



**Rt. Rev. Olubunmi A. Akinlade B.Sc., Dip. Th.**  
Diocesan Bishop



## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 2022**

### **GREETINGS**

My Lord, the immediate past Bishop of Ife, The Rt. Rev. Oluranti Oluwole Odubogun, my Lords', the Bishops here present, The President, Women and Girls' Organization, Diocese of Ife, Mama Ife, Mrs. Nkechi Valentina Akinlade, The Chancellor of our Diocese, Hon. Justice Olayinka David Afolabi, The Deputy Chancellor, Barrister Lupo Aderemi, The Registrar, Barrister Mrs. Titi Akintunde, other Legal luminaries, Diocesan Officials, the Clergy and Clergy wives, Royal Fathers, Synod Delegates, distinguished Gentlemen of the Press, Ladies and Gentlemen, I bid you welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Synod of our great Diocese. The Diocese of Ife in the year 2022.

Any time we gather in this Cathedral, I always admire the beauty of this place. I cannot but thank God for the foresight he gave our father, the immediate past Bishop of this Diocese, Baba Oluranti Odubogun. This Cathedral has given Ife (The Source), its pride of place amongst the dioceses in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Baba Odubogun, we celebrate you once again for the tireless work you did while here as the diocesan. I remember that the administrative building at the Bishop's Court was dedicated on the eve of your departure. You never used the facility; you just prepared an incredibly beautiful and functional headquarters for this Diocese. The Lord will

continue to reward you. Our appreciation also goes to Mama Folashade Odubogun for the legacy she left behind in the women's work.

## **INTRODUCTION**

At the 2020 Synod, a decision was taken to move the hosting of our Synod back from September to April. It was also decided at that Synod that implementation will begin in the year 2022. Here we are, gathered in April 2022 for Synod.

The resultant effect of the decision is that the Diocese has only operated for seven months since the last synod. This will be reflected in the various reports presented. Nevertheless, God has done great things amongst us, and we are grateful. The words of a popular chorus comes to mind:

*What shall I say unto the Lord?  
All I have to say is thank you Lord  
Thank you, Lord, Thank you Lord  
All I have to say is Thank you Lord.*

Within this short period, God did great things for us as a diocese, this address will highlight some of these achievements in due course. Our story is best captured by

### **Psalm 126:1-3:**

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the*

*nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.*

Despite the challenges of the Corona virus Pandemic, and the economic outlook of our nation, God made a way where there seems to be no way, and we are grateful.

We thank God that countries all over the world are now opening and beginning to overcome the fear of the Corona virus Pandemic, which crippled many economies around the world. Many countries are no more demanding test before allowing entry to their country. As I write this charge, I learn that Nigeria has dropped this requirement. Government has also lifted the restrictions on number of people that can gather at a service. The curfew imposed from 11pm to 4am has also been lifted. We can now resume with vigils and other special meetings. By the grace of God, we shall no longer witness a surge in the pandemic again.

## **OUR RESOURCE PERSONS**

Let me appreciate our resource persons for this year's synod. At the communion service this morning, I celebrated while Ven. Prof. Olugbenga Orimogunje preached. The Rev. Olaleye Onitiju led the bible study.

Tomorrow, I will also celebrate the Eucharist while The Most Rev. Emmanuel Egbunu Ph.D., Lord bishop of Lokoja will preach at the thanksgiving service. Let me thank everyone who will officiate during this synod session, God will honour

all your efforts in Jesus Name. The detailed profiles of our resource persons are listed in Appendix A

## **HAPPENINGS IN THE DIOCESE**

### **MISSIONS**

Missions have been the heartbeat of this diocese. In the period under review, we continue to lay emphasis on mission work all over the diocese.

#### **Rural Mission**

I was able to visit some of our rural churches during the period under review to have an on-the-spot assessment of happenings. One major observation is that we have a lot of rural churches that need new church buildings. We are addressing this gradually with the funds we can raise from friends of the diocese. Presently, we are constructing two new church buildings within the mission field. As funds become more available, we will embark on more projects. We encourage people to partner with us in this mission work. You can sponsor the building of one of these rural churches with N6 million. Your token contribution towards this is also welcomed.

As is our yearly practice, all the clergy in our city churches were posted to various rural churches for a week during the mission week in March. While on this assignment, they conducted revivals, counselling, baptism, and private prayer sessions for the villagers as considered necessary.

Souls were won for the kingdom. I also paid unscheduled visits to some of the churches (about forty) to ascertain what was going on. The Kingdom of God is certainly advancing under our care.

Our policy of posting more priest to rural churches as vicar is beginning to yield positive results as some of these churches are now experiencing growth. Also, communion is administered more regularly to communicants in the rural settlements.

### **Church Planting**

While no new church was planted within the period under review, we were able to nurture those planted very recently at Lagaba, Awolumate, Fasina Ogunwusi, Obalaayan, Ikeketu and Aba Onikoko. We count on the support of all of us, as the mission of God is not cheap. Only the best should be good enough for our God.

### **Construction Works within the Diocese**

Construction work is ongoing in the following places.

**Diocesan Camp Asipa New Hostel** – The new hostel under construction will accommodate about 50 people. The building has been roofed, plastered, with windows and doors installed, and the ceiling work has been completed. What remains is tiling, fixing of toilet materials, electrical work, water connection, painting, and furnishing. This project is funded by the proceeds of the camp's rental to

various groups that make use of the place, and donations from friends of the bishop. *(If you are not an enemy of the Bishop, we are waiting for your donations)*

**Diocesan Camp Asipa Public toilet for the main hall** – The construction of toilet facilities to compliment the main auditorium has begun. This project is financed through contributions from all archdeaconries during the last Clergy School. The diocese is also contributing to the project.

**Heritage Chapel Moro** – We took a step of faith to embark on this project. This is a dedicated church for the teeming youths in the various higher institutions situated within Moro Archdeaconry in our diocese. There are three major institutions in that area. The land was donated by St. Jude's Church, Moro. It is well situated along the Moro-Sekona Road. This project is being sponsored by the N950,000.00 donation by the daughter of Chief Mrs. Christiana Aduke Fawole of Ayegbaju Church and N6,000,000.00 (Six million Naira) the bishop initially raised towards the purchase of a new official car for the bishop. Both funds are insufficient to complete this project, thus we are seeking donations. We estimate that finishing and furnishing the Chapel would cost N15,000,000.00 (Fifteen Million Naira). As I write this address, we are on the lintel level.

**Yekemi Church** – This church which was adopted by Dr. Wale Olawoyin SAN before (our resumption) is now approaching finishing stage. Dr. Olawoyin just released the



funds needed to complete the project and work is going on at the site. We are grateful to Dr. Olawoyin for keeping his promise to sponsor this project. We need more of his type to keep the diocese moving at the required speed.

**Arode Loodoko Church** – The construction work at this site which started before our last synod was stalled because of funds. We are happy to announce that as at the time of writing this address, finishing touches were going on at the site. This project was made possible by friends of the bishop from Lagos.

**Lagaba Church building** – Lagaba is a new farming settlement in Ife that shares boundary with Ijebu Igbo. I had reported in my last Synod address that construction work had started on a church building that can sit about 250 worshippers in Lagaba community. We acquired the land (Two Plots) from the Kabiyesi at a prime location just at the entrance to the village. The Christian community in Lagaba paid for one plot and the diocese paid for the second plot. As at the time of writing this report, construction work is at the roofing stage. We still have a long way to go in completing the church/Vicarage building project. However, once the roofing is in place, worship can start in the building while we finish the rest of the work. Funding for this project are majorly from friends of the bishop from Lagos. We still need about N3 million to finish the church project.

**Divine Royal College** – In order for our school to be approved by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to conduct their exam on site, we need to have two science laboratories and a hall, among other things. We reached out to Josephus Foundation for help and our application was approved by the Chairman of Josephus Foundation, Chief (Dr.) Tunde Afolabi MFR, who gave bountifully towards this project. Work is about to commence at the site. We put on record the efforts made by Baba Oluranti Odubogun in ensuring that this grant was approved for us. Baba Odubogun, thank you sir.

### **Completed Construction Works**

**Elewure** – the new church building at Elewure village built by a friend of the bishop in the Federal House of Representative have been completed. This church was dedicated late last year.

**Orisumbaje** – the new church building at Orisumbaje village built by friends of the bishop in Lagos have also been completed. The church was dedicated late last year.

**Elerin** – Construction work has just been completed at the church building in Elerin Village. All that is left is painting of the building. This church was financed by donations from friends of the bishop in Lagos. We shall dedicate this church later this year by God's grace.

**Church Hall at St. Peter's Church, Edunabon** – A member of this church has just singlehandedly built a church hall for this church in memory of his parents specially to mark one year of the passing to greater glory of his mother. I just dedicated the hall on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2022. We thank the donor profusely.

**Vicarage at St. John's Church, Ilare** – A block of two three-bedroom flats and Sextons quarter built by a member of the church, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Oyekanmi Onagbola was dedicated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2022. We thank the Onagbola family for this worthy project.

**Flooring of the Compound at St. John's Church, Ilare** – When I went to install Chiefs at St. John's Church, Ilare late last year, I mentioned on the pulpit that the compound of the church needs proper landscaping. One of the Chiefs installed, Chief Goke Olayinka, there and then offered to take on this project on behalf of the church. I am happy to inform Synod that the entire landscaping of Ilare church has been done. We thank Chief Olayinka for this wonderful gesture.

**Dean's Lodge at the Cathedral of St. Philip** – The new Dean's lodge at the Cathedral built by the Cathedral members and friends was dedicated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2022. It took just one year and one month to construct. We salute the effort put in by the Dean and the entire Cathedral members in ensuring this project became a reality.

**New Vicarage/renovation of Children's Chapel at Canon Ogunbanjo Memorial Church, Mokuro** – This project sponsored by mama Mrs. Olagbaju was dedicated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2021.

