

Garden City Radio (GCR) Programme:
Spreading the Gospel
(Wednesday 5 am to 5:30 am)

Recording Session 02/03/2015
Broadcast dates: 03/03/2015 & 10/03/2015

Title: The Truth about GM Food and its Implication for Health and Local Farming

Interview with Mr. Yaw Poku Dankwah (Free the Mind Movement/Hebrew Israelite) in a question and answer format.

Interviewer: Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr, regular preacher on the programme.

INTRODUCTION:

(Greetings and/or pleasantries and thanks for support offered during our New Year Camp Meeting 2015).

Welcome to the programme, Wɔfa, on Garden City Radio, Kumasi. It's our church's weekly broadcast programme dating back to the time of Apostle Kanok Ofori of blessed memory.

For over a month now, I have been preaching on the dangers of GM food under the general topic: "A Culture of Death has taken hold of the World". The message has elicited a lot of interest (with some media outlets even granting me live interviews) and expectedly debate as well.

Today, I would like us to throw more light on the probable dangers GM food poses to our health and local agronomy, in light of scientific research, scriptural testimony and firsthand experiences.

Interview Begins

- 1) So my dear Wɔfa Yaw, what is GM food and how does it differ from traditional crop varieties produced either organically or conventionally?

Answer: *A genetically modified organism (GMO) is organism (animals and plants) whose genetic material has been altered with genes from other organisms using genetic engineering. The scientific world is altering the very fabric of nature by transferring characteristics not only between plants but cross-altering animals, plants and human beings in a laboratory process known as biotechnology.*

Today, pressure is indeed mounting on Ghana to introduce biotech/GM crops into its agricultural framework and allow for the production of biotech foods on commercial scale. Accepting to introduce GM crops will mean smallholder farmers will no longer depend on the traditional farming methods driven by the natural climatic and maturity cycles to cultivate crops like cotton, maize, rice

or even banana. Instead, they will depend on the laboratory-manipulated improved varieties of drought and pest resistant crops to shorten their maturity cycles

- 2) That means before the GM food is planted in the field the genetic make-up of the crop has already been modified from its original nature. Is that not so?

Answer: *Exactly.*

- 3) But I hear the introduction of genes from a different species into the modified plant or animal is to improve its characteristics giving it an advantage over the traditional one. What could be wrong about that?

Answer: *“Proponents of GM food crops highlight increased yields as the solution to feed a starving and hungry world. According to them biotechnology in modern agricultural techniques not only improves on the genes of plants to withstand pest and diseases but increases the productivity of food crops.*

As a result, they argue that investing in agriculture especially in Africa where smallholder farmers who constitute the bulk of agriculture production live, is the surest way to reducing poverty and hunger on the continent.

But do GM food crops really increase yields? According to a 100 page report by the African Centre for Bio-safety and Friends of the Earth International, ten years after the first significant planting of genetically modified (GM) crops, there are no apparent benefits for consumers, farmers or the environment. And despite renewed promises by biotech corporations, there has been no impact on hunger and poverty.

Another study published in 2009 by the Union of Concerned Scientists indicated that GM seeds do not produce any significant increase in U.S. crop yields than conventional seeds. Yet they pose serious ecological risks, especially from genetic contamination from pollen.

Despite the prediction of GM crops turning around the economic fortunes of smallholder farmers and revolutionize agriculture on the continent, it has failed to achieve the expected targets and instead threaten the existence and perpetuation of most of the traditional seeds raising a number of environmental concerns such as loss of biodiversity and the development of herbicide resistance in weeds which call for more research on effects of GMOs on both human and animal health and the environment generally.

- 4) As a Christian broadcast programme, we are interested to know if the Bible says anything about our farming practices and, if yes, whether it offers any viewpoint on such a hi-tech method of breeding as biotechnology which essentially involves the creation of transgenic plants and animals – what I called in my sermon “new life forms across species.” Wofa, does the Bible speak against transgenics or to sound old fashioned “the mixing of diverse kinds”? (Note, the Bible teaches holistic well-being – 3 John 1:2, I Tim. 4:8 – quality life now and in the world to come; cp. 2 Pet. 1:3).

