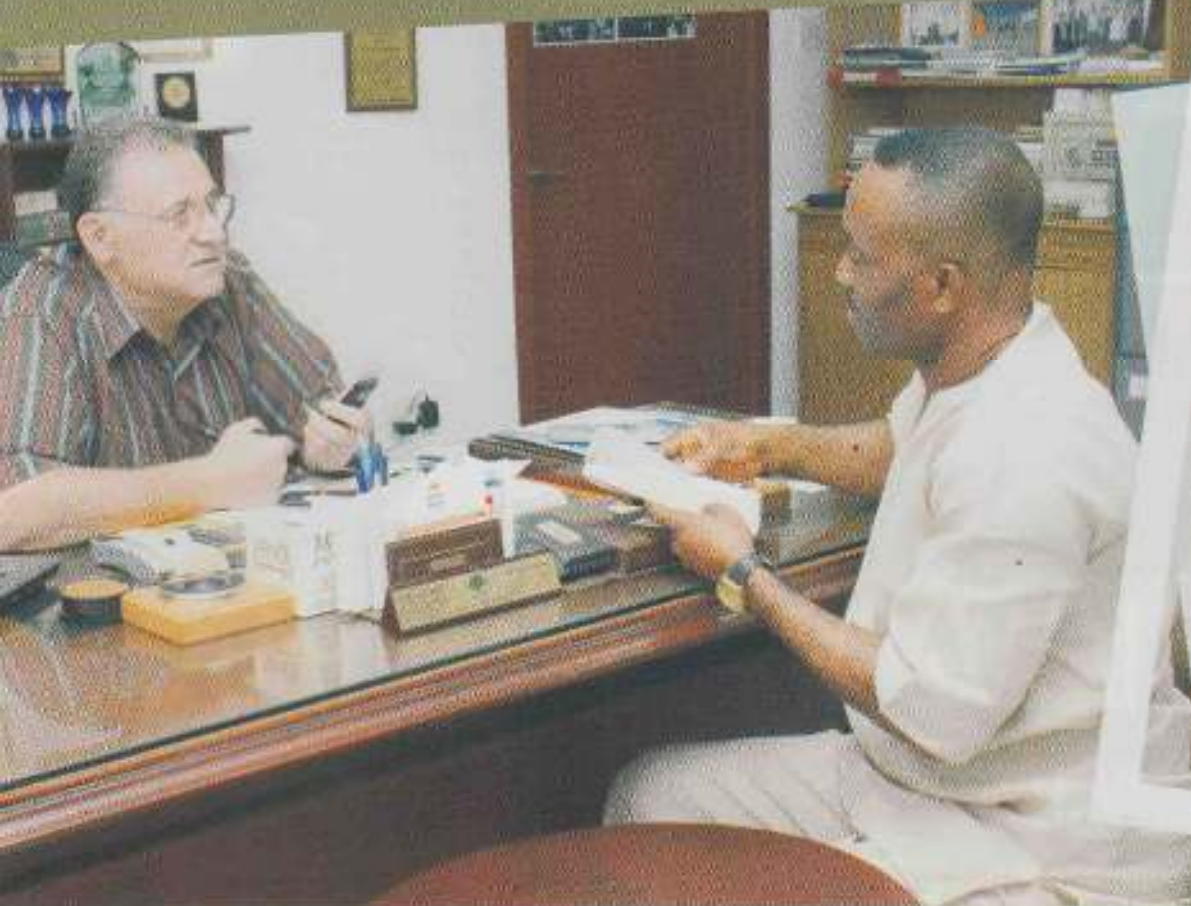


MR. CHAKIB RAMMAL

SPEAKS ON GHANA-LEBANESE COMMUNITY. EXTENDING FRIENDSHIP



Statue donated to the Ghanaian people by the Lebanese community

Previously, you are the leader of the World Lebanese Cultural Association in Ghana; could you please tell us a about the Association, what it stands for and the activities in Ghana?

I joined the World Lebanese Cultural Union about twenty-four years ago while I was working hand in hand with other friends for the Lebanese social activities here in Ghana and I initiated and championed the registration of the Association and obtained a license; and that was done in 1996. Previously it was here, but not officially recognized. Presently, I am the President of the World Lebanese Cultural Union Trustee Committee, because of my active participation in their activities and functions.

As the leader of this Lebanese cultural union in Ghana, how do you manage or co-ordinate the affairs and welfare of the Lebanese in the country? Are there challenges?

The Lebanese are known here as traders mainly; but we have presently expanded and ventured into other areas like construction, health sector and others. Now, there is competition in the country, not only among the Lebanese but even with other nationalities and Ghanaians. You have many of them coming back home to invest in their country like before.

From your own point of view sir, how would you assess the relationship between the Lebanese and Ghanaians?

We can say that we are proud of the relationship

between the Lebanese and the Ghanaians. Lebanese came into this country about one hundred and twenty years ago. I must testify that the Ghanaian Government and Ghanaians don't have any objection to whatever anybody wants to do so long as you follow the rules and regulations; and of course, if there is anybody, Lebanese or any citizen of any other nation who disobeys the laws of the land, they will punish the person according to the law of the land.

Have you personally or through the cultural association been involved in community development projects or charity works to help people and communities in Ghana?

Yes, our association has always helped anytime they are invited to any occasion or event for national development. Also, members of our association have always helped in their individual capacities through their companies in various developmental projects; they help in building hospitals, schools, etc. We also have the Lebanese Women Association, and they are committed to a lot of social activities in this country. There are some other groups too, of the Lebanese nationality, which are equally committed towards the developmental activities of this country, Ghana and of course, in conjunction with our embassy.

Has any government in Ghana honoured you for your contribution in the country's

developmental concerns?

Yes, of course, they know that some people are working and helping in so many ways. For instance, myself, they give me a lot of respect because I respect them. They have really been appreciative of the Lebanese efforts in this country; and this has always come in form of letters or awards.

Does the Government of Ghana's policy of naturalization favour your people in any way?

Yes, a lot of Lebanese have Ghana's nationality. Like I told you, the Lebanese have stayed here for about one hundred twenty years, and that is quite a long time. So, many of them were born here; many of them married here; and many married to Ghanaians! They got the citizenship.

From my perspective, you deserve to be a Ghanaian citizen; have you got it?

Of course! Of course!

How do you spend your leisure sir?

As I told you, I feel that here is my country. I am 58 years old. I spent only twenty-four years in Lebanon and the rest of my years here in Ghana. Sometimes, I take a short break, travel to Lebanon and spend some weeks, a month or two, relax and come back. Here, I work hard, but I try to find time to relax.