## **RADIO/ONLINE MEDIA SERVICES**

Our weekly radio bible study in English at Crown F.M and in Yoruba at Orisun F.M is waxing stronger. This program is usually pre-recorded at our studio in the Bishop's Court and aired on these stations. We have added a new dimension to it by doing a live broadcast once a month at the radio stations.

These recordings along with weekly sermons are posted to our social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram). Other activities in the diocese are also now posted on our social media platforms. You are all encouraged to subscribe to all our social media platforms.

We are currently considering a proposal to start an online Radio Station for the diocese.

We are soliciting sponsorship for the weekly bible study on radio. It cost about N27,000.00 to sponsor one edition at each station. We also solicit funds to further equip our media department. We need one extra Camera for their operations. It cost around \$4,000.00 (four thousand dollars) for a professional Camera.

## **BLOCK INDUSTRY**

Late last year, we injected more funds into this industry after it moved to its permanent site at Alaoko. With this funding, a car wash was added. In addition, we now sell cement. A new block making machine was also purchased, and our product line was expanded to include rings and paving stones. Let it be the first choice of all builders and contractors in this diocese, and please do some marketing for us.

## **COMPUTERIZATION PROJECT**

I am happy to announce that work has started on the Diocesan website. We hope to launch before the end of the second quarter of this year. A donor is sponsoring its development. This is the same donor who pays the monthly rental fee for the Church Management Software (Shelby) that we currently use to manage the financials of the diocese. The rental stands at \$252.00 (two hundred and fifty-two dollars) per month. May the Lord bless this organization and enlarge their coast, in Jesus name.

## **CROWD FUNDING**

We once again encourage us all to contribute to this fund. We ask for a minimum of N500.00 (five hundred naira) a month from each of us. We intend to use this fund to establish a solid investment foundation for the diocese. The

designated account for this fund is – Diocese of Ife Crowdfunding, Zenith Bank Account number 1015670471.

### **MACEDONIAN FUND**

This initiative by the Late Prof. Gabriel Olawoyin was intended to gather Ife Sons and Daughters to endow the diocese. The target of N50,000,000.00 (Fifty Million Naira) is far from being achieved. We implore all sons and daughters of this diocese, both at home and abroad, to contribute generously to this fund.

The designated account for this project is – Diocese of Ife Macedonian Fund, Zenith Bank Account number 1017306826.

### **DIVINE ROYAL COLLEGE**

The school began the 2021/2022 academic session in November 2021 with 41 students and 11 staff members.

Having previously been approved to sit for Junior Secondary School Examination (BECE), 7 students sat for the examination and the school recorded 100% in the examination. Three pupils from the senior class SS3 were presented for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), and they performed above average.

The principal resigned his position in order to pursue a postgraduate degree. Since then, a substantive Principal (a Priest of the Diocese) has been appointed.

Our school has yet to be registered as a Senior School Certificate Examination centre (SSCE). The reason for this is that we do not yet have Physics and Chemistry laboratories, as well as a hall where the SSCE examination will be held. This issue is currently being addressed thanks to a grant we received from the Josephus Foundation this year. Construction work is ongoing. We are also erecting the school gate and access road.

Two classroom maker boards were donated to replace the damaged ones. Four students were also awarded bursaries from the Mojinyinola/Oyindamola and the Ven. Professor E.R.I. Afolabi & Professor (Mrs.) Olubunmi Afolabi Scholarship Foundations.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **OUR MEN**

To the glory of God and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men in the Diocese, I formally launched the Diocese of Ife Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) on December 19, 2021. The inaugural ceremony provided an opportunity for men, teenagers, and children to unite and worship together. The sermon was delivered by the Bishop of Osun Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. 'Gbenga Babatunji, who exhorted men to be agents of change in society.

CMF meetings have commenced across parishes since January 2022. With the joint action of the administrators and

the Archdeaconry coordinators, each Archdeaconry has dedicated a particular Sunday in the month for CMF meetings. Reports of activities from various Archdeaconries have been quite impressive; meetings are being held regularly and men of various ages attend with great excitement. The focus of teachings and other activities at CMF meetings are tailored towards in-depth knowledge about God and the well-being of members and their respective families. It is believed this will empower our men to be effective in playing their roles in all ramifications of life.

The teaching manuals were launched during the inauguration ceremony. Impressively, the first set of the teaching manuals have been completely sold out and payment have already been made in anticipation of the reprints in some churches. The acceptance of the teaching manuals is far beyond the shore of this Diocese, as some Dioceses have already indicated interest in procuring copies. This is an indication of the depth and resourcefulness of the teaching manuals.

To further consolidate on the gains of the fellowship in the Diocese, an annual gathering of all men in the Diocese is being planned. This year's edition is scheduled to hold in December and all hands must be on deck to make this event a successful one.

It is important to appreciate the priests in the Diocese for the support the fellowship has enjoyed thus far. As we all



strive hard to bring our men back to the church, it is crucial for the priests to show more love and commitment to the growth and sustainability of the Fellowship in the Diocese.

## **WOMEN AND GIRLS' ORGANIZATION**

The Women and Girls' Organization led by Mrs. Nkechi Akinlade continues to flourish in their programmes and activities. During the period under review, the various units had their programmes.

**Action & Outreach Unit** – Programmes held include Visitations to the Prison, Widows and Widowers' Seminars, Essay Competitions, Visitation to the school of the handicapped, Health Talk for Retired Clergy and their wives, Hospital visitation to children ward.

**Mothers' Union Unit** – Programmes held include Rededication Services, Enrolling Members' Retreat, and the Couples Retreat, Feast of Annunciation of Blessed Virgin Mary. Other programmes scheduled to come up later in the year include Mary Sumner Day, Young Wives' Retreat, Wave of Prayers, and the Mothers' Union Christmas party.

**The Evangelical Outreach Unit** – This unit continues to work tirelessly in propagating the gospel in all the Archdeaconries within the Diocese.

**Prayer & Spirituality Unit** – The Annual Prayer Conference, 'Quiet Day' was held successfully. Other programmes to come up during the year include Diocese of Ife and Ibadan

Province prayer days for Church of Nigeria, and the Church of Nigeria Prayer Day with fasting for Nigeria.

**Girls'/Ladies' Guild Unit** - The Rededication Services of the Girls'/Ladies' Guild, Ladies' Guild Valentine Programme, the annual Girls' Guild Retreat as well as the Ladies' Guild retreat, the annual Girls' Guild Competition and the annual Ladies Guild Competition all took place successfully in the year under review.

**The Publication Unit** – This year's edition of Ile-Ayo Magazine was themed “WOMAN: A WORK I PROGRESS”.

**Diocesan Clergy Wives** – The Clergy wives continued in their usual manner of fellowshiping together. Some of their programs include retreats, fellowships, the annual Clergy wives' school, and anniversary.

## **WOMEN ORGANISATIONS PROJECTS**

### **Oyere Farm Project**

The tenants on this farm are owing the Women Organization arrears of rent. We are at the point of requesting the Legal team of the diocese to take up the case.

### **Hadassah Conferences and Multipurpose Centre, Arubidi**

Work has continued at the event centre since the dedication of the project as necessary fittings are still being installed and the flooring of the premises is still being done. Through the relentless effort made by the President, a

50KVA generator has been purchased and air conditioners have also been installed. We are still trusting God for chairs, tables, and other furnishings to make the place useable for a standard event. We welcome donors to support the work to bring it up to the necessary standard.

## **OUR YOUTHS**

We give all glory to the Almighty God for being kind to the Diocese and the Directorate of Youth in providing an enabling spiritual environment for the development of ladies and young men who are evolving into responsible adults by the day.

The Diocesan Youths have had many important engagements and meetings in the year under review. There was a change of baton in the leadership as the Diocesan Youth Executive election took place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021 at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife. The Induction of the new executives/Diocesan Youth Thanksgiving Service and a Leadership Retreat for the new executives took place thereafter.

The Valentine Luncheon Program this year themed “The Joy of Singleness” featured a number of activities that were quite educative and spiritually uplifting for the youths.

Pa Adesanmi obtained UTME forms for some of the youths preparing for admission into Tertiary Institutions.

This year's Joshua Generation International conference will take place in Abuja and the Diocese is already planning and preparing to be well represented at the conference.

Worthy of note is the involvement of youths in Diocesan programs and activities. The youths served as Ushers in the recent Diocesan Seminar at the Diocesan Camp, Asipa.

### **The Alpha Course**

This year, the Diocesan Youths concluded another Alpha Youth Series. This took place at St. John Ilare, Ile-Ife. The Alpha Course is an interesting way of promoting the Gospel of Christ among youths in a pleasant and non-threatening environment. The Alpha Youth Series will resume this year at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Ireemo Ile-Ife, every Friday at 5 p.m. from Friday, April 29, 2022.

### **Quarterly Diocesan Youth Service**

The Directorate of Youth has launched a Youth Service which will take place once in a quarter throughout the year. The service will feature impactful and contemporary but youth relevant themes which will be highly interactive and engaging, providing youths the opportunity to ask questions and contribute. It will be hosted in the different zones of the Diocese on a rotational basis. The first edition was held at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju, where Mama Ife and I were interviewed.

## **SOCIAL WELFARE**

Programmes and events organised by the directorate include visitation to St. Zacharias Church for the Deaf and Dumb, where they distributed food and clothing items; the Elderly Christmas Party which has become a yearly get-together program for the elders in our Diocese. The guest speaker was Rev. Canon Dr Richard Ogunlusi who talked on “You and your health in times like this.” Also, The Diocesan Medical Personnel were there to attend to the health needs of the elderly.

A new assistant director for this directorate in the person of Rev. Canon Kelly Panama was appointed in January 2022. I thank the Director, Olori Remi Aderemi and her team for a good job.