Answer: Yes, Pigs, whose hearts have been genetically manipulated with human genes have been created in the United Kingdom since 1992 for the purpose of heart, kidney and lung transplants into human beings. They are known as transgenic pigs. A Cambridge-based organization called IMUTRAN, which is behind the programme, plans to start clinical trials transplanting transgenic pig hearts into humans soon.

[Yet the Creator says], “Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind; Thou shalt not sow thy field with mixed seed, (GMO), neither shall a garment mixed of linen and woolen come upon thee.” – Leviticus. 19:19

- 5) Apart from the Biblical prohibition – and indeed in light of it – is there evidence in history where a civilization once experimented with transgenics for God to warn the children of Israel years later not to go down that road?

Answer: Indeed, there is. I quote from the Book of Jasher (an ancient sacred Hebrew poetic writing referenced in scripture):

“... and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other in order therewith to provoke the Lord; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men and all animals. And the Lord said, I will blot out man that I created from the face of the earth, yea from man to the birds of the air, together with cattle and beasts that are in the field for I repent that I made them.” – Jasher 4:18-19 (The Book of Jasher is referred to in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18) and also accounts for the lives of Enoch, Noah and Abraham. It also answers questions unanswered in Genesis.

The Book of Jasher tells of evil scientific experiments or genetic engineering to create trans-genetic species that prevailed in the days of Noah leading to the destruction of the earth. Today, history is repeating itself in this generation too, to once again provoke God (Yah) “in the name of biotechnology” to cause another destruction of mankind. Indeed, the Book of Ecclesiastes clearly states that there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

- 6) Well, that whole civilization was wiped out by the flood. And so today’s generation must be awfully provoking God with all the scientific experiments going on involving combinations of different plant and animal species at the genetic level, sometimes even involving human animal/plant genes. It is food for thought. There is, indeed, nothing new under the sun as the Bible says.
- 7) Wɔfa, against what you might say, I hear biotechnology holds huge potential for world agriculture and food production and, in fact, is the (only) answer to the challenge of feeding the burgeoning population of the earth, not least in Africa. If so, Wɔfa, why should we (myself included) run down something that is so good, something that holds the key to the world’s food security? Isn’t the GM opposition driven by mere religious and ideological fanaticism? Surely, the great scientists with chains of degrees must know better than us. Why don’t we just zip up

and allow them to do all the lecture on the prospects of GM? (You know, they have been complaining of late in the media. The last time I checked the Apostles of Jesus [Yeshua] were called a bunch of ignoramuses by the 'enlightened' religious establishment, Acts 4: 13). So, Wofa how do you answer the charge?

Answer: *Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt.) is a bacteria that produces proteins which are toxic to insects. It is the most widely used biological pesticide in the world either by spraying on crops or injected into the DNA of genetically modified (GM) crops. Insects and pests that eat the crops are killed by making their stomachs burst. How about humans who consume Bt. crops?*

Despite the fact that information on the potential human health risks and safety of GM foods are suppressed, studies on animals fed with GMO crops reveal organ damage, reproductive failures, sterility, damaged immune systems and abnormal cell growth in their digestive tract.

The disturbing concerns about eating GM foods are that they alter the expressions on the organ function to make one less human apart from the fact that ultimately, depopulation is the basic reason for GM foods as a potent weapon to considerably reduce global population.

Like the HIV/AIDS scenario, while Euro-American scientists hotly and scientifically debate whether AIDS was/is really caused by the HIV virus or not, millions of people were/are dying from the dreaded disease.

For now, let the American scientists and biotechnologists play God and pride themselves that GM foods are healthy for human consumption while emerging allergies and drug-resistant diseases as well as infertility take their toll on human lives to signify the presence of the fourth horseman and the rider of the pale horse in the Book of Revelation who represents death (pestilence and viral and microbe diseases).

