artifacts from the museum by local peddlers and encouraged international investors to mount an arts exhibition in Zurich, Switzerland.

Over the years, the erudite scholar/artist wrote and directed Dehkontee productions that spoke against Apartheid in South Africa such as his "Chains of Apartheid", and other plays that promoted African history and culture including but not limited to: "**Love for Mymah**" and "**No More Hard Times.**" He and his Dehkontee Artists were honored by President William Tolbert, Jr. of Liberia as a national playwright at the Executive Mansion Theatre in Monrovia in 1979. They subsequently received a similar laurel at the State House in Freetown, Sierra Leone in July of 1978 when "**Chains of Apartheid**" was staged in honor of the First Vice President of Sierra Leone, S.I. Koroma.

### **Dr. Gbaba's Research Interest and Projects**

Dr. Gbaba's research interest lies in the conduct of qualitative research and specifically in curriculum development, teacher training and production of culturally relevant literacy materials and textbooks to motivate at risk children to improve their literacy skills and cut down the high rate of illiteracy in developing societies like Liberia and violence prone communities worldwide.

Dr. Gbaba's doctoral dissertation was entitled: "**The Chiandeh Afrocentric Curriculum and Textbook Experience: Exploring Children's Responses to an Afrocentric Curriculum.**" In his research, the researcher argued the need to include African-centered teaching and learning materials into mainstream curriculum to promote cultural diversity and tolerance in school settings and to create a safe teaching and learning environment for all teachers and learners. The Chiandeh research explored new modes of communication, especially African storytelling techniques, to teach moral lessons. Music and dance were included in the storytelling process to engage participants and the audience, and promote active listening skills. Dr. Althier Lazar served as Chair of the dissertation committee and other members of the committee were: Drs. Robert Palestini, Jeanine Brady, Molefi Kete Asante of St. Joseph's and Temple Universities, respectively. **Dr. Gbaba's dissertation is published and can be accessed on ProQuest.**

## The Chiandeh African Children Textbook Series

The African expression “chiandeh” means: “Learn something” in the Kwa languages of Liberia: Krahn, Kru, Bassa, Grebo, and Deiweion. It is an endeavor to produce more culturally relevant texts that reflect African history and culture and to promote diverse literacies in our educational settings. It is a project that helps children and teachers realize that the world is round and there is no one way of teaching and learning but to be inclusive in order to actively engage teachers and learners in the construction of knowledge. Under this banner, Dr. Gbaba has written and self-published three books:

1. ***The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville (2009)***: *The book is an African children’s reader that presents African folklore as a medium of reconceptualizing the curriculum in order to introduce children to the African art of storytelling, active listening, and responsiveness. It also aims to promote cultural diversity among persons of varied socio-cultural and political persuasions. Further, it features basic democratic principles, such as inclusiveness of all persons in the decision making process (especially issues on civic education and active participation of electorates in the electoral process), and, the ultimate theme is that in unity there is strength. It costs \$30 including postage;*
2. ***Conflict Resolution and the Concept of Change (2010)***: *Self-published book that narrates the causes and effects of the Liberian civil war. It also provides tips as to how the Liberian crisis can be peacefully resolved (\$35 including postage);*
3. ***Ah-zeo, Ma Garh: An Autobiographical Account of Feminism in Liberia and the United States of America (2009)***. *The book was self-published. It gives an autobiographical account of the author and his mother, Ma Garh. It highlights the social, political, and economic progress and changes made in Liberia due to the resilience of Liberian women. In this context the author redefines “feminism” as a word that is not only limited to the concerns of women but rather *feminism* takes on a global definition that encompasses men who share similar passions as women in human rights issues, including the right to live freely and happily, and to pursue one’s dreams and achieve ultimate satisfaction. The cost of this book is \$35 including postage.*

## How to Obtain Copies of Dr. Gbaba’s Controversial Books

You may obtain a copy of Dr. Gbaba’s books by contacting him directly via e-mail: [gbaba5@aol.com](mailto:gbaba5@aol.com) or by dialing: (267) 973-1709 . Make sure to provide your mailing

address and to enclose a money order for the book you wish to purchase. Personal checks are not accepted at this time. Sorry for the inconvenience.