## **ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF IBADAN**

It is with utmost sense of gratitude to the Almighty God that I inform Synod of the retirement of our revered father, the retiring Bishop of the Diocese of Ibadan North and the Archbishop of our dear Province, Ecclesiastical Province of Ibadan, The Most Rev. Dr. Segun and Mrs. Juliet Okubadejo.

I join other myriads of well-wishers to give glory to God and heartily felicitate with our Baba and Mama Province for starting well and ending gloriously. It is an indisputable fact that The Most Rev. Dr. Segun Okubadejo is a great leader

whose positive impacts have spanned beyond the Ecclesiastical Province of Ibadan.

Baba and Mama Okubadejo will undoubtedly be missed as they retire from active service. On behalf of the people of the Diocese of Ife, I therefore wish Baba and Mama a flourishing and joy filled retirement in sound and long-lasting robust health.

## **OSUN STATE**

We are grateful to the Almighty God for His protection over us in Osun State during the period under review, despite reported cases of armed robbery, kidnapping and human sacrifices that were rampant in the entire country, we continue to enjoy the goodness of God in the state.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically reduced in Osun State through the help of God. I pray for you all, The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases in Jesus' name.

According to feedback from our members who are government employees and retirees in Osun State, salaries and pensions are paid on time. However, we still have outstanding salary and gratuity arrears from the previous government; so allow me to utilize this means to appeal to our amiable Governor, Alhaji Isiaka Adegboye Oyetola, to extend his generosity, in putting smiles on the faces of these people by paying them their due.

We applaud the government's efforts in constructing the Okesoda-Iloro-Aganhun road up to the Aganhun Police Station in Ile-Ife. We urge the government to complete the road up to Garage-Olode in order to build an access route to Ondo.

During my last year synod address, I called upon the government to help us see to the construction of the road around Arubidi Community in Ile-Ife. The road is daily getting worse. We appeal again that the government should make the reconstruction a priority.

The state election is scheduled for July, this year; may I use this medium to implore all politicians to allow peace to reign and to accept defeat in good faith. Every valid vote must count. I also encourage everyone to troop out on election day and vote for the candidate of their choice. Get your voter registration card and make sure you vote. God will continue to provide us with good and competent leaders.

We employ this medium to continue to appeal to the government to help release our schools back to us, especially St. Philip Primary School, Ayetoro, Ile-Ife next to our Cathedral, which has become an eyesore with the roof that has gotten blown off.

We commend the government for the relative peace we are enjoying in Osun State and pray that God will continue to allow peace to reign supreme in the state.

## **OUR COUNTRY – NIGERIA**

Nigeria is endowed with a diverse ethnic population, comparatively favourable weather, and millions of hectares of arable land. This is in addition to abundant human resources that excel in various fields, particularly in developed countries. With a population of over 200 million people and an almost limitless supply of natural resources, the country has the potential to be one of the world's most successful.

Unfortunately, the reality in the country is one of pain, hardship, deprivation, political instability, crimes and criminality, interethnic conflict, corruption, and resource theft by a privileged few, among other ills. Regrettably, Nigeria underperforms in comparison to her resources.

### **CHALLENGES**

Poverty and other societal factors have encouraged crime and criminality to the point where traveling from one place to another poses a significant personal risk owing to robberies, kidnappers, and deadly roads. Even in towns and cities, the majority of people sleep with one eye closed.

With an unemployment rate of more than 30% and an inflation rate of 15.7% in February 2022, it is not surprising that the average Nigerian is struggling a lot.

Our health indicators are likewise not promising. We are still grappling with poor health indices in noncommunicable



diseases despite having survived the height of the Covid 19 epidemic. The situation appears to be very grim. Peer pressure and frustrations are pushing many Nigerians to substance abuse, suicide, and depression, creating a frightening scenario.

Our education sector is also suffering. Nigeria has the biggest number of out-of-school children in the world, with over 10 million. Strikes by academic and non-academic unions have reduced our universities to a joke. It is horrible that students have to stay at home for months while the government and labour unions work out their disputes.

To compound the situation, energy is neither available nor affordable. Petrol (PMS), diesel, domestic gas, kerosine are gradually getting beyond the reach of the average Nigerian.

## **SOLUTIONS**

National rethink, reorientation, and rebirth on the part of every individual is urgently needed. This can be driven by visionary and selfless leadership that can create the atmosphere for such a change. The dwindling emphasis on morality, integrity, and forthrightness especially among the youth is alarming. A society where teenagers sacrifice their friends and parents for money require prayerful attention to moral instructions and teaching the Word of God at every level. The church must remain an agency for societal rebirth by calling men and women back to God. The church must

Speak truth to power without prejudice and political correctness. Remember the words of Holy Bible in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chron. 7:14 *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.* God will heal our land when we do the needful. Christians should be encouraged to participate in the political process by registering to vote and voting focused, competent, and sincere leadership at all levels. This is especially relevant as the political atmosphere is getting charged in preparation for 2023 general elections. All Christians must get their PVCs, participate as led by God and vote when the time comes. The outcome of next year's election is a "make or break" situation for the country potentially.

The war on insurgency and banditry has witnessed significant progress and the security agencies must be commended for their efforts. However, this trend should not be allowed to diminish, rather, interagency cooperation should be deepened and the appropriate budgetary allocations to the security agencies should be properly accounted for and effectively utilised. The effective control of banditry and kidnapping for ransom and resolving the farmer-herder disputes will encourage farming and other activities that can grow the economy.

Similarly, the efforts of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency appear to be bearing fruit as the sponsors are

being arrested in addition to their couriers. This should be sustained in addition to taking preventive measures to minimise substance abuse by government and non-governmental agencies.

The comatose power sector needs to be urgently addressed. The availability of power and economic development is inextricably linked. Without power, small and medium scale businesses cannot thrive. With the epileptic supply of PMS (petrol) and prohibitive cost of diesel across the country, the energy shortage has become more acute. It is time for Nigeria to tap into her massive gas reserves and harness the potential for renewable energy, as many developed countries are doing. The dependence on imported refined products, as well as the subsidy scheme, should be replaced by domestic refining. This is significantly more sustainable in the long term.

Above all else, the general living conditions of the populace should be improved by reducing wastage and the cost of governance. Such savings should be spent on infrastructure and provision of employment. Government borrowing to support political appointees and pay redundant workers should be discouraged. Small and medium scale industries, local manufacturing and agrobusiness should be encouraged and empowered to grow the economy and reduce our dependence on foreign goods. This will reduce our need for foreign exchange and enhance the value of our local currency. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

## **EVENTS SINCE 2021 SYNOD**

### **DEDICATIONS**

- 15/09/2021 Dedication of a Vicarage at Canon Ogunbanjo Anglican Church Mokuro (COMAC).
- 21/12/2021 Dedication of a new Church building at St. Philip's Anglican Church Orisunbaje Via Akinlalu.
- 22/12/2021 Dedication of a new church building at Christ Anglican Church Arode Elewure
- 08/01/2022 Dedication of a new Vicarage at St. John's Anglican Church Ilare, Ile-Ife.
- 23/01/2022 Dedication of the new Dean's Lodge at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.

### **FOUNDATION LAYING**

- 15/09/2021 Foundation laying of a new vicarage at Our Saviour's Anglican Church Iloro.

### **CONFIRMATION**

- 09/10/2021 Confirmation service of Ipetumodu Archdeaconry, held at St. John's Anglican Church Yakooyo.
- 10/10/2021 Confirmation service of Ifetedo Archdeaconry, held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Okesoda, Ifetedo.
- 24/10/2021 Confirmation service of Mokuro Archdeaconry, held at Canon

- Ogunbanjo Memorial Anglican Church  
Mokuro (COMAC)
- 14/11/2021 Olode Archdeaconry Confirmation, held at St. Paul's Anglican Church Ayepe, Olode.
- 18/11/2021 Oyere Archdeaconry Confirmation, held at Ebenezer Anglican Church Bolorunduro.
- 27/02/2022 Confirmation of Obalufetedo Archdeaconry held at St. Paul's Anglican Church Obalufetedo.
- 13/03/2022 Confirmation Service of Ireto Archdeaconry, held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Ireto.

## **INVESTITURES AND ORDINATION**

- 06/11/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, Held at St. John's Anglican Church Asipa.
- 20/11/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, held at Joseph Oladapo Memorial Anglican Church Oke-Ogbo Ile-Ife.
- 21/11/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, held at St. John's Anglican Church Yakooyo.
- 27/11/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Okesoda, Ifetedo.
- 28/11/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, held at St. Peter's Anglican Church Tonkere Orile.
- 18/12/2021 Investiture of Chiefs, held at St. John's Anglican Church Ilare, Ile-Ife.

## **CONFERENCES AND RETREATS**

- 28 – 31/10/2021 Diocesan Women Conference, Held at Christ Anglican Church Wasimin, Ipetumodu.
- 25/01/2022 The first Clergy and Evangelists retreat of the year, held at The Obawole Chapel of Christ the Light Bishop's Court Parakin, Ile-Ife.
- 19/02/2022 Diocese of Ife, Seminar on Diet and Diseases, Eating to Stay Health, held at the Diocesan Camp Asip.
- 01/03/2022 Pre-Lenten Retreat for Evangelists and Clergy, held at Emmanuel Anglican Church Ikoyi Quarters.
- 09/04/2022 Diocese of Ife, Seminar titled 'The Woman in Family Finances; Supporter, or Breadwinner,' held at the Diocesan Camp Asipa

## **EPISCOPAL SERVICES**

- 23/12/2021 Diocesan Christmas Carol, held at the Obawole Chapel of Christ the Light Bishop's Court Parakin.
- 25/12/2021 Christmas Service, held at The Cathedral Church of St. Philip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.
- 08/01/2022 The Diocesan Power for the year program, held at the Cathedral Church of St. Philip Ayetoro, Ile-Ife.
- 13/01/2022 The Diocesan, Mama Ife, Clergy, Evangelists and Wives Convocation,

- held at St. Silas Anglican Church  
Ajebandele, Ile-Ife.
- 30/01/2022 The Diocesan Women rededication  
service, held at St. Judes Anglican  
Church Moro.
- 25/03/2022 Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Service, held at St. John's Anglican  
Church Asipa.