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come. And I looked and behold a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth." Rev.6: 7-8 –Fourth Seal: Death.

- 8) Wofa, I haven't been to a GM crop farm before. But I hear it is the most beautiful farm you ever saw. The crops have harder crusts, have higher yields, use less pesticides, are pest resistant and take a longer time to spoil (i.e. stay fresh for a longer time). If this is true, what could be fundamentally wrong with GM food crops? But I won't trouble you, Wofa. From the explanations you have just given, it's clear that the GM crop is pest resistant and/or uses less pesticides because the crop itself is a pesticide of a sort with biological pesticides like Bt. injected into its DNA as part of the genetic modification process performed on it.
- 9) Ministers like myself who warn people against GM food are not scientists and so we are routinely accused by the pro-GM scientific camp of adopting an emotional response to the GM

debate rather than an informed response grounded in science. Wofa, are there any scientific research findings proving that GM food poses health risks to consumers?

Answer: *Yes, I have already cited two, one of which is the study by the Union of Concerned Scientists indicated that GM seeds pose serious ecological risks with a bleak outlook for human health.*

10) Wofa, only last two weeks or so, the media reported that the Ministry of Agriculture had placed a ban on chicken imports from the USA due to concerns about unsafe levels of arsenic in them. Shouldn't this cause us to wake up?

Answer: *It should make us sit up. We need to take strong measures as a nation to protect our food supply from contamination.*

11) Touching on GM food in the wider context of local farming, it's an established fact that most GM seeds are sterile – that is, the seeds harvested from the grown GM crops are incapable of reproducing on their own – and a farmer needs to buy a new set of seeds from the GM seed producer to plant during the next planting season. Wofa, is this true and, if true, what does this imply for our local farmers and national food security in the long term?

Answer: *Since 1983, the United States government has been financing research on a “terminator seeds technology” which when fully commercialized will give its owners (Monsanto/U.S. govt.) the power to control the food seeds of entire nations. The seeds would only produce one harvest after which the seeds from that harvest would commit “suicide” and be unusable.*

Reacting to the “terminator technology” in an interview in the Daily Graphic of 14th July 1999, Prof. F.K.A. Allotey Chairman of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) described it as a set of genetic engineering techniques that cause crops to bear sterile seeds thereby posing a direct threat not only to national food security but smallholder farmers as well as agricultural biodiversity and therefore should be banned.

The interview was based on a letter from the Executive Director of the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), a Canadian NGO which focuses on biotechnology and the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, cautioning the government of Ghana of the existence of the “terminator technology” developed by the world's leading crop chemical and plant breeding corporations.

“The GM revolution aims to give global corporations control of our food supply so that they can extract maximum profits through the use of patents. “ New African January 2009

Big biotech seed companies such as Monsanto, Novartis, Syngenta, Dow Chemical and DuPont-Pioneer Hi-Bred are readily alert to capitalize on this to force Africa to accept their patented GM seeds that have been specifically designed to yield only “sterile” seeds from the next harvest so that the traditional African farmer would be obliged to depend on them for new GM seeds each planting season.

The danger is, once a country opens its doors to the spread of genetically modified patented seeds among its farmers, its food security is potentially hostage to an agribusiness multinational company to use food as a weapon because once it controls food it controls the people the Illuminati way.

“Control oil and you control nations. Control food and you control the people.”- Henry Kissinger 1970.

12) Wofa, another scary information out there is that GM food crops are a great threat to traditional food crops and can even wipe them out through cross pollination. How far true is that?

Answer: *One of the more unbelievable examples of corporate exploitation of particularly the Third World is the systematic destruction of natural agricultural seeds, replacing them with patented genetically engineered ones. According to UN estimates, 75% of genetic diversity in agricultural crops has been lost this century and in England, 1500 'unapproved' seed varieties have been withdrawn. The situation now is that, instead of using native seed varieties, Third World countries must pay royalties to the multinational companies for genetically engineered seeds, which have been distributed and chemically produced by the same corporations, and which are useless in a Third World environment.*

Genetically modified pollen released into the natural environment spreads long distances on the wind by insects and humans because it is widely acknowledged that GMO crops are a “leaky technology.”

