BELIZE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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MEDIA STATEMENT BY BELIZE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Belize Council of Churches extends it congratulations and offers prayers for our beloved country of Belize as we celebrate our 45th anniversary of political independence. We are grateful to all those who have labored, and continue to labor, for the vision to which we aspire to be a nation ***"founded upon principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God, faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions, the dignity of the human person and the equal and inalienable rights with which all members of the human family are endowed by their Creator."***

We are not without our struggles — in crime, in poverty, in the temptation to division along lines of race, political party, creed or other human constructs. But we have never doubted that the same spirit which brought a small nation of many tongues to nationhood forty-five years ago is equal to the challenges before us now, provided we seek it in humility and work for it together.

Scripture reminds us: "Righteousness exalts a nation" (Proverbs 14:34). Let that be our prayer and our labor on this ongoing journey of 'nation-building' — not righteousness as judgment upon one another, but righteousness as right relationship with God, with neighbor, and with this land we are proud to call home.

Based on this assertion, the Council, an organization committed to the moral and spiritual welfare of our nation, feels compelled to also address a matter of growing public concern: the increasingly immodest attire and conduct displayed by some participants during Carnival festivities in recent years.

We recognize that Carnival is a cherished part of Belizean culture – a celebration of national identity, creativity, and community that brings joy to families across the country. The Council does not seek to diminish this tradition or the artistry, music, and craftsmanship that go into the Carnival experience.

However, we believe that public celebration and public decency are not mutually exclusive. We call on organizers, participants, and parents to consider the example being set for our children and the image being presented of our nation. Modesty in dress is not opposed to festivity; it is a reflection of self-respect and respect for the wider community that shares these public spaces.

We therefore urge:

1. Carnival organizers to establish and enforce clear guidelines on costume standards, particularly for events involving minors;
2. Parents and guardians to exercise discretion regarding their children's participation and exposure to certain aspects of the celebrations; and,
3. All participants to consider that Carnival can be vibrant and expressive while still honoring standards of decency and virtue that reflect well on our nation and our shared values.

The Council remains committed to engaging constructively with government bodies, cultural institutions, and Carnival organizers to find a balance that preserves the spirit of this beloved tradition while upholding the moral standards our churches represent.

We invite dialogue, not division, on this matter, and pray for a Carnival season marked by joy, unity, and mutual respect.