### **OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

- 11-15/10/2021 Diocesan Evangelical Week, Held in all  
our Churches in the city of Ife and  
Origbo axis.
- 15-17/11/2021 Diocesan Mission Training, held at the  
Diocesan Camp Asipa.
- 25/11/2021 The funeral of Late Oba Timothy  
Adedokun Adeyera, held at St. John's  
Anglican Church Ilare, Ile-Ife.
- 06/12/2021 The Retirement Service of The Ven.  
Samuel Isola Ojo, held at St. Peter's  
Anglican Church Iremo, Ile-Ife.
- 08/12/2021 The Diocesan Mothers Union Christmas  
Party, held at the Diocesan Camp  
Asipa.
- 09/12/2021 The Wardens, Evangelist and Clergy  
Meeting with the Diocesan Treasurer  
and the Bishop, held at the Bishop's  
Court Parakin, Ile-Ife.
- 10/12/2021 The Diocesan Board Meeting, held at  
the Bishop's Court Parakin, Ile-Ife.

- 16/12/2021 Clergy, Evangelists and Wives, Baba and Mama Christmas Party, held at the Diocesan Camp Asipa.
- 24/01/2022 The Retirement Service of The Ven. Dr. Charles Jegede, held at St. Judes Anglican Church Moro.
- 29/01/2022 The Retirement Service of The Ven. Dr Emmanuel Soji Ogunyimica, held at St. Paul's Anglican Church Ayegbaju, Ile-Ife.
- 14-18/03/2022 The Diocesan Mission Week, held in all the churches in the rural area.
- 20/03/2022 The first edition of the Diocesan Youth Service, held at St. Paul's Anglican Church Ayegbaju.
- 08/04/2022 Diocesan Board Meeting held at the Bishop's Court, Parakin



## SYNOD THEME – THE GRACE OF GIVING

### INTRODUCTION

The chosen meditation at this year's Synod is titled – **The Grace of Giving**. Our observation is that many believers do not pay much attention to this important doctrine of scripture. What largely exists are certain church leaders who either abuse or ignore the doctrine. As a result, some have reacted negatively to the lessons contained within. A balanced view based solely on the scriptures is hardly ever presented. Giving (generosity) is quite low in our Diocese; many individuals find it difficult to part with their money for a variety of reasons.

Naira denominations recently met in Ile-Ife to share their experiences with how people utilize them. The following is the outcome of the chat.

*"I feature more than you all during offering time at churches," said Five Naira. "However, if you take me to the market today, I am entirely out of place because there is almost nothing of value that you can buy with me." In an effort to gather more funds, church officials take a vast number of donations, and in reaction, congregation members convert other denominations of Naira to me. As a result, I became even more famous inside the church. They frequently return home with changes in their pockets that they would have contributed if fewer collections were taken.*

*Fifty Naira cuts in, "As far as men of God are concerned, I am the champion." Most men of God have become accustomed to dropping me into the offering box. Despite the fact that the same Priests urge the congregation to donate numerous times throughout a service, the Priests normally only give once. I'm stylishly squeezed into the offering bag, where I won't be observed by other church members." As a result, the man of God only gives God N250 in a month of five weeks.*

*"Guys, I may not be as popular as Five Naira, but when parishioners want to offer their best offerings, I come into the picture," says Twenty Naira. "The great majority of the congregation regards me as a substantial offering."*

*Hundred and two hundred Naira were glad for the opportunity to feature in church for big thanksgivings such as birthdays, weddings, and so on. Speaking on behalf of the duo, two hundred Naira noted that some people who are grateful to God for His favours in their lives sometimes reluctantly part with them. The 500 Naira and 1,000 Naira notes were the next to talk. They asserted that they are well-known in the marketplace, restaurants, and other commercial activities. When it comes to the church, however, they are scarcely acknowledged.*

*“In fact, when congregation members bring us out by mistake, they hastily tuck us back deep into the pocket or purse, with some even casting and binding the devil for making us come forth from their pockets during offering time.” Their final remarks were, “We wish to play major roles during church worship service.”*

People are quite miserly when it comes to offering in God's house, stating many reasons for this mentality. The most prevalent in our area is the government owing them their entitlements over a long period of time. The practice of the immediate past administration in our State (Osun) of paying barely 25%, 50%, or 75% of people's salaries lent validity to this claim. Others, on the other hand, hid behind different excuses not to donate. Many people have a very unfavourable perception about giving.

On the contrary, if you drive about town on a typical Saturday afternoon, hardly will you find an open space that is not holding a social gathering. Additionally, whenever ‘Áso Ebi’ is reserved for any event, even in the church, the rate at which such is sold-out is worrisome. Someone who struggles to part with 20 Naira as an offering during a service is willing to spend N3,000.00 or more for ‘Aso-Ebi’ immediately after such a service in church.

There is no correlation between what is happening in the society and the giving pattern in churches. I have traced this problem to the lack of basic bible knowledge on giving.

There have also been unfortunate cases of gospel ministers exploiting people for their own personal gain, hardening such individuals whenever the subject of giving is brought up.

When we, Clergymen, utilize worldly wisdom to generate funds in the temple of God, we implicitly discourage people from giving from the heart. In order to obtain more, we resort to collecting large number of offerings in a service. Often, we receive less. Some of our teachings on Tithing are designed to scare people and make them feel guilty about being punished/judged by God if they do not pay tithes. Greed in the house of God is creating more poverty in the house of abundance. Consider the man of God who teaches that Tithes can only be paid to the church where you worship regularly (where you are being fed). Someone once stated that you cannot travel back to your village and pay tithe since you are not fed there on a regular basis. My question to such a man of God is that if he is the pastor of the village church and a member from the city pays tithe to his parish, would he return such because he is not the one 'feeding' that person regularly.

I must acknowledge that giving is a tough subject to teach since money is involved; as a result, pastors often avoid teaching extensively on the issue in order to avoid being misunderstood. However, if you carefully study the New Testament, you will discover that one of the key doctrine taught in it is giving (financials). If we avoid teaching such

a vital doctrine, we are omitting a significant portion of scripture which will set people free.

## **HOLDING BACK – THE GUILT OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH**

In the scripture chosen for our theme (2 Cor 8), Apostle Paul addresses the key issue I mentioned in my introduction; 'Holding back' when it comes to giving. The Corinthian church was guilty of this, and he used the passage to address the issue and refocus them on the matter.

Internal evidence (2 Cor 8:10) indicates that a year before the writing of 2 Corinthians, believers in the Corinthian church began collecting funds for the Jerusalem church, which at that time was facing major challenges. In his first letter to the Corinthian church, Apostle Paul asked them to lay aside something for this purpose on the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:1-4). Overtime the collection began to dwindle (2 Cor 8:10-11). Apparently, some greedy, traveling preachers (2 Cor 2:17) had alleged that Paul had devised the collection in order to extort money from the congregation. They claimed this despite the fact that Paul had taken no money from the Corinthians to support his own ministry (2 Cor 7:2; 2 Cor 11:7-9; 2 Cor 12:14-17). Apostle Paul had supported himself as a tentmaker when he was in Corinth (Act 18:1-4). These traveling preachers may have desired to divert the funds to themselves (2 Cor 2:17). In any case, one of the goals of 2 Corinthians was to encourage

the Corinthians to complete the collection they had begun a year before (2 Cor 8:10-11; 2 Cor 9:1-3).

In (2 Cor 8:1ff) Paul used two examples to encourage giving in the Corinthians Church. The first was that of the Macedonian church (2 Cor 8:1-5) and the second was that of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Cor 8:9).

### **Giving when poor – The Macedonians**

Despite the fact that the Macedonian church was poor, they gave generously to the needs of the church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:3). Even when Paul tried to persuade them otherwise, they insisted on participating in the giving (2 Cor 8:4). According to the passage, 'they gave beyond what they had' (2 Cor 8:3). They did so willingly and joyfully.

It is worth noting the uniqueness of the church in Macedonia; they were poor people, who gave generously. The message to us, especially here in Ile-Ife, where we are fond of complaining about poverty in the land, is that poverty is not an excuse for not contributing to the work of God and also to people around us. The worldly standard we practise when we don't have much on hand is to keep the little we have to ourselves. The Macedonians did otherwise by releasing the little they had joyfully.

Giving by the Macedonians was not motivated by a desire for praise from Paul or others. Their generosity was driven primarily by a desire to serve the Lord. They first 'dedicated

themselves to God' (2 Cor 8:5) and expressed a desire to follow whatever directions God gave them. They gave because they knew they belong to God. Everything they possessed, including their very souls belonged to God. Knowing this, they devoted themselves to serving Jesus and his Kingdom in whatever capacity they could.

Often during thanksgiving when the collection bags are placed in front of the congregation, I am always amazed at how many people dance forward and go back without giving anything. Some will deceive themselves (because you cannot deceive God) by squeezing their hands as if they contain money, but they will give nothing. The bible says, 'Give and you will receive.' (Luke 6:38). Your gift will return to you in full. Your gift leaves your hand temporarily only to return in multiple fold. Many in the church, including men of God, find it difficult to put this simple biblical truth into practice. Let me add that this is a universal law that non-Christians follow, and they get results.

If you deceive yourself by folding an empty hand and pretending to give at thanksgiving, what will God bless? We know that you truly love God when you extend that love to His work and to your neighbour by giving to God's work and to your neighbours from what you have.

Later, in the passage (2 Cor 8:7), Paul commended the Corinthian Church, saying, "They were rich in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the

love, we have kindled in you." He went on to say that they should extend that attitude to giving as well.