The prayer of biotech seed companies is that as genetically modified pollen blows around contaminating nearby fields, objections to genetically modified crops diminish because non-GMO alternatives also become very rare. A few more years of this and there may not be many (if any) truly non-GMO crops left anywhere. At that point there would not be any debate about whether to allow GMO-crops to be grown here or there since no one will have any choice.

When all crops on earth are genetically contaminated, then the seed companies that own the patented seeds will be in a good position to begin enforcing their patent rights. Armed with this legal precedent, after genetically modified crops have drifted far and wide, Monsanto, Dow and the other GMO seed producers will be in a position to muscle most of the world's farmers.

The Green Revolution being trumpeted in Africa today by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation via AGRA is part of the scheme that was started in Mexico and India in the 1940s and 1960s respectively by the Rockefeller Foundation to enable America develop a global agribusiness that would concentrate control of the food chain in the hands of multinational corporations owned by the dynasties and bloodlines that control the world.

13) Wofa, is GM food grown in Ghana? Some say it has been here for years citing the importation of onions into the country as an example of a GM crop which we have been consuming for all these years. In effect, these critics are saying GM food is not a new phenomenon of unknown dangers to worry about. Do they have a point?

Answer: *According to a Workshop Proceedings Report entitled “GMOs for African Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities” dated July 2010 by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), most countries in Africa have ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety (CPB) and have received*

United Nations Environment Program- Global Environment Facility (UNEP- GEF) assistance to formulate their bio-safety frameworks, policymakers and consumers remain deeply divided oftentimes in heated debates over safety concerns and benefits of genetically modified (GM) foods.

Currently, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe either have functional bio-safety legislation that allows field trials of GM crops which is the final step before adoption or are at various stages in the development of bio-safety policies and regulatory guidelines.

14) Ghana's Parliament passed the Biosafety Law some few years ago. Is that what allowed GM food a formal entry into Ghana, to be grown and cultivated here? What does the law specifically say?

Answer: *Yes, in May 2010, Cabinet approved a Bio- safety Bill that would allow the full commercialization of biotechnology and the deployment of genetically modified (GM) products in Ghana.*

In June 2011, the Ghanaian Parliament passed the Bio-safety Bill 2010 to provide the legal framework to ensure, in accordance with precautionary principles, an adequate level of protection in the field of safe transfer, handling and use of genetically modified organisms, resulting from biotechnology that may have an adverse effect on the environment. On December 31, 2011 a presidential assent was given to provide Ghana a Bio-safety Act 2011 (Act. 831).

In 2012, the National Bio-safety Committee (NBC) received three applications for research and confined field trials of genetically modified (GM) crops in Ghana. One application sought permit to research into a particular variety of cowpea. Two other applications also sought NBC's consent for field trials of sweet potato.

On July 18, 2013, The New Crusading Guide reported that at a panel discussion organized by the U.S. Embassy in Accra, a Director at the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology in a presentation mentioned that rice, sweet potato, cotton and cowpea have so far been approved for confined field trials.

On 13th December 2014, Daily Graphic reported that Ghana has developed GM cowpea following the success of the confined field trials of Bt. Cowpea to pave the way for its commercial production for farmers to cultivate across the country.

On 21st March 2015, Daily Graphic again reported the success of the confined field trials of GM rice at Nobewam awaiting commercial production in the coming years.

Meanwhile, NGO Food Sovereignty Ghana (FSG) is in court with an interim injunction to restrain Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the National Bio-safety Committee from the release and commercialization of GM cowpea and rice until a proper National Bio-safety Authority is established according to the Act.

In September 2010, the Ghanaian Parliament passed the national seed bill (Plants and Fertilizer Act 2010) in line with the 2008 ECOWAS regional seed harmonization regulation. The new seed law opens

the door for an increased role of the private sector in seed production of different types of grains. It also encourages international seed companies to introduce new open-pollinated and hybrid varieties.