Permit me to say that there are many gifted prayer warriors, bible study leaders, and preachers in the church today. Unfortunately, many of us are stingy when it comes to giving to the needs of the church and people around us. If you have any of the gifts mentioned above and generosity is not among them, then you need to pray for liberation in your giving. Poverty is not an excuse to refrain from giving. Stop holding back.

### **Giving as a rich person – Jesus Christ**

Although the Macedonians had shown a great amount of generosity, their sacrifice couldn't compare with Jesus' gift of himself. Jesus' actions served as the ultimate model for both the Corinthians and us as Christians.

The word 'Grace' is used in a variety of context in the New Testament, but here in (2 Cor 8:7) the meaning is unmistakably that of generosity. How generous was the Lord Jesus? He was so generous that He gave all He had for our sakes, so that we through His poverty might become eternally rich.

We are urged to give a little money, clothing, food. Please note that Jesus gave Himself.

This scripture (2 Cor 8:9) teaches the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus. When was He rich? Certainly not when He was



born as the Babe of Bethlehem! And definitely not during His thirty-three years in the world His hands had made.” He was rich in a bygone eternity, dwelling with the Father in the courts of heaven. He did, however, become poor. Jesus became poor for our sakes by generously giving up his rights as God and becoming human. He even voluntarily surrendered himself to death on a cross, and in doing so, he made all who believe in him rich.

If this is true, and it most certainly is, then it should be our greatest joy and delight to give all that we are and have to Him. No argument could be more powerful than this in the context of Paul's explanation of Christian giving.

Christians have not only been saved as a result of his self-sacrifice, but they have also been adopted into God's family (2 Cor 5:8; 2 Cor 5:18). This implies that they have a glorious, eternal inheritance in heaven (2 Cor 4:18; 2 Cor 5:1).

## **HINDERANCES TO GIVING**

I recognize that there are circumstances that makes giving difficult; we will examine some of these in order to prevent them.

### **1. A life not consecrated to the Lord**

The most significant hindrance to giving is a life that has not been consecrated to the Lord. The Macedonian Christians were able to give freely because “they first dedicated

themselves to the Lord" (2 Cor 8:5). Giving to God's work becomes easy when you are truly regenerated.

It has also been observed that giving your time to the Lord's cause largely leads in giving your money. Members who hesitate to invest their time frequently refuse to commit their resources as well.

## **2. Unconcerned Stewardship**

Do you plan your resources? Is God first and foremost in your life and finances? If you have given your life to Christ, it should be reflected in you placing God first in all things, even your finances. The way we give money during the Sunday offering is a deep reflection on this point. The vast majority only remember that they have to give to God at that point, so they reach into their purse and pull out whatever 'change' they see. Giving should be planned ahead of time (1 Cor 16:2). Our money is not ours to spend as we see fit. It belongs to God. 1 Chr 29:14) "For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You"

The direct implication of this principle in Christian giving is that the Lord's work takes priority in our giving. We must prioritize what we give him from our resources. When you get your salary, take out the offering for the month, your tithe, and other commitments to the work of God first, before anything else. "The amount we give to Him should in no way depend on what we choose to spend on ourselves." It should be done ahead of time. Let us learn

from King David (1 Chr 29:3) "I have set my affection on the house of my God." Where have you set your affection?

This does not outlaw unexpected, spontaneous giving. The Lord's glowing praise for the poor widow who generously dropped her last two coins into the temple collection box is sufficient proof of this (Lk. 21:1-4). And freewill, even sacrificial, giving is just as appropriate today as it was then, and God honours it just as much.

### **3. Unspiritual Attitude**

Some of us are fond of making comments such as 'all they do is collect our money.' Some argue that they don't have to give. Giving is considered as a lesser form of service to God by these people. Searching through the scripture, you will not find any basis for such a viewpoint. On the contrary, giving money is described as both a 'grace' and a 'sacrifice'. The Macedonian Christians considered it a real blessing to be able to share in this gracious work of the Spirit (2 Cor. 8:6-7). Some of us believe that favour is in receiving gifts and not in giving it! (It is more blessed to give than to receive – Act. 20: 35) Let me clarify here that giving is a privilege because it is a form of worship. The book of Hebrews strongly associates the sacrifice of praise to God with the sacrifice of giving or sharing what we have. It also enjoins us not to forget. Furthermore, the scripture tells us that God is not simply gratified when we do so; He is

overjoyed. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16).

We should no longer consider collections during divine service to be a required task. Giving should be done with reverence as part of our total worship. There should be no break in the flow of worship because the offering bag is passed. Remember that what you are giving is an offering, something given to the Lord Himself, and springing from an overflowing heart.

#### **4. Static giving**

Another major hindrance to the expansion of the Lord's work is static giving. When inflation or currency devaluation occurs, what do we do? The solution lies in the principle of proportional giving (1 Cor. 16:2). Apostle Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to give in proportion to their income. If our income rises, so should our giving.

You will notice that no proportion was provided in the New Testament, although a tenth was specified in the Old Testament. Giving was left to the generosity of the giver. Haven stated that if the Israelites were required by the Law to give a minimum of one tenth of their income (the tithe), we should ask ourselves, should we, under grace, give less? I believe we should give more. In the Old Testament when you give tithes, you are promised an outpouring of God's blessing i.e., 'the windows of heaven will be opened' (Mal

3:10). Similarly, we should not expect God's blessing on our activities if we withhold from Him what is rightfully His.

## **5. Inhibited Attitude**

According to (1 Chr 29:1-9), in preparation for the construction of God's temple, King David and all present, even the commoner, gave without restraint, without counting the cost. The needs of the Lord's house captured the imaginations of all present, and all gave with unrestrained joy. This attitude is still appropriate today.

In (2 Cor 9:7) we read that "God loves a cheerful giver". The word "cheerful" actually means "hilarious." God loves it when we give joyfully.

Scripture tells us that 'God loves the world' (Joh 3:16), and the measure of that love is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her" (Eph. 5:25), and he paid the supreme price for it. "Though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). When we read that 'God loves the cheerful giver,' we are introduced to a new dimension of His love. Those who give without restraint and joyfully become special objects of God's love, capable of enjoying an intimate personal relationship with Him. Those who sow bountifully will likewise reap bountifully.

## **6. Worrying about how your money is spent**

You may sometimes disagree with others in your church about how money is utilized. You can react to this by simply trusting God to guide your church leaders according to God's will. You can also pray for your own discernment and for that of others. You can even choose to leave your church and join one where you are more comfortable with how money is handled.

But you cannot allow the decisions and actions of other people become an excuse for your own failure to live and act generously. Find a place of worship where you can give joyfully and confidently.

## **7. Indebtedness**

God knows exactly what got you into debt, and God's desire for you to be free of it is even greater than your own. As you work to repay creditors, trust God to guide you; listen for His voice. Recognize that God does not want you to miss out on the joy that comes with giving when you are led to give.

The Bible tells all Christians to give to God from their "first fruits" (Pro 3:9). God's grace is sufficient to allow you to obey God and to give generously, even during times of debt.

When you obey God's leading to give generously, you place God's Word above earthly concerns about security and everyday living. Passion triumphs over prudence in

whole-hearted commitment to the Lord, let us overcome these hindrances and become “hilarious” givers for Him.

## **FAITHFUL SERVICE**

When we speak of a faithful person, we are referring to someone who is - Loyal, Constant, True, and Devoted. Do any of these characteristics describe you? Are you faithful in giving?

Before you can manifest these characteristics, you must have surrendered all (including your finances) to God. This is the major obstacle we must overcome. We find it difficult to let go even when we confess it with our mouths. Remember the chorus we love to sing ‘... I surrender all, I surrender all, unto Him my precious Saviour, I surrender all.’ Allow those words emerge from your heart rather than your lips. We are to totally surrender ALL to God because of all he has done for us. Allow Him to change the way you think.

When you completely surrender to God, you become a member of His family. As a member of His family, you have a role to play. God has gifted you accordingly to be able to play the role. How well are you contributing to the needs of the body of Christ?

The parable in (Matthew 25:14-30) of the three servants to whom their master entrusted his wealth gives us insight into what is expected of us as gifted servants. These servants

were given bags of gold (real wealth). The first received five bags, the second two, and the third one.

There are 4 lessons for us to learn from the parable.

- 1. They were gifted** – this clearly shows us that what we have is not ours. It all belongs to the master (in our case God), even though it had been entrusted to us. In Psalm 24:1, the bible says, “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Whatever you think is yours belongs to God. (Haggai 2:8) adds, “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the LORD Almighty.” So be prepared to return to Him what He gave you in the first place like the first and second servants did.
- 2. Use EVERYTHING that He entrusted to you for His glory** – the emphasis is on everything He has given you. When you are a stingy giver, you do not use everything. You are limiting what will return to you. The first and second servants utilized everything, and they both received 100% returns.
- 3. Never hoard or bury these gifts for selfish reasons** – when you are selfish, you eventually lose what you are hoarding. Holding back as some of us do is costly. The third servant lost everything because he held back. He was protecting what he was given so that he wouldn’t lose it. Unfortunately, he lost it because he found it difficult to utilize it (let it go). Let go of what is in your hand



and it will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaking together, and running over (Luke 6:38).

- 4. In life, our opportunities and responsibilities are tied to our abilities** – because the master understood his servants, he gave them each what they could handle. We must be careful never to bemoan the inadequacy of God's gifts to us. We must accept the limitations that God has placed on us and not struggle or grumble about them. No matter who we are or what we have, there will always be those who have more or less than we do. Ultimately, the issue is not how much we have, but how well we use what we have.

Make sure you invest or use the things God has given you, no matter how small. You will not lose your gifts by using it. You lose them when you bury them. When you use your gifts to glorify God, you can be rest assured He will honour your investment.

## **CONCLUSION**

As I conclude, let me share a story with you. My Pastor friend visited a lady friend of his, whose daughter was getting married. She was so excited and could not hide her excitement.

She told him the hall for the wedding would cost them N1.0m; decorations would cost N 400,000.00; the Gospel

Band N400,000.00, while the Master of Ceremonies (MC) was charging N500,000.00.

The Pastor then asked her how much she planned to give as Thanksgiving offering to the Lord. She started by quoting a bible verse that says, "Your left hand should not know what your right hand is giving." When she was reminded that the verse quoted was for "alms giving", and you don't give God alms, you give Him an acceptable Thanksgiving, she reluctantly said N50,000.00.

So, my friend did a comparison for her - God Almighty N50,000.00; MC N500,000.00, can you see where our priorities are? I'm sure most of you can relate with this. She later increased it to N100,000.00.

When asked if she was going to give an envelope to the officiating Priests (4 of them), she replied, of course, N50,000.00. Again, she was reminded 4 Priests that will make the marriage possible N50,000.00, one MC of no spiritual value N500,000.00. Our priorities are clear.

This was a woman who opposed the payment of N100,000.00 to the church, to take care of diesel, cleaning and other necessary logistics for the service, but was willing to pay N1,000,000.00 for Hall rental. She said N100,000.00 was too much to give to the Church Band to play at the reception but was willing to pay a hired Gospel band N400,000.00.

How do we treat God? Like a **D O G** or a **G O D**?

I want to encourage you to practice giving. When you collect your salary every month, first remove your tithe then set aside the amount you desire to give as offering for the month. Stop the practice of just dipping your hand into your pocket at offering time to bring out whatever you find. If you practice planned giving (1 Cor 16:2), some of you will find out you can easily drop five hundred Naira in the offering plate every Sunday. For some, that amount will be N1,000, N5,000, N10,000 or even more. Watch out what God will do for you in His time. Also, practice reaching out to people around you that you can bless. It could be money or other material blessing; it could even be food. Remember that the hand that gives always comes out on top.

“At the judgment seat of Christ, many will be commended, but others will be condemned.” Unfortunately, stinginess, wickedness, laziness, and fear will conspire to hinder some people from fully surrendering and serving God.

God has gifted each of us present here today, as well as those who will read this address or listen to it via the various Social Media platforms. God desires to see us faithfully use the resources He has entrusted to us for His glory. It doesn't matter if what you got is one, two or five talents. The important thing to remember is that none of us are empty-handed. In the long run, what God commends, and

rewards is not genius, brilliancy, perfection, or popularity, it is faithfulness.”

I pray for us all, receive the “grace for giving” in Jesus’ name.

*+Olubunmi, Jfe*

April 2022

# **APPENDIX A**

# **PROFILES OF RESOURCE PERSONS**

## **PROFILE OF THE MOST REV. EMMANUEL EGBUNU PH.D.**

Emmanuel Egbunu was born on 4th September, 1960 to the family of Late Rev. Canon Robert & Mrs. Christiana Egbunu. He had his elementary education from 1965-1971. While in the secondary school, he made a commitment to Christ at an FCS conference in Igbaja, Kwara State in 1976. In 1979, he was admitted to the University of Jos where he obtained B.A. (English) in 1983.

He served with Challenge Publications during his NYSC in 1983/84 after which he was offered a job as an Assistant Editor (Books), a position he held till 1989 when he went fully into the pastoral ministry of the Church of St. Piran's on the Plateau, in the Diocese of Jos. He immediately proceeded for training at Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan, where he obtained a Diploma in Theology in 1991. He was made Deacon that year by Rt. Rev. T.E. Idowu-Adesola and priested the following year by the then Rt. Rev. B.A. Kwashi (now Archbishop), and also later preferred statutory Canon in 1995.

Recognizing a teaching gift in this young priest, Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi sent him to the Cornhill Training Course in expository preaching run by the Proclamation Trust in London in 1993/94. This was a major development in his handling of Scripture as hermeneutics and exegesis were the core emphasis of the course. During that time, he was also assigned to the parish of St. Margaret the Queen,

Streatham Hill, London, in the Diocese of Southwark under the overseas Clergy license.

Between 1994 and 1997, Emmanuel served as Canon-in-residence at St Luke's Cathedral, Jos, Deputy Dean of Christian Institute, Jos; from 1998-1999, he served as Academic Dean of the International School of Evangelism (ISE) and as Cathedral Archdeacon at St. Peter's Cathedral in Minna from 2000-2002. He was thereafter moved to the Church of Nigeria headquarters in Abuja on the directive of the then Primate, Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola. He later became the Sub Dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent, and elected and consecrated Bishop (Suffragan) on 9th February, 2003. He served a Suffragan to the then Bishop of Abuja, Most Rev Peter J. Akinola. He was translated in 2004 to Lokoja Diocese where he has been Diocesan Bishop. He became the pioneer Archbishop of the newly created ecclesiastical Province of Lokoja, serving the maximum two terms from 2009-2019.

Emmanuel fulfils his ministry by teaching the Word on many platforms and through writing (articles, books, poetry, songs).

He and his wife, Abiodun, met in Jos, Plateau State when she went for her NYSC in 1985/1986. The relationship blossomed and they got married in 1988. God has blessed the union with a son and two daughters, among other younger ones they have been privileged to raise.

## **PROFILE OF THE VEN. PROF. OLUGBENGA ORIMOOGUNJE**

Oluwagbenga Orimoogunje is the Vicar of Isaac Williams Makinde Memorial Anglican Church, Idita Quarters, Ile-Ife in Ife Diocese (Anglican Communion). He was ordained as a Deacon in 2000 and priested in 2001, preferred to the post of a Canon in July 2007 and Archdeacon in 2012. He is also a Nigerian biogeographer and landscape ecologist whose research focuses on land use utilization and natural resource management including its evolution, dynamics and conservation with particular focus on how to understand the processes that contribute to improved land resource management. He is an academic staff of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, where he rose through the ranks to become a Professor of Geography in 2016.

Oluwagbenga Orimoogunje has served in various capacity in the Diocese of Ife as *Youth Leader* (EFAC) and later as *Deacon*, at Canon Adejumo Memorial Anglican Church; *Pioneer Priest*, St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Ajidara and *Vicar*, St. Mary's Anglican Church and Isaac Williams Makinde Memorial Anglican Church.

Oluwagbenga has also served in various capacity in the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Oluwagbenga Orimoogunje was Vice-Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife between 2011 and 2013; Nigeria's Representative on the Governing Council of



the UNECA - African Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology (AFRIGIST), Ile-Ife, Nigeria between 2017 and 2019; Head, Department of Geography, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, between 2017 and 2019 and presently, a Senate Member of Obafemi Awolowo University.

Oluwagbenga Orimoogunje holds a Diploma in Theology from the Archbishop Vining Memorial College of Theology, Akure and obtained B. Sc. (Hons.), M. Sc., and Ph. D from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; and Postgraduate Diploma in Geoinformation Production and Management from Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS), Ile-Ife, Nigeria. As a researcher, he has over Fifty scientific publications to his credit. Oluwagbenga Orimoogunje is a teacher and preacher of the living word. His married to his helpmeet, Mrs. F.A. Orimoogunje and the union is blessed with the glorious children.

## **PROFILE OF THE REV. SAMUEL OLALERE ONITIJU**

Samuel Olaleye Onitiju was born on the 12th of December, 1978. He hails from Ile-Ife, Osun State.

He had his primary education at St. Philip's Anglican Primary School, Iloro, Ile-Ife and his Secondary education at the famous Oduduwa College and School of Science both in Ile-Ife. He proceeded to the School of Medical Laboratory Technology, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC) in 1998 where he had his Associate Certificate in Medical Laboratory Science in 2002. He proceeded to Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, where he bagged a BSc. Medical Laboratory Science in 2008.

Rev. Onitiju was ordained a Deacon in July 2011 and Priested July 2012. In 2011, he served as an Assisting Priest at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Ayegbaju; Vicar, Anglican Church of the Holy Spirit Agahun from 2012 to 2017 and Assisting Priest, Obawole Chapel of Christ the Light from 2017 to 2021 and was made Vicar from 2021 till date.

Rev. Onitiju is a Chief Medical Laboratory Scientist at the department of Morbid Anatomy and Forensic Medicine OAUTHC, Ile-Ife. He is an Associate Member of Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria.

Rev. Onitiju is happily married, and the marriage is blessed with four children.

**APPENDIX B**

**COMMUNIQUE**

AND

**PASTORAL LETTERS**

FROM

CHURCH OF NIGERIA  
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)



# CHURCH OF NIGERIA

## (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> TO FRIDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022 AT ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL, RUMUOKWURUSI AND ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, RUMUOBIOKANI DEANERY, OBIO, EVO DIOCESE, RIVERS STATE.

**Introduction:** The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican communion) met under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presided over by the **Most Rev'd Dr. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba**, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria, accompanied by his wife, **Mrs. Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba**, President of the Women and Girls' organizations at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi and St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery, Evo Diocese, Obio, Rivers State from Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> to Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. In attendance were 161 Bishops, 151 Clergy and 94 Lay delegates.

The Standing Committee was welcomed by **His Excellency Chief Barrister Nyesom Wike**, the Executive Governor of River State. The Executive Governor of Delta State, **His Excellency, Sir Sen. Dr. Arthur Ifeanyi Okowa**, delivered the keynote address and also received the Church of Nigeria Award for Courageous and Purposeful Leadership in Challenging Situation. Other recipients of the same award were **His Excellency Hon. Samuel Ortom**, the Executive Governor of Benue State, **His Excellency Prof. Babagana Zulum**, the Executive Governor of Bornu State ably represented by **Barrister Simon Malgwi**, Borno State Head of Service and the Senate Minority Leader of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, **Senator Enyinnaya Harcourt Abaribe**, the Senator representing Abia South Senatorial District of Abia State.

**Theme:** The theme of the Standing Committee Meeting was '**The Christian's Dual Citizenship and Responsibilities**' taken from Matthew 22:20-22. Christians belong to the present world but are as well citizens of heaven. It is imperative that they live responsibly on earth in preparation for their heavenly home. Civic responsibilities such as payment of taxes, active participation in electoral processes, good neighbourliness, discipline and obedience to Government's good regulation are veritable means of demonstrating commitment to heavenly citizenship. Every believer is called upon,

therefore, to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God, without compromising their heavenly pursuit.