Through AGRA's Programme for Africa's Seed System (PASS) to push GM crops on the continent, not only are seed regulations of African countries being liberalized but the passage of Plant Breeders' Rights legislation, as a boosting welcome for U.S. biotech seed and chemical giants to take over the African market because they are key collaborators of the Bill and Melinda Gates/Rockefeller Foundations and AGRA's grantees in promoting the spread of industrial agriculture in Africa.

15) Wofa, the Plant Breeder's Bill is still pending in Parliament. How different is it from the Biosafety Law? What new thing will it bring if passed?

Answer: *A plant breeders' right is a form of intellectual property right granted to breeders of new plant varieties for protection of their varieties against exploitation without their permission for which reason same should be registered in order to obtain financial rewards. This is the norm associated with genetic engineering in agribusiness (not agriculture) to patent new varieties for farmers to purchase and cultivate.*

The stage is now set using Ghanaian scientists/agronomists as bait, for a Plant Breeders' Rights legislation which allows the patenting of genetically modified (GM) plant species to pave the way for the legalization of patented seed business transactions in the country in the name of science and efficient free market agribusiness as part of the American high-tech (GM) invasion of Ghana's agriculture.

African countries engaged in the AGRA high tech (GM) initiative are all expected to liberalize their seed regulations and pass legislations that permit the promotion of patented (GM) seeds and legally sets the stage for farmers to buy GM seeds and plants and also export GM produce.

The South African Plant Breeders' Rights for example, permit foreign breeders to apply through an agent residing in South Africa. Similarly, Ghana's Plant Breeders' Rights Bill also allows the participation of international seed companies to make it easier for them to dominate the continent. Today, DuPont is the largest seed company in South Africa, a country that accounts for 82% of commercialized GM crops on the continent.

Over the past 18 years, five giant biotech and chemical corporations namely Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer,

Over the past 18 years, five giant biotech and chemical corporations namely Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, Dow and DuPont have collectively bought up more than 200 other companies to control access to seeds generally making it difficult for farmers to find alternatives.

In sum, the Plant Breeders' Rights Bill is like the "Trojan Horse" in Greek mythology. Inside it, are the giant American agribusiness corporations being dragged into the country, to dominate the food chain with their perverted science and technology, to create a garden of evil (GM) crops. This is neo-colonialism by invitation only.

16) Wɔfa, can you confirm that most European nations do not allow GM food to be imported or grown in their countries? If true, what are their reasons?

Answer: *The European countries resent US corporate takeover of their food systems. Monsanto, the American biotech seed giant, for one, wields great political influence. There are also health concerns.*

17) Wɔfa, I know you have been a very active member of the anti-GM Coalition in Ghana. Any successes achieved? It appears you are fighting against powerful interests who are bent on winning. Is there hope of a GM-free Ghana? (Certainly, part of the job is the watchman's job of warning people of the approaching danger – Ezekiel 33. It has been reported that the NGO *Food Sovereignty Ghana* has even taken the government to court for allowing field trials of GM food crops in Ghana without the proper regulatory framework). So, Wɔfa, what has been the struggle so far, including challenges and successes?

18) Wɔfa, what practical measures can, say our local farmers take to protect our traditional crop varieties from GM contamination and thus preserve traditional farming?

19) Some argue that the campaign against GM food is a lost cause. They say our shops and markets are flooded with imported GM foods. Wɔfa, what can we do as health-conscious consumers?

Answer: I will answer all the questions in these final words: *The fight against GM food crops and the Plant Breeders Rights Bill in the country is far from over. Our collective effort to continuously educate the general public is the necessary weapon to ensure total victory. Let us continue to fight on. Thank you very much, Elder and peace be unto you.*

20) A million thanks, Wɔfa, for making time for this all-important interview. It has been a great eye-opener. We will certainly meet again on this programme. Shalom and Yah be with you!