**National Security:** Insurgency, kidnapping, banditry and all manners of criminality continue to bedevil our country. These security challenges are matters of national concern. The insincerity of purpose exhibited by the Government in many instances have provided a thriving platform for criminal activities to destroy the lives and properties of the innocent in our country. The Standing Committee notes that the lives of Nigerians, irrespective of religion, tribe or class, matters to God, and calls on Government to increase its effort at stemming the tide of insecurity in our country.

**Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Industrial Action:** The Standing Committee is disturbed by the ongoing one-month warning industrial action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). ASUU has consistently accused Government of failure to keep the terms of agreement in the past. The Standing Committee calls on Government to give urgent and holistic attention to this matter once and for all in order to avert the myriad of inevitable future consequences of a destroyed educational system.

**The 2023 General Elections:** The Standing Committee calls on the citizenry to pray and be actively involved in working towards a peaceful electioneering process in 2023. It urges the Government to ensure non-interference in the affairs of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at all levels, and provide a level playing ground for all the parties including the electorate.

**Removal of Oil Subsidy:** The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government for suspending the further removal of oil subsidy which would have worsened the level of poverty in the land. It encourages the Federal Government to show greater commitment towards rehabilitating the moribund oil refineries in the country. It further calls on related Government agencies to exercise due diligence in monitoring the importation of oil and oil related products so as to avert the importation of adulterated products into the country as was recently experienced.

**National Truth Peace and Reconciliation Commission:** In the light of the prevailing high level of insecurity and agitations in the country, giving rise to all sorts of violence and utter disregard to the sanctity of human life, the Standing Committee suggests that a National Truth, Peace and Reconciliation Commission be constituted that will make concerted effort to reconcile all the antagonizing groups in the country.

**Infrastructural Development and Transportation:** The Standing Committee appreciates the efforts and actions of the Federal and State Governments in infrastructural development, but calls on the relevant authorities to work on the road

leading into Port Harcourt, as it does not befit this oil rich State. In the same vein, actions should be taken to give other areas in the country a sense of belonging.

**Environmental Degradation:** The Standing Committee expresses worries over the level of environmental degradation owing to oil explorations in the Niger Delta region, and calls on the Government to curb the activities of illegal refineries and harness their potentials in setting up modular refineries.

**National Economy:** The Standing Committee applauds the efforts made to get the nation out of recession and urges the Government to provide the enabling environment for a private sector driven economy. In this regard the need for electricity, other industrial energy sources, cannot be over-emphasized. Standing Committee urges the Government to do everything possible to lay the foundation for a virile modern economy and be extremely careful about further external borrowing that can jeopardize the future of the unborn generation.

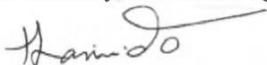
**Russia/ Ukraine Conflict:** The Standing Committee notes with concern the present situation in the Eastern part of Ukraine, and calls on the Federal Government to urgently commence the process of evacuation of Nigerians in Russian and Ukraine as the war between world powers in the Eastern European country escalates.

**Ritual Killings and Money Making:** The Standing Committee notes with grave concern, the current preponderance of ritual killings for the purposes of acquiring wealth, especially, among our youths. The Standing Committee calls upon all Government agencies, parents, the Church and schools to rise up in our common interest to tackle this ugly menace and drug related issues.

**Conclusion:** The Standing Committee urges believers and citizens in general to show commitment to their earthly responsibility and civic duties as part of serving God purposefully because the “earth is the Lord’s and its fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1).



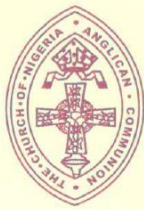
**The Venerable Dr. Gershinen Paul Dajur,**  
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria.



**The Most Reverend Dr. Ali Buba Lamido,**  
Dean, Church of Nigeria.



**The Most Reverend Dr. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba,**  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.



# CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

**PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY 21ST TO FRIDAY 25TH FEBRUARY, 2022 AT THE ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL, RUMUOKWURUSI AND ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, RUMUOBIOKANI DEANERY, EVO DIOCESE, OBIO, RIVERS STATE.**

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We bring you warm Christian greetings from the Standing Committee Meeting of the Church of Nigeria which held at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi and St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery, Evo Diocese, Obio, Rivers State. We are profoundly grateful to the Bishop, Clergy, good people of the Diocese of Evo, the Archbishop and the entire Province of Niger Delta, as well as the Government and the good people of Rivers state, for a generous hospitality and Christian love practically demonstrated during our meeting. May the Lord bless His Church and the entire State.

We reflected on the theme; "**Christian's Dual Citizenship and Responsibilities**" - **Matthew 22:20-22**. We give thanks to God for the immense contributions Anglican members all over the country have been making to the life of our society, since the advent of Christianity. The modern challenges call us, once again, never to relent but to renew our commitment as Christians to making our society better than it has been, as we are called to be the light in the world. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, rightly admonishes, *'Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your Heavenly Father'*. (Matthew 5:16).

In spite of the situation of things in our country about which so many of us have continued to complain, we have a challenge to ensure that we play our role within the society, especially, knowing that the earth belongs to the Lord and the fullness thereof (Psalm 24:1). While we are living here on earth as pilgrims and strangers, we should not lose sight of the fact that our citizenship is of heaven. It behoves on

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## ST MATTHIAS HOUSE:

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us, therefore, to live as faithful ambassadors of Christ here on earth and as citizens of heaven. Our time here must be spent in the fear of the Lord and in obedience to His will.

The imperative of being responsible citizens of heaven here on earth calls for diligent engagement with the present world in such a way that God may be glorified. Hence, Jesus says, "*Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to Him*" (Matt.22:20-22). This is not a calling to abandon our world to Caesar as the world actually belongs to God; it is rather a calling to play constructive role under our earthly administrators without failing God the creator of the universe.

We must ensure that we are guided by our goal of the heavenly home as we strive to remain responsible members of our present society. It is in living out the demands of our heavenly citizenship that we can make the desired impact here on earth.

I ask you, therefore, to live as responsible members of our earthly society, paying your taxes, and making contributions to the betterment of the society. Politics offers a context for the governance of the land. It is important that we are involved in the electoral process, by registering for, and obtaining our Permanent Voters Card (PVC), going to vote, and actively advocating for good things that will be beneficial to our people. Partisan politics should not be avoided. We request of you, beloved people of God, to be actively and responsibly involved in godly politics without which our society becomes poorer, failing in God's purpose and plan.

By fulfilling our responsibilities, we are mindful of our accountability to God, who truly is the owner of the universe. Thus, while living here we secure our citizenship of heaven without abandoning our earthly responsibilities.

People of God, we continue to give thanks to God, on your behalf, for your constant partnership in the Gospel and for your commitment to our Church. Our calling to this joint commission to reach the world must be sustained in spite of the present challenges. We appreciate the endeavours of CNMS and we do encourage Diocesesto support and partner with them. Another edition of our St. Matthias' Day Collection has just come up and we are grateful to you all for constantly giving towards the work of God. I encourage you never to lose confidence in our Lord's goodness; know that He is faithful and will continue to keep and bless you.



Our country has continued to encounter various challenges including the recent scarcity of petrol. We can only trust God, as we pray for grace and guidance, for our Government to be able to manage our resources more effectively for the benefit of all. Regrettably, ritual killings and drug abuse, especially, amongst the youth have become prevalent; this is not unconnected with ungodly and inordinate ambition for the acquisition of wealth. Our youth should learn that hard work is a legitimate means to prosperity. So we call on parents, guardians, the Church, schools and Government agencies to rise up in our common interest to combat and put an end to this menace. I am delighted that the Joshua Generation Conference has come to add to the resources of our Church. This Conference has great potential to bless our youth. The next edition is coming up soon after Easter, please support this financially and spiritually as we encourage all our youths to register en masse and attend the Conference

Finally, we gratefully return all thanks to God for blessing us with His presence in Evo Diocese, and we greatly appreciate the labours of both the leadership and the followership of the good people of Niger Delta Province and the Diocese of Evo. As we continue to ponder on the theme of our Standing Committee Meeting this year, let us do so daily, reflecting on the hymn written by Isaac Watts (1719).

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun, doth his successive journeys run:  
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore, Till moon shall wax and wane no more.  
People and realms of every tongue, Dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
And infant voices shall proclaim, their early blessings on His Name.  
Blessings abound where'er he reigns; The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;  
The weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blest....*

May the Grace of God be with you all.

Yours in the service of Christ,



**The Most Rev'd Dr. Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba.**  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria



# CHURCH OF NIGERIA

## (Anglican Communion)

**THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA**, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.

**THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HOSTED BY THE DIOCESE OF LAGOS, AT ARCHBISHOP ADEBOLA AND OLURANTI ADEMOWO RESOURCE CENTRE, FAITH PLAZA, BARIGA, LAGOS STATE, FROM MONDAY, 20TH TO FRIDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2021.**

**PREAMBLE:** The Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) which was held from Monday, 20th - Friday, 24th September, 2021 was presided over by the Most Reverend Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria, accompanied by his wife, the National President of the Women Ministries, Mrs Angela Eberechukwu Ndukuba, attended by 163 Bishops, 151 Clergy and 97 lay delegates. Also in attendance were 3 Bishops from the Province of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), led by its Primate and Chairman of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), the Most Reverend Dr Foley Beach.

The Standing Committee received guests at the opening ceremony, including His Excellency, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-olu, the Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Barr. Chief Nyesom Ezeibunwor Wike, CON, the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu (SAN), the Executive Governor of Ondo State, represented by his Deputy Governor, Hon. Lucky Orimisan Ayedatiwa, His Excellency, Prince Dr Dapo Abiodun, the Executive Governor of Ogun State, represented by the Most Reverend Michael Fape, Archbishop of Lagos Province and Bishop of Remo, and Hon. Prof. Emmanuel Akinola Abayomi, the Honourable Commissioner for Health, Lagos State, all of whom were recipients of the Primatial awards for their courageous and outstanding leadership in our nation at this challenging times.

**THEME:** The theme, "Abiding in Christ: God's Panacea in an Unstable World," was taken from John 15: 1 - 8. The theme was exhaustively exposed through the Primatial Address, Bible Study and Sermons. The meeting calls on Christians to abide in God as the only panacea in an unstable world.

**INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN NIGERIA:** The Church expresses its sympathy to the communities affected by violence and insecurity in various dimensions, spreading all over the country. The Church laments the gruesome killing of one of its Clergy in the Diocese of Orlu, the Reverend Emeka Merenu. It calls on the Government at various levels to take actions that would restore confidence in its ability to protect lives and stem the tide of despair and hopelessness, urging them to ensure that the killers are identified and brought to book. The unabated kidnapping of school children in the country portends grave danger not only to the education of our children but also to the nation's development. The Church condemns the fragile state of insecurity in the nation due to religious extremism, terrorism, violence, attacks and killings all over the country; and urges the Government to urgently rise to address the situation.

**NEW WAVE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC:** The Standing Committee bemoans the unfortunate situation which the 'Corona Virus December 2019' (COVID-19) pandemic brought to the world. The Church appreciates the Government's efforts to vaccinate the people against this pandemic and urges that efforts should be taken to make it available in all parts of Nigeria. The Standing Committee therefore calls on everyone to take precautionary measures and observe all protocols of COVID-19 and its variants.

**EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION:** The Church calls on the Government to make efforts at addressing issues of youth unemployment. The Standing Committee, therefore, urges the government to make Nigeria attractive to Foreign Investors. It proposes a re-orientation in our educational system that will be relevant in the contemporary world. In this direction, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has decided to establish the Anglican University of Technology.

**ECONOMY AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS IN NIGERIA:** The Church notes that the regularity of industrial actions in Nigeria is alarming, adversely affecting the economic development of Nigeria. The Standing Committee recommends that all stakeholders involved in industrial relations should adopt Conciliation/Mediation and other Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. The Standing Committee urges the Government to endeavor to keep the agreements reached at the roundtable conference between them and various organisations.

**INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT:** The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government on diversification of the nation's transport system by the introduction of rail transport and the ongoing construction of the second Niger Bridge. It calls on the Government to expedite actions to complete the projects. However, the Church is worried over the durability of some of the roads constructed.

**EXTERNAL DEBTS:** The Church is concerned at the rate at which Government is borrowing, thereby increasing the national debts portfolio. The Standing Committee urges Government to exercise restraints in further borrowing so as not to jeopardise the future of all Nigerians.

**ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA:** The General elections will hold again in Nigeria in 2023. The meeting encourages all Christians to be involved in the electoral processes. The Church admonishes the National Assembly to revisit the issue of Direct-recording electronic (DRE) voting system. As the gubernatorial election approaches in Anambra State, the Standing Committee, enjoins all stakeholders to embrace equity, justice, fairness, and good conscience in all political permutations and engagements.

**AGITATIONS:** The Church observes that many are clamouring for self-determination because of varying forms of injustice in governance in the country. It therefore urges Government to initiate dialogues and inclusive governance to address the reasons for the agitations and stop gagging people with opposing views.

**HEALTHCARE:** The Standing Committee calls on the Government to urgently redress the lapses in the country's health system. It urges the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to as a matter of urgency, establish functional centers in the six geopolitical zones.

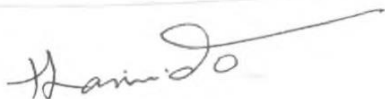
**WAR AGAINST DRUG ABUSE:** The Church observes with grave concern one of the monsters confronting our nation as drug abuse and addiction. Nigeria is fast becoming a major drug hub in the world. The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government for efforts of 'National Drug Law and Enforcement Agency' (NDLEA), in curbing drug trafficking. The Church has gone further in supporting the efforts of the Government by declaring a War Against Drug Abuse and Addiction through her initiative called 'Anglican Compassion and Development Initiative' (ACADI).

**AFGHANISTAN:** The Church stands with the Christian believers in Afghanistan, and calls on the international community to prevail on the powers in Afghanistan to respect the peoples' Fundamental Human Rights of Freedom of Religious Faith and Practices.

**CONCLUSION:** In line with the theme of the Standing Committee, it is necessary to die to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our LORD and the obedience to the Word. This will enable all Christians to abide in Christ in this unstable world and in our nation Nigeria that is passing through a very challenging time.



**The Venerable Dr Gershinen Paul Dajur,**  
General Secretary, Church of Nigeria.



**The Most Reverend Dr Ali Buba Lamido,**  
Dean, Church of Nigeria.



**The Most Reverend Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA (Ed),**  
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.



# CHURCH OF NIGERIA

## (Anglican Communion)

**THE MOST REV'D HENRY C. NDUKUBA**, MA, BD, MA (Ed.)  
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**THE PASTORAL LETTER ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HOSTED BY THE DIOCESE OF LAGOS, AT ARCHBISHOP ADEBOLA AND OLURANTI ADEMOWO RESOURCE CENTRE, FAITH PLAZA, BARIGA, LAGOS STATE, FROM MONDAY, 20TH TO FRIDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER 2021.**

Dearly beloved in Christ,

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Greetings to you from the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) hosted by the Diocese of Lagos, at Archbishop Adebola and Oluranti Ademowo Resource Centre, Faith Plaza (CMS Grammar School), Bariga, Lagos State, from Monday, 20th - Friday, 24th September 2021. The theme of the meeting was "Abiding in Christ: God's Panacea in an Unstable World" John 15: 1 – 8.

We were well received by the Diocese of Lagos (Anglican Communion) and the Province of Lagos. It was an opportunity for us to recognise some eminent Anglicans for outstanding performance with awards for courageous leadership in challenging situations in various states across the country. Meanwhile, the unstable state of our country is a matter of utmost concern to all and sundry. Banditry, kidnapping and insecurity now characterise the life of our society in the present day Nigeria, and it is painful that our dear country has found itself in this situation. Many are now fearful, exhibiting hopelessness and lack of confidence in the future of our country. Yet, at this meeting, we are strongly encouraged not to give up on our faith in Christ and the power of the Lord to deliver us and our country. The Standing Committee condemns in strong terms the murder of Reverend Emeka Merenu from Orlu Diocese, Owerri Province by unknown gunmen right inside the Church parsonage. The Standing committee commiserates with his family, the Diocese, the entire Church and others who have suffered the same faith.

Our joy is that abiding in Christ gives us hope to go through all these situations. It is important therefore that we hold on to Christ and abide in Him, who is the solution to our problems. If we remain in Him, He is able to keep us and make us

Page 1 of 3

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fruitful. Therefore, we encourage all our members to remain faithful and committed to Christ, knowing what He has called us to be, and remain firmly committed to the purpose of our calling as God's children. This demands that we focus on Christ and allow no distraction whatsoever, but look up to Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1 - 2).

The economic and socio-political problems of our time call for responsible leadership on the part of our political leaders. While we note with joy the improvement in our economic situation as recently announced by the Government, we are well aware that unemployment and inflation rates are still high. But we appeal to you all never to lose hope, but to serve with diligence wherever the LORD has placed you, while we continue to pray for more improvement in our economic situation. Hence, we encourage you to go on with your daily business in confidence knowing that our God will not abandon His children.

We are aware of the attempt of some people who are trying to use the name Anglican in the formation of their Churches. This is most unfortunate when we realise that it is intended to confuse our members; and also, bearing in mind that those who are doing this are people who are under discipline from our Church for their immoral conduct. We urge you not to be confused. There is only one Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) duly registered in Nigeria. Any one that tries to use the name Anglican deceptively is mischievous. Therefore, We ask you to be vigilant and not be confused. Please, continue to serve God faithfully; and be loyal to the leadership within the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in the Diocese where the LORD has placed you.

We are delighted to report that our mission in North America is growing and we are working on a plan to have it register as a non-profit charitable organisation in North America under the name 'Church of Nigeria North American Mission' (CONNAM). Please, continue to pray for this mission and all those who are working there, that, through them, the work of God, may continue to grow.

Here, at the home front, we have at this meeting launched an initiative called Anglican Compassion And Development Initiative (ACADI) to lead in our fight against drug abuse and addiction. Drug abuse has reached an alarming stage in our society and the havoc this is doing to our numerous youths is unimaginable. Please, join us to fight the scourge. Any drug that has not been medically prescribed for our use by certified health workers is not to be taken; and we should not indulge in using drugs for any selfish aim to attain what we may not be able to attain naturally.

Regrettably, COVID-19 pandemic has not totally disappeared from the world yet. It is disturbing that the Delta variant of it is manifesting even in our country. Our government is now making an effort to ensure that the people who live in Nigeria are vaccinated against this virus. While appealing to all to continue to keep the protocols, it is now important to encourage all our members to ensure that they are vaccinated, as a better way of ensuring protection against this virus.

Finally, we urge you to continue to serve God faithfully knowing that your labour in the LORD is not in vain. The bane of the Church of our time is a loud profession of the faith that is devoid of integrity and character. Much noise with no fruit. God wants us to shine as light and be the salt of our decaying society and the only way to do so is by abiding in Christ, obeying His Word, and serving God in worship and witnessing to His love. The fruit He desires of us is the fruit of repentance, Christ-like character, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruit and harvest of soul winning and mission. Our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ said, "Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. For the branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be unless you remain in Me.... When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to My Father" (John 15: 4, 8).

To the only Wise and Eternal God, be glory, dominion and excellence, now and forever. Amen.

Your brother and fellow-branch in the True Vine,



**The Most Reverend Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA (Ed),**  
*Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria*