

**DIOCESE OF EVO
(Anglican Communion)**

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/BISHOP'S CHARGE

**DELIVERED BY
THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP
BISHOP, DIOCESE OF EVO**

**ON
SATURDAY, 4TH AUGUST, 2018**

**AT THE
THIRD SESSION OF THE THIRD DIOCESAN SYNOD**

**HOLDING AT
CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,
ELELENWO DISTRICT,
(Evo South East Archdeaconry)**

BISHOP'S PICTURE

DIOCESAN ANTHEM AND SYNOD PRAYER

DIOCESAN ANTHEM

1. O praise our Lord Creator of Evo Diocese,
Come brethren, let us love, teach, and preach the gospel;
Lord, grant us grace and wisdom, the strength to spread Thy Word,
And teach us how to pray aright,
God bless our Diocese.
2. O God our Father, bind us in brotherhood and faith,
Thy will on Diocese of Evo be accomplished;
The gains of perfection is our desire, Lord we pray,
To know Thee more and more O Lord,
God bless our Diocese.

SYNOD PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, who by the washing of water and the word has made us members of the mystical body of Your dear Son Jesus Christ Who is the Head of Your Church on earth; be present with us as we gather in His name and hear us as we lift up our hearts to You in this annual Synod meeting of the Church in Evo to seek Your blessing upon our work in this Diocese.

Pour Your Holy Spirit upon us to direct and guide us in our worship, prayer, teaching of Your word and in our concerns and deliberations for the rapid growth and advancement of Your church here and throughout the world.

In this Synod, may we be renewed and enabled to both know and do Your will, and with zeal go forth as faithful labourers into Your harvest to accomplish the work that lies before us as did Your Church of old.

We beseech You, O God to grant us the grace to continue steadfastly even after this synod in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers; that united in brotherly love one to another we may with one mind and one mouth glorify you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

GREETINGS AND PROTOCOLS

*“To Him who sits on the throne
and unto the Lamb; Be blessing
and glory and honour and
power forever-Amen.”*

Your Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, Chief Barr. Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike, CON, GSSRS,

Your graces, the Archbishops and my Lords, the Bishops here present or represented;

My Lord, The Bishop of the Diocese of Kubwa, The Rt. Rev. Duke Akamisoko, our main guest speaker;

My Lord, The Bishop of Enugu North, The Rt. Rev. Sosthenes Eze, Synod Bible Study Leader and also speaker,

Other guest and local speakers,

Our Guests of Honour,

Members of the National, State Assemblies and judicial officers here present or represented,

The Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Solomon Abel Eke and members of your Executive Council,

Other Government functionaries and captains of industry,

The Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum S. Amadi & all other Diocesan Legal Officers,

The President of the Diocesan Mothers' Union & Women's Guild, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP (Mama Evo),

Venerable Archdeacons and their wives,

Invited heads of churches in Rivers State here present or represented,

Other clergymen and their wives,

Highly respected Royal Fathers, Community Chiefs and Elders here present,

Members of the Evo Diocesan Council of Knights and their Ladies (Our Diocesan Chief Launcher)

Church Teachers, Lay Readers and your spouses;

Distinguished nominees of the Bishop to this Synod;

Other distinguished Synod delegates;

Members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees;

Our Diocesan men, women and youths;
Members of the fourth estate of the realm;
Our dear ladies and gentlemen;

With a heart full of gratitude to God, we welcome every one of you to this **Third Session of the Third Synod** of our Diocese of Evo holding here in the Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District, the headquarters of Evo South East Archdeaconry, hosts of this year's synod.

We are grateful to you for finding time out of your very busy schedules to attend this year's Synod either as delegates, observers, invited guests or their representatives or friends of the Diocese and more especially for your highly esteemed presence at this presentation of our Synod Address/Charge. We confess that your coming has been a great encouragement to us and so we say thank you for coming.

OUR SYNOD HOST AND VENUE

HISTORY OF EVO SOUTH-EAST ARCHDEACONRY

(OUR SYNOD HOST)

At the inception of our Diocese in 2009, soon after the inauguration of the Diocese and our enthronement as Bishop, we convened a One-Day Synod on Thursday, 6th August, 2009. Part of the major events of that day was the proposal for the creation of the **EVO SOUTH-EAST ARCHDEACONRY** with headquarters at Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo along the East West Port Harcourt/Elеме road alongside other new administrative blocs. Church of The Holy Spirit at the time of inauguration of Evo Diocese served as the headquarters of the Port Harcourt East Archdeaconry under the Diocese of Niger Delta North with churches spread across the old and the new Dioceses.

At the onset, Churches of the new Evo South East Archdeaconry covered such areas as Iriebe, Atali and Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi with the headquarters church along the East West road axis of Elelenwo.

However, in furtherance of the evangelistic and missionary goals of the Diocese of Evo, we twice (on Thursday, 20th September, 2012 at Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District, and on Friday, 28th December, 2012 at St. Philip's Church, Oro-igwe District) announced our intention to create a new Missionary Archdeaconry out of Evo South East Archdeaconry as it was then constituted.

Our proposal was welcomed and approved by the Diocesan Board at its emergency sitting on Monday, 18th February, 2013. Consequently, all churches of the Archdeaconry from Atali and Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi and two others from Eliminigwe-Elelenwo and Rumuogba were carved out to form the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry which was subsequently inaugurated on Sunday, St. Matthias' Day, 24th February, 2013 with headquarters at St. Matthias' Church, Atali District.

Following this development, only the following churches were left to continue as Evo South East Archdeaconry:

1. Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District(Archdeaconry Headquarters)
2. St. James Anglican Church, Iriebe Parish – planted in the late 1930s and christened on 15th June, 1940
3. Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish – planted in 1999 through the efforts of a few brethren from the old St. Andrew's Church, Mile 1, Diobu, Port Harcourt; it moved to its present site in May, 2008.
4. Anglican Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe – planted in early 2007 by St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery and christened on 13th August same year by The Rt. (Now Most) Rev. Dr. I. C. O. Kattey, JP, Bishop of Niger Delta North Diocese. It was Inaugurated Parish on 30th June, 2010 by the Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP, Bishop of Evo.
5. Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo, Iriebe – planted on 19th February, 2006 at Umuebulu-2 within the Diocese of Etche under the name *Greater Faith Anglican Church*. It was later renamed Emmanuel Anglican Church on 26th October, 2008 by the Rt. Rev. I.C.O. Kattey, JP.

It moved from Umuebulu-2 to Okporo-Iriebe, (Diocese of Evo) on 2nd April, 2011. It is now an Archdeaconry church under the office of the Archdeacon.

6. True Vine Anglican Church, Timber Shade, Iriebe – planted on 4th September, 2011 by the Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Board in partnership with Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish which from then became the mother-church.
7. Redeemers Cross Anglican Church, T.A.P, Elelenwo New layout – planted Sunday, 4th December, 2011 by Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District and christened by us on Sunday, 4th April, 2012.
8. Jericho Inn Anglican Church, Pre-eminence Hotel, Elelenwo – planted on Sunday 12th February, 2012 by Evo South East Archdeaconry and christened by us on Septuagesima Sunday, 27th January, 2013.

These other three Churches were later planted within the Archdeaconry:

9. New Life Anglican Church, Rumuodani, Elelenwo – planted by Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District on Sunday, 7th June, 2015 and christened on Sunday, 2nd July, 2017.
10. New Jerusalem Anglican Church, Boskel Road, Elelenwo – planted on Sunday, 15th May, 2016 by Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District and christened on Sunday, 2nd July, 2017
11. Anglican Worship Centre, Inter lock Estate, Iriebe – planted on Sunday, 24th September, 2017 by Holy Ghost Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish.

List of Archdeacons from inception to date:

- Ven. Sunday Opara - 2009 to 2010
- Ven. Dr. F.N Akah, JP - 2011 to 2013
- Ven. Chidi S. Worgu - 2014 to date

History of The Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District (Our Synod Venue)

1. **Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District** is the Headquarters of Evo South-East Archdeaconry and the venue of this Synod. The vision concerning **Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo** was conceived by the then Vicar of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Nkpogu Deanery, The Rev. Canon Chidi Oparaojiaku (now Rt. Rev.). The inaugural service took place on Sunday, 4th February, 2001 at the Dining Hall of the Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo. It was attended by eight families.

The church moved from ACMGS Elelenwo to No. 14 Eleme Road on Sunday 11th March, 2001. This new site was a free lease from Mr. Jawachi Uwandu.

The vision of the Church was focused on “**RED**” – **Revival, Evangelism and Discipleship**.

A running Committee was set up to see to the day-to-day administration of the church. Evangelist Innocent Nwokoro (now Henry) was appointed to oversee the Running Committee and the young Church. The running committee was in

place for two years and three months and handed over to the Ven. Eugene Nicholas as the Church was made an Archdeaconry headquarters of Diocesan Churches in 2003.

Challenges of Accommodation

The accommodation challenge was two-fold: The first was accommodation for the new Ministers. Mr Augustine Igwegbe graciously rented his duplex to the Church to meet that challenge. The second which was securing a permanent worship centre. A Land Acquisition Committee was set up and Seven (7) plots of land were acquired from the Wodi family of Elelenwo for the permanent site with the help of His Royal Highness (late) Eze G. B. Wodi, the Eze Elelenwo Eto of Elelenwo for N3.5m.

- Barr. Augustine Bomor (of blessed memory) prepared the legal papers free of charge
- Surv. Gaius Assor handled the survey work free of charge
- Sir Obiajulu Igwenma drew the building plan of the Church Auditorium free of charge

A Building Project Fund-Raising Committee was set up to raise funds for the development of the permanent site with Rowland Okolo as Chairman. The first Fund-Raising held on Sunday, 23rd June, 2002.

Permanent Site and Building of Church Auditorium

The Ven. Eugene Nicholas kick-started the work on the Church auditorium at its permanent site while the Ven. Gabriel Omoleye moved the Church from the old site to the permanent site. However, it is on record that a greater part of the work on the permanent site was done by the Ven. Sunday Opara and his team of Pastors.

In July, 2009, the Church became one of the Churches that constituted the new Diocese of Evo under our episcopacy. Later on, at a one-day Synod on 6th August, 2009, the Church was pronounced the Archdeaconry headquarters of Evo South-East Archdeaconry. On Sunday, 29th November, 2009, we inaugurated the Evo South East Archdeaconry with Church of The Holy Spirit as the headquarters.

In January 2011, The Rev. Canon Ikechukwu Godwin Anene (Now Ven. Dr.) took over as the Vicar with Ven. Fyneface Akah, JP, as the Archdeacon of Evo South-East Archdeaconry. The completion and dedication of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo Church Auditorium was done under the leadership of The Rev. Canon Ikechukwu Godwin Anene on Saturday, 17th November, 2012.

Building of Vicarage and residence for the Clergy and other Church workers

Having overcome the challenge of securing a permanent site, built and dedicated the Church Auditorium and with the onset of the Administration of the Ven. Chidi S. Worgu in 2014, the Church proceeded to face the challenge of

building a Vicarage and Permanent place of residence for the Clergy and other Church Workers.

- On 20th April, 2014 (Easter Sunday), We, the Bishop of the Diocese of Eyo, Rt. Rev, Innocent Uchechukwu Ordu, JP, laid the foundation for a new Vicarage Complex.
- By 29th December, 2014, history was made with the termination of the “**Rent Regime**” as the first set of Church workers led by the Curate, The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun packed into the ground floor of the new Vicarage building.
- By 11th February, 2018, we were called on again to dedicate the now completed Massive Vicarage Building Complex, leading to the moving in of the Vicar/Archdeacon, The Ven. Chidi S. Worgu. To God be the glory.

Missionary and Evangelistic Exploits of the Church

From the onset, the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo has been missionary-oriented and did a lot in the area of soul-winning and discipleship. Below is a list of churches either planted by the church or received from higher Diocesan authorities for their nurture:

- Planted the Anglican Missionary Church at Ada George Road,
- Assigned Emmanuel Anglican Church, Trailer Park Onne; Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo faithfully paid the priests of this station, bought land for the building of its permanent site and did a lot to sustain the work there.
- We assigned the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi to the church to replicate its missionary work as done in other places. Regrettably, this charge was not carried out and we were left with no other option than to re-assign this station church to Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo and the Lay Readers Association of the Diocese. Till date, the leadership of the Church of the Holy Spirit has never bothered to find out from us the reason for our taking the Holy City church from them.
- Planted The Redeemer’s Cross Anglican Church, TAP, Elelenwo New layout,
- Planted the New life Anglican Church, Rumuodani, Elelenwo, and also the New Jerusalem Anglican Church, Boskel Road, Elelenwo.

Clergy workers since inception of the Church

1. Ven. Eugene Nicholas	-	Vicar (2003-
2. Rev. Olungwe Olungwe	-	Curate(2003-
3. Rt. Rev. (Now Most Rev. Dr.) I.C.O Kattey	-	Vicar (2005 -
4. Ven. Gabriel Omoleye	-	Vicar (2006 -
5. Rev. (Now Ven.) Charles Mordi	-	Curate(2006-
6. Ven. Sunday Opara	-	Vicar(2008 -2010)
7. Rev. (Now Canon) Roland Benjamin	-	Curate(2008-
		2009)

8. Rev. C.J. Kemakolam	-	Priest	(2006-2008)
9. Rev. Confidence Gura	-	Curate	(2009)
10. Re. Reginald Chinweze	-	Priest	(2009)
11. Rev. Canon B.C. Eke	-	Curate	(2010)
12. Rev. Charles Ibeh	-	Priest	(2010-2012)
13. Rev. Canon (Now Ven. Dr) Ike Anene	-	Vicar	(2010-2013)
14. Rev. (Now Canon) Ugochukwu Nwahaghi	-	Curate	(2012-2013)
15. Ven. Chidi S. Worgu	-	Vicar	(2014 till date)
16. Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun	-	Curate	(2014-2016)
17. Rev. John Nkuene	-	Curate	(2016-2018)
18. Rev. (Now Canon) Ahamefula Olluor	-	Curate	(2018 till date)

OUR SYNOD SPEAKERS

THE RT. REV. DR. DUKE AKAMISOKO

The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Duke T. Akamisoko was born at Gboloko, Kogi State on the 6th of March 1964. He attended the following schools between 1974 and 1999: Abon Gari Primary School Kaduna; Teachers College, Dustin-ma, Katsina; Federal College of Education, Katsina, Bishop Crowther College of Theology, Okene; University of Nigeria, Nsukka; and Theological College of Northern Nigeria Bukuru/University of Jos. He also holds a Doctorate Degree from the prestigious London School of Graduate Studies, United Kingdom.

His education from primary to Tertiary level spanned a period of 25 years with the following qualifications: FSLC; Teacher Grade II, NCE; Dip. Th.; BA Religion/Education; M.Th., Church History and Doctorate Degree. He was ordained Deacon in June 1991 and Priesthood in December 1991. He was preferred Canon in August 1997 and Archdeacon in October 2001. He was Teacher/Chaplain of Crowther Memorial College, Lokoja, from 1989-1996; Vicar of St. Barnabas Ecewu, Kogi State (1991-1992) and Vicar, Crowther Memorial Church, Lokoja (1992-1997), and Synod Secretary, Diocese of Lokoja (1994-1997).

He worked with the Civil Service from 1989-1996 and resigned voluntarily to join full time Gospel ministry in 1996. He was released to Diocese of Kebbi in 1997.

He served as Canon Residentiary of St. Luke's Cathedral, Birnin Kebbi (1997-2001) and Archdeacon of the same Cathedral, 2001 to September 2002. Bishop Duke served as Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Kebbi State from 2000-2002.

Again in 2002 he was released from Diocese of Kebbi to Church of Nigeria Headquarters, Abuja, as Director of Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Dialogue, a position he occupied until he was elected Bishop of Zonkwa Missionary Diocese in January 2005. In 1995 and 2005 he travelled to Jerusalem on Holy Pilgrimage and in 2008 was in Jerusalem for three weeks intensive course (majoring on Agriculture, Security, Religion & Politics of Israel).

While in Diocese of Abuja, he served in the following churches: Christ Church, Idu-Karmo (2002-2004) and All Saints' Church, Wuse, 2004 until election as Bishop of Diocese Zonkwa.

He was elected Bishop by translation for the Diocese of Kubwa on the 6th January 2009 at St. Peter's Chapel Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. He was the National Treasurer of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) 2013-2016. Among his many publications are: *Dual Nature of Jesus; Thesis Essays in Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England, Teacher Effectiveness in the use of instructional materials in the Religious Knowledge in Secondary School in Bassa LGA; Samuel Ajayi Crowther: His work in Lokoja Area* (2002), *Unveiling The thirty Nine Articles of Faith* (2011).

He is married to Mrs. Sarah Akamisoko and the marriage is blessed with three children: Sokowonci Duke Jnr. Sokolauji Timothy Jnr. and Sokojinwon Mary - two boys and one girl.

Bishop Duke has been speaking to us on our Synod theme since yesterday, Friday, 3rd August and will still be ministering to us tomorrow, Sunday at the early morning Eucharistic and general Synod concluding/thanksgiving Services here at the church of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Akamisoko is a very busy man and we regard his coming to speak at this synod as a huge sacrifice on his part. We thank him immensely for honouring our invitation and pray that God continues to bless him and the whole Akamisoko family and the Diocese of Kubwa under his charge.

THE RT. REV. ENGR. SOSTHENES EZE

Bishop Sosthenes Ikechukwu Eze is an Electrical Engineer by profession with over three decades of engineering practice in various organisations in Enugu, Calabar and Port Harcourt. He worked in Shell Petroleum Development Company, Port Harcourt from where he resigned in 2005 as Senior Contract Project Engineer for full time ministry.

Bishop Eze has a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering, Diploma in Theology, Masters Degrees in Divinity and Arts in Christian Religious Studies. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Religious Studies from Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta.

While he was in Niger Delta and Niger Delta North, he served in various capacities as Bishop's Administrative Assistant, Chairman of Diocesan Revival Conferences and Crusades, Chaplain to the Prayer and Sunday School Ministries. He also served in New Covenant Church, Oroabali Parish, Nkpogu and Rumuomasi Deaneries and New Generation Church, Mile 3, Diobu, Port Harcourt as Priest.

Bishop Eze attended Haggai Institute, Singapore in September, 1992 for Advanced Christian Leadership Training. On his return, he established The Evangelism and Missions International Institute in Port Harcourt in October, 1993. The Institute has trained over 5,000 people to date. He has also attended several other Leadership trainings in Nigeria and Kenya, and ministered in various African Countries like Cameroun, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, United States and the United Kingdom.

He was the Chairman, Haggai Institute Alumni Association, Port Harcourt Chapter from 2005 to 2007. During this time, he was able to organize two sessions of leadership trainings before he was elected and consecrated Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Enugu North in 2007.

He is currently the Chairman/Coordinator of Church of Nigeria Prayer Convocation from 1995 till date.

By the grace of God, he operates in the teaching and prophetic ministry of the Church. He has passion for developing Leaders and is currently running Leadership Development Seminars for leaders in the market place across Africa. He is widely travelled both within and outside the nation and has great passion for Anglican Revival.

Bishop Eze is married to Faith Chukwunenye Eze, a Chemist by profession and a Counsellor and Bible Teacher by ministry. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry, Masters Degrees in Divinity and Art in Christian Religious Studies from Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Religious and Cultural Studies in University of Nigeria, Nsukka

They are blessed with four lovely children and both couples are labouring together from the Diocese of Enugu North as their base.

We consider the acceptance of The Rt. Rev. Sosthenes Eze to come and minister in this synod as equally a huge sacrifice. Just fresh from his Diocesan synod which ended last week, Bishop Eze was still able to honour our invitation not minding the enormous stress it would bring upon him. He has led our Bible study sessions and also ministered at the opening service of this synod on Wednesday, 1st of August. We sincerely appreciate him and pray for God's continual blessing upon his family and ministry.

REV. DR. STEVE OGAN

Dr. Steve Ogan is a multi-talented and versatile person. His passion is to develop people to fulfill their primary assignments in life. His vision is to prepare people for the prepared place of their destinies through the written and the spoken word.

He attended Kitwe Primary School in Zambia and the Township School in Port-Harcourt. He also attended the Okrika Grammar School, where he served as the Library Prefect.

Steve Ogan believes that reading books is an indispensable part of leading men. This informs his habit and hobby of reading and writing daily. He strongly believes that a book a day drives ignorance away.

Dr. Steve Ogan studied History at the University of Port Harcourt between 1977-1981. He went on to do a Graduate Programme at the University of Ibadan, where he earned a Master of Arts in 1983 and a Ph.D in Legal History in 1989. He has written many books which are best sellers. His Master's Degree thesis earned him the Chief Salubi Prize in History at the University of Ibadan. His Ph.D thesis was on the subject of the foundations of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Although he is not a Lawyer, he speaks to Lawyers and Judges at their leadership conferences because of his skill in multi-disciplinary approach to intellectual reflection.

On November 8, 2004, Dr. Steve Ogan was given a Bestsellers Award by the Uzima Publishers in Nairobi, Kenya for two of his books ***How To Beat Your Husband*** and ***How to Beat Your Wife***. Since then, five other titles have entered into Uzima's 20 Bestselling List. In 2006, Dr. Ogan was honored as the First Prolific Writer and Public Speaker in the 1977 Pioneering Class of the University of Port Harcourt.

"How to Beat Your Husband" has remained Uzima's Number 1 bestselling book for several years now. He has written more than a 150 books, many of which are published in Nigeria, East Africa, the United Kingdom, India and Malaysia. Dr. Steve Ogan is a much sought after conference speaker and marriage counselor. He majors in the areas of leadership, intercession, marriage and family life. He has spoken at leadership conferences of the Medical and Legal communities in Uganda. He has also given lectures at the Ugandan Parliament and at the University of Makerere, Uganda. He is one of the resource persons in the Sundulous African Leaders Training Programme under the Intercessors for Africa, with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr. Ogan serves as a teacher and trainer for governmental and corporate institutions. He is a trustee of several boards, which include, Intercessors for Africa and University of Agriculture Chapel, Umudike, Abia State, the Rainbow

Book Club which recently won, on behalf of the Rivers State Government, the Port Harcourt World Book Project of UNESCO in 2014. He is passionate about the ethical development of people and places, particularly Nigeria and Nigerians.

He is married to Atim Sofiri Ogan, and they have five biological sons and many adopted children and grandchildren.

Dr. Ogan is a friend of this Diocese and has always honoured our invitations. He ministered at the Second Session of this Synod last year. Yesterday, Friday, 3rd August, he spoke to us a sub-topic of our synod theme: **“The Church as a Constantly Growing Community.”** We were greatly enlightened by his in-depth knowledge and exposition of the topic. We sincerely appreciate him for his love for our Diocese and pray God to always respond to his personal, family and ministry needs.

PASTOR AKINWALE AKINYANMI

Wale Akinyanmi is a Pastor, an Entrepreneur, a Communicator and a staunch promoter of Economic Empowerment and Sustainability in Africa. In the entrepreneurship development terms, his appellation is The STEAM – Start-up, Trainer, Enterprise Advisor and Mentor.

Born to Chief Amos Akinbolaji Akinyanmi and High Chief Amuwa Akinyanmi of Ile-Oluji, Ondo State Nigeria on 18th September, 1958, Wale is founder and International Coordinator of **SPEED Africa - Rwanda** and Project Coordinator, **SPEED Africa - Nigeria**, both Pan-African projects for advancing economic empowerment in Africa through development of Christian Entrepreneurship. The coinage **SPEED Africa** is derived from - **Strategic Pillars for Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development of Africa** (and Africans in Diaspora).

SPEED AFRICA is bridging critical gaps in governments’ efforts at addressing wealth creation by using the private sector as the engine for sustainable growth in the continent. The project emerged between 2014 and 2016, while on a self-sponsored mission work in Rwanda. He was led to offer entrepreneurial services to the post-genocide country with its over 70% youth population.

He reached the country's teeming youth population through structured meetings, trainings and public-speaking engagements. **SPEED Africa** progressed from its foundational base in Kigali, Rwanda, East Africa and extended its frontiers presently to Nigeria.

Wale, in furtherance of his vocation, has been a Consultant on Enterprise Facilitation and Investment Promotion to several Private and Public Enterprises in Nigeria from 2004 to date.

Wale was the Guest Speaker at the Rwanda Youth National Convention (Youth Konnekt 2014) with close to 3,500 young people in attendance. Since he initiated the GEMS – Graduate Entrepreneurship Mobilization Summit in February 2007, he has been rated to have trained well over 2000 young persons in self-development and individual opportunities.

He is also rated a leading resource in Entrepreneurship Education in Africa having promoted, facilitated and pioneered Entrepreneurship learning within a decade in Nigerian tertiary institutions which include: Federal University of Technology, Akure (Centre for Entrepreneurship, Gender, Science and Technology – FUTA-CEGIST) as well as Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD). He had also facilitated with Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Kings University Ode-omu and was Guest Faculty with Covenant University, Otta, Nigeria.

Wale Akinyanmi is an alumnus of Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership, Hawaii, USA and a Faculty of Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership (Nigeria); Institute of Strategic Management of Nigeria; Nigeria Institute of Journalism, Lagos; and the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

His spectrum of specialization and competencies are wide but complementary, starting from his initial 11-year media background in Broadcast Journalism, Media Productions and Management, Public Relations, Writing and Publishing.

Wale's exploits in Public Service include a stint as Special Assistant (Public Relations and Corporate Affairs) to the government of late Chief Adebayo Adefarati of Ondo State between 2000 and 2003 and currently, his membership of the Ondo State Christian Welfare Board.

Ordained as a Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God in 2000, Wale pioneered and pastured Churches but his conviction for Christian Entrepreneurship as a calling and urgent need of Christian Entrepreneurship in the church in these times prompted him to opt for the Youth Development Ministry alongside Enterprise Development.

His passion for youth development and raising civic entrepreneurs for the renaissance and economic emergence of Africa has impacted thousands of youths from different parts of the world, many of whom he mentors today with inspiring results. He promotes individual opportunities, global and 21st Century skills development and all that is required to make the young African become a reckonable global icon.

We met Pastor Wale Akinyanmi at the last West Africa Round Table on Christian Education organized by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) held at Redemption Camp, Ogun State where he ministered on the subject of entrepreneurship. We invited him to take a slot in this synod and address us on how as individual Christians, parish churches and Diocese, we can engage in such godly entrepreneurship schemes that will help us provide for ourselves and support the work of God. We thank him for honouring our invitation to this synod and pray also for him that God would greatly prosper his ministry, family and other life's endeavours.

Ladies and gentlemen, we welcome Wale Akinyanmi . . . a pastor, an entrepreneurial trainer, a mentor, a disciple and discipler, an author, a media strategist, a revolutionary in national transformation and an unrelenting change maker.

Panel of Discussants

We also thank the following members of our Diocese who constituted the panel of discussants on the topic “**Growing our Local Churches from within through the Home Fellowship/Prayer Groups, Welfare and other ministries of the Church**”:

- Barr. Othuke Okpighe who spoke on Home Fellowship ministry,
- The Ven. Chidi S. Worgu who spoke on Prayer Groups
- The Ven. Emmanuel Anyasodo who spoke on Activity groups and other ministries, and
- Dr. Mrs. Blessing Onyegeme-Okerenta who spoke on Welfare and other Social actions of the Church

OUR SYNOD THEME

**“TOWARDS WHOLESOME CHURCH GROWTH:
Lessons from the early church” (Acts 2:41-47)**

Introduction:

A key finding of a recent online report by foreign researchers is that NIGERIA HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PASTORS WORLDWIDE! The corollary of this finding is that Nigeria should automatically have a very high, if not the highest number of churches too. Never in any century have we witnessed such an explosion in the number of churches and congregations in Nigeria today. In fact, one needs to just tune in to the media, especially the electronic media, for just a couple of minutes, to come face to face with the plethora of churches, church programmes and pastors! One can conclude straight away that there is unprecedented growth in Christendom currently!

In the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, the last decade and even the one before it, has witnessed a spike in the growth and number of new dioceses and of course, attendant upon this, is a growth in the number of bishops in the Communion. Here in Evo, from our creation till date, there has been an increase in the number of our churches as well as in the number of clergy and congregations. Several new physical structures and church paraphernalia have been put in place. We certainly must be growing, not so?

Let's pause one minute to ask: does the picture above constitute church growth? Most people consider church growth simply as numerical growth, and for good reasons. Most of the time, numbers indicate success, and the more you have, the more to whom you are ministering. Nevertheless, is that the main reason for growth? A focus on numerical, infrastructural and financial growth is important but these are not the only aspects of church growth.

If your primary emphasis is on maintaining our buildings, or on getting more people involved, or on money, this is sure evidence that the focus is on survival and not growth. Do the people who pay for the buildings, or who provide the money in the church have a personal relationship with Jesus? The primary goals in church growth are the spiritual growth of the congregation, and growing in the Lord. When this is taking place, the numbers usually follow, because people are following the Lord and reaching out.

Most pastors today wrongly attribute the success of their churches and efforts to numbers. Consequent upon this, most of them believe that if their congregations are not large and do not have magnificent structures to worship in, then the church is not growing! But the early church was meeting in homes and houses! Today church growth has been equated with large attendances, presence of modern day technology, massive financial outlay, sprawling infrastructure, etc. One may ask: but do these indices not indicate growth? Can

we honestly claim that the church is not growing in the face of all these advancements in our churches today? To answer this question, let us pose another question: what is more important in a car: the engine or the body? Can we have the engine without the body or the body without the engine? To move, the car needs both. And to grow, the church must strike a balance, because a growth that is not encompassing is not growth. So, is our church growing? Let us look at the early church.

Scriptural source of theme:

The inspiration for our Synod theme this year came to us from verses 41-47 of the second chapter of the Book of Acts of the Apostles:

41 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is an eyewitness account of the Early Church, from Christ's death until about A.D. 60. It contains a key historical record of what the Early Church believed and practised within the first 30 years of its emergence. It is of great value to us because it provides the bridge that ties the church in its beginning with each succeeding age.

Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke, the Physician and travelling companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20: 15-21; 18; Col.4:14). It was the second book, written as a follow up to his first – the Gospel according to Luke (Acts

1:1). He wrote them to Theophilus so he would have assurance in the things he had been taught about Jesus Christ and be strengthened in his faith (Luke 1:4).

As we study the book we shall learn about:

The history of the growth and development of Christianity in its formative years: how the church was begun, maintained and spread by the Holy Spirit working through the early disciples (1:8); how the things that Jesus taught and did in the gospels were continued through the preaching and teachings of the apostles; the principles for missionary work, church-planting, growth and administration and how to respond to persecutions and defend the gospel in the face of stern oppositions.

Chapter Two records the beginning of the Church when God sent His Spirit to 120 followers of Jesus of Nazareth who were waiting in prayer at the Upper Room in Jerusalem. Verses 41-47 of this chapter contain one of the most useful and descriptive passages in discovering God's pattern for the Church. The examples presented to us in these verses convey to us how the first congregation grew.

Definitions:

1. "Towards"

This means running to achieve or realise something we feel persuaded about as the proper standard or correct purpose of a matter. This leads us to a place of expectation or expected end of a matter.

2. "Wholesome"

The word "wholesome" comes from the Old English '*hal*' meaning "healthy." It can therefore be further defined among other things as something "good for, conducive to or characteristic of physical, emotional or moral well-being."

3. "Church"

The Bible gives a broad definition of the word "Church" as the "Body of Christ." The Greek word, "*ekklesia*" which is translated "church" literally means "the called out ones." It was used among the Greeks as a body of citizens gathered to discuss the affairs of believers (Acts 19:39). In the

Septuagint, it is used to designate the gathering of Israel summoned for any definite purpose. It applies to the whole community or company of the redeemed believers in and followers of Jesus Christ (that is, Christians; Acts 11:26) of which He said “I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18).

4. “Growth”

This speaks of increase, usually in terms of size, quantity and quality.

5. “Church Growth”

Simply put, the term church growth is the development of the church such that she increases in number, in the knowledge and grace of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18) and in her influence within the society.

6. “The Early Church”

This refers to the period from the origins of Christianity in the 1st Century A.D to the First Council of Nicaea in 325. It refers to the earliest believers in and followers of Jesus Christ who essentially were all ethnically Jewish or Jewish proselytes and initially started in Jerusalem. Its leaders included Peter, James, the brother of Jesus, and John the Apostle. Paul was to later join them after his conversion.

The Church is both an organism and an organisation and subsequent upon this, it definitely needs growth. This growth, its nature and how it is achieved, is at the heart of God. He desires not just growth but a wholesome one as shown in our text. God is desirous to see a community of those who believe in Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, that is daily growing in number, in spiritual and moral strength, in grace and knowledge such that members are certain of their places in heaven after their earthly pilgrimage. He further desires to see local churches that are spirit-driven in all their endeavours such that they are well able in the power of that same Spirit, to become fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, subdue it and exercise both physical and spiritual influence, dominion and authority on earth (Gen. 1:28); beginning from their places of operations.

The early Christians wielded enormous influence in their time to the extent that they were accused of “turning the world upside down.”

“...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6).

This is wholesome church growth. They understood properly all that God expected of them and equally devoted themselves to doing them.

Purpose of the theme

In addressing this theme therefore, we seek to x-ray the Biblical patterns that abound in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles which members of the Early Church exemplified and which gave rise to their spiritual and numerical increase. We intend furthermore, to explore the values modelled by both her leaders and congregants that ought to drive our present day local churches, particularly here in Evo and the practical results that those values ought to show.

The journey of growth in the Early Church

The journey to the worldwide mission and growth of the early church began with the Lord Jesus Christ charging His disciples at the end of His earthly mission with the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8) before His ascension into heaven. They were however, not to proceed with it until they had waited for and actually been endued with power from on high, that is, the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).

This promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the disciples experienced a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and cloven tongues like as of fire which came resting on every one of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in diverse tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. This signalled the birth of the New Testament Church. Following this outpouring and the reaction of the crowd that gathered at the scene of the visitation in Jerusalem, was Peter's first message which led to the conversion and addition of 3,000 persons that gladly received the word to the already existing band of 120 believers in Christ.

Luke recounts several other accessions that followed the Pentecost day harvest of souls. In Acts 4:4, the number of members of the young church rose to 5,000

believers. The growth continued steadily and in Chapter 5:14, he referred to their number as “multitudes both of men and women.” In Chapter 6:7, it is reported that the number of the disciples multiplied greatly and even priests joined the band of growing followers particularly as the word of God increased.

The ministry of the Apostles was so impactful that soon the infant church spread out of Jerusalem - the initial centre of its operations - to other fields, beginning with the city of Antioch in Syria where Luke again reports that the “...hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord” (Acts 11:24). The mandate handed down to the Apostles by the Lord was for them to take the gospel to all the world (Matt. 28: 18-20; Acts 1:8). However, they appeared to have been limiting themselves only to the city of Jerusalem. And so the Lord had to permit both the political and religious authorities of the day to visit them with severe persecutions which forced many of the disciples to flee to other cities and later nations, carrying with them the message of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ (Acts 11: 19-21). This marked the beginning of their foreign mission efforts. An example is Philip who relocated to Samaria where the Lord opened unto him a great door of ministry. Peter and John were to visit him there later and their ministry brought great joy to many in that city (Acts 8:5-25).

Persecutions can therefore be a tool allowed sometimes by God to wake up His underperforming church and also promote its rapid growth and expansion only if we respond to it with the right attitude (Acts 8:28). We pray that the current waves of persecution of Christians in Nigeria and other parts of the world would lead to the further strengthening, growth and enlargement of the Kingdom of God in all the affected places.

The conversion of Paul who became the great missionary and the leading figure in the church during this period (Acts 9:1-30) contributed greatly to the growth of the church. Under his preaching “a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed” (Acts 14:1; 17:4) and the churches increased in number daily (Acts 16:5); and the converts were baptized (18:8), that is, initiated into the community of believers in Christ.

In all these reported cases of growth, we are careful to note the human influence and the divine. Firstly, the initial apostles/disciples and those that emerged after, were faithful to their calling as ministers and leaders in the Lord's vineyard. Their faithful pastoral care of the new converts under the power of the Holy Spirit brought about the daily additions of persons drawn into the infant Church by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47).

Luke, the writer of Acts of the Apostles, outlined a number of characteristics of the early church and the extent of their devotion which largely influenced their wholesome growth:

1. The Early Church was born out of the **descent and influence of the Holy Spirit** upon the waiting believers. Subsequently, that early church operated under that influence. The leaders and the people were always under the fullness, control and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 11:12; 13:4; Eph. 5:18).
2. The leadership of the church understood their calling very well and stuck themselves faithfully to it. They **devoted themselves to the ministry of prayer and the word of the Lord** (Acts 6:4). This means that they separated themselves from every distraction around them in order to spend quality time in God's presence to receive useful messages that would enhance the spiritual growth of their flock. To address these "distractions", they prayerfully raised other Spirit-filled, wise men with honest report from the flock to attend to the ministry of "serving tables." And so, theirs was a focused leadership (Acts 6:2-6).
3. **The members devoted themselves to the Apostles' Teaching:** The early church was founded on the testimony of the apostles who stayed, walked, felt and ate with Jesus and witnessed His life and ministry, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension back to heaven. These apostles were ever prepared to repeat to the people the teachings of Jesus in obedience to their Master's command (Matt. 28:20) as well as the meaning of his death and resurrection. Having been so blessed with such leaders (ministers) who were totally devoted to the ministry of the Word-Acts 6:4, not subletting or shying away from it, the new believers in return enthusiastically devoted themselves to the doctrines (teachings)

of the apostles. They willingly set out to learn all about their faith. A faith that is not understood will be continuously shaky and its foundations, poor. The church grew under the apostles because young converts to the faith were not left to themselves. The older and more mature believers laboured hard to nurture, disciple and mentor them in the faith of Christ (Acts 11:22-30). Suffice it to say here that this is the height of discipleship. The reason we have all manner of indecency among followers of Christ today is due to the lack of the discipleship process and also the unwillingness of most new converts to be disciplined or taught what it takes to follow Jesus.

4. **They were devoted to fellowship:**

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

The Greek word used here for ‘fellowship’ is *Koinonia* which is more helpfully translated or explained by the word “community”, that is, Christian community; not local or town union community. The first Christians devoted themselves to each other regardless of wherever anyone came from. They took time to build a loving, caring and supportive community of faith, to which everyone was proud to belong. Members were taught the value of fellowship and to cherish it. They simply lived out Jesus’ charge in John 13:34-35:

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Fellowship is the “nuts and bolts” of the local Christian community. Without it, such a community does not really exist. It is the love of God for one another in action. God passes through it to grow His church. The early believers persisted in and stuck with fellowship as a way of life, in spite of difficulty at times.

5. **They were devoted to the “breaking of bread.”** This phrase (“the breaking of the bread”) refers to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Paul used this language in 1st Corinthians 11 to describe the Holy Communion. The Lord’s Supper tells the basic Christian message of human sin and God’s sacrifice of His only begotten Son to forgive that sin. The devotion of the early Christians to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper was proof of an on-going hunger and thirst for more of this self-sacrificing and forgiving God in their lives. Lastly, the Lord’s Supper

conveys the presence of Jesus. And so in their frequent celebrations of it, the early believers were being intentional about nurturing a hunger for Jesus.

6. **They were devoted to Prayer and Fasting.** Prayer, both together and alone, was central to their experience of church (Acts 2:42; 4:31; 10:30; 12:5; 13:2; 14:23). They prayed earnestly before embarking on any process, for instance, the election of Matthias to replace Judas *“And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen”* (Acts 1: 23-24).

When they were threatened, persecuted and imprisoned for teaching, preaching and performing miracles in the name of Jesus, they responded not only in word but also reported their challenges to God in prayer. And each time they did this, God always responded in very remarkable ways:

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

“And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands” (Acts 12:7).

Before sending out men into the mission field they fasted and prayed:

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1-3).

They prayed and fasted for their leadership:

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23).

7. They were extremely bold – Acts 4:23-31; 14:3, in their proclamation and defence of the gospel. They had a culture of preaching and also performing signs and wonders – Acts 5:24; 8:4; 5:12-13; 6:8.

8. They were generous in giving – Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37. Members who had needs were relieved of their burdens and felt accepted. An atmosphere of sacrifice and selflessness prevailed. The rich did not watch the poor die in their lack.
9. They were evangelistic – Acts 5:12-13; 6:7; 11:19-22
10. They worshipped and praised God (Acts 2:47) in awe and fear of Him – Acts 13:2; 16:25; 2:43; 5:11.
11. They met regularly from house to house as well as in the Temple - Acts 2:46; 3:1; 20:20
12. They functioned in teams, Acts 5: Philip, Peter & John; Acts 18: Paul & Silas/Barnabas
13. They encouraged exercise of spiritual gifts – Acts 2:4; 4:10; 5:9; 6:10; 8:6-7; 9:40
14. They were humble and not willing to take credit for what God did - Acts 3:12:20:18-19
15. They were willing to suffer persecution and martyrdom, e.g. Stephen – Acts 6; the Church, Acts 8; Acts 12:1; Paul – throughout the Book of Acts.
16. They were unified and had oneness of purpose - of one accord (Acts 2:46); of one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32).
17. They were Apostolic in their mission – sending/planting – Jerusalem to Samaria to Antioch and out, Acts 13:3 as well as the entire Book of Acts. The early church was not just a sitting or fellowshiping church; it was a going-and-sending one. It understood the Great Commission mandate properly (Acts 1:8; cf Matthew 28) - making disciples, reaching out and teaching; and they were purposeful about it.
18. Members (both ordained and lay), shared ministry with each other and served with gladness and simplicity of heart (Acts 2:46). In other words, they practised the priesthood of all believers.
19. They did not encourage sin and corrupt practices in their midst (Acts 5:1-11; 8:20) as that was seen as Satan's way of weakening their message and influence.

Our Lessons and motivations from the early Church

If we long to see our local congregations and by extension our Diocese grow wholesomely, then we all – Clergy, lay leaders and others would:

- i. Necessarily have to **welcome the presence and power of the Holy Spirit** in all we do. This is presently lacking in most of our congregations. Nothing impactful can be achieved by a church that fails to recognize and enthrone the Holy Spirit in her midst. He is the life-blood of the Church. Without Him the Church is dead. Therefore,

every church – from the Priest/Minister to the other leaders and members - should open up to the Holy Spirit. Every congregation should prayerfully let in the Holy Spirit into her worship, leadership and decision-making in addition to the general church and fellowship groups activities. The early church came alive and took the world by storm only after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them in the upper room.

- ii. Have to be more **earnest in our prayers**. The Holy Spirit will always be present in praying churches. We have noted that a good number of our ministers and their congregations are very weak in prayer and fasting. Christians and Churches that do not pray effectually and fervently are as good as dead and hardly experience any serious growth. Such congregations are stagnant and would urgently need to come alive FIRST in the place of prayer and fasting. Whatever church growth methods or strategies we try to promote must be first and repeatedly soaked in the church and members' altars of prayer. Prayer has remained one of the few old-fashioned ways the church has carried out her activities and warfare against the kingdom of darkness over many generations and prevailed. Our generation cannot afford to side-line it. If we neglect prayers or easily tire out as the case appears to be presently, our chances of growing out of where we are now and impacting our world will be very slim. And so, we must be deliberate in our prayer ministry and make it a critical part of our life as worshipping communities. Let the prayer and fasting meetings, periodic vigils of our churches and meaningful intercessory prayer sessions during our Matins and Eucharistic services be immediately revived, with the clergy offering leadership. The prayer squads and groups of our churches should start living up to their names and purpose of their existence, which is praying.

Henceforth, our church services and other programmes must be made lively. The Anglican liturgy is rich and lively. It was prayerfully put together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; any given church liturgy no matter how rich, can however turn dry and dead if its operators are godless and prayerless and do not permit the Holy Spirit to function through it. Therefore, our clergy, lay readers, choristers, gospel band members and everyone else who is enlisted to officiate in the worship programmes of our churches must from now on approach such duties prayerfully at the personal level and with others, before and during such outings.

- iii. Have to lead the congregation to **obey and carry out the Great Commission** of our Lord Jesus. The church that wishes to grow must be willing to preach the Word everywhere (Mark 16:15-20) through members' personal and church corporate evangelistic efforts and programmes. We must be faithful, consistent and unashamed in proclaiming Christ to all, using every Biblical pattern and modern day strategies available to us. The Diocese in line with this, instituted the quarterly mass outreach programme "*On the Highway and Hedges*" to encourage every member to become a faithful witness to Christ and

His message of salvation and to also bring in more members into our churches. It is sad however, to note that both the clergy and laity of this Diocese have so far demonstrated a very cold response to it. The verdict then is that we are not being faithful to our calling and mission as a church. Consequently, we shall all be held accountable by God. How do we expect to experience increase in number, in the knowledge and grace of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18) as well as exert influence on our immediate society if we go on disobeying the Lord's command? What do we have to offer to Him as our excuse for this negligence? Obviously we do not have any. It is just that we are simply lazy and dull in our understanding of our Master's heartbeat. Every clergyman would want to serve in churches that are overflowing with members. But it takes hard work and faithfulness to the Great Commission for a church to be full with members. The more we abdicate our ministerial duties, the more our churches will become empty and ministry uninteresting and boring for all of us.

We charge all ministers (our clergy and church teachers) who insist on having been called by God and have since been ordained/commissioned and assigned church stations, administrative blocs and units, to wake from every form of sloth and slumber and begin with a fresh zeal to work worthy of their calling. Each minister should revisit his ordination vows and commitments and ask himself if he is still faithfully pursuing them. The hymn, *Sacred Songs and Solos 815*, should serve as a motivation to all of us:

*Go, labour on ; spend and be spent —
Thy joy to do the Father's will:
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?*

*Go, labour on; 'tis not for naught;
Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain:
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;
The Master praises — what are men?*

Just as Paul told Timothy, we must all now determine to do the work of evangelists, preaching the word in season and out of season and making full proof of our ministry (2Timothy 4:2, 5). The era of aimless gallivanting in pursuit of other interests should give way to a new season of active and purposeful ministry that enhances wholesome growth within and around the church community as did the apostles of old.

- iv. Have to **commit ourselves to the authority of the scriptures**. The church was founded on the teachings of the Bible and so also should our lives and ministries be founded on the teachings of the Bible which is the final authority in all things for all believers. This explains our persistent emphasis over these years on the ministries of both the Adult and Children's Sunday School, Home Fellowship, Weekly Bible studies/teachings of the church and bible-centred sermons by all who use our pulpits; and of course the need to apply

the scripture to our day-to-day lives (Acts 5:42). As much as the Holy Spirit leads, altar calls should be made after sermons, crusades and revival meetings, with a view to drawing the unsaved into a living, saving relationship with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. When this is done, the church should as a matter of deliberate policy and in obedience to the Lord's command, take all those who receive the word through "the apostles' doctrine" that is, a systematic Foundation Bible/Discipleship Class or School for a given period of time. Seasoned and passionate teachers should be engaged to do this. On completion of these classes, such nurtured believers should be prayerfully assigned to the various ministries of the church as the Holy Spirit would direct.

The pulpits and teaching platforms of our churches must no longer be given to any and everyone who is not licensed or authorized to address the congregation. For the avoidance of doubt, we remind our priests that they do not have the authority to invite anyone from outside this Diocese (including Anglicans) to minister under whatever guise in our churches, groups and units without our due approval. This is the normal rule in every Diocese and we in Evo cannot understand and practise it differently. Defaulting ministers and group leaders in this matter should prepare for appropriate sanctions.

Those who take our pulpits should be known and certified persons who are deeply rooted and grounded in the word of the Lord; not heretics and those seeking avenues for vain glory and exploitation of the unsuspecting flock. Such persons will not help the growth of our churches but rather contribute more to their death. Messages emanating from our pulpits should from now on aim at meeting the people's need for genuine eternal salvation, relationship with Christ and other concerns.

- v. Have to cultivate the life of **fellowship** with God, the Father, Son, the Holy Spirit and with one another. In fellowship, we encounter God in grace and in deeper knowledge of Him. As we await the return of our Redeemer King and Lord Jesus Christ, the writer to the Hebrews exhorts us on the need to cultivate fellowship:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

Just as we note with the early church, circumstances which threaten our desire for fellowship or our continuation with a given local church, may arise from time to time. These do not call for discouragement or cessation from that fellowship/church. They are challenges we must prayerfully find answers to and stay on and still contribute to the growth of that church. We are to note that there is no perfect church anywhere in the world. Every church has its many shortcomings caused daily by her imperfect leaders and members. And so when we angrily leave our local churches to other places, we are not likely to escape experiencing the 'ugliness' that abounds in such new fellowships. Consequently,

every one of us must endeavour to promote genuine fellowship in all our churches.

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:1-4).

- vi. **Have to serve with generosity** within the limits of available resources. Every church should consciously come up with **generous welfare** policies that will address the needs of her true and indigent members which will arise from time to time while also endeavouring to extend such acts of charity and goodwill to those outside.

We are to live our lives publicly as a community with the compassion and servant posture of Jesus Christ. We are to love one another and that creates its own attraction especially to those outside. Serving with generosity creates all the evangelism we need.

In our activities, we must strive for the kingdom, and the very essence of the kingdom is generosity. We are to welcome and show hospitality to the strangers in our midst. This way, we shall be building a loving, caring and supportive community of faith to which everyone within and outside will be proud to belong. This was exactly what obtained in the early church.

- vii. **Have to lend support to distressed/struggling Churches**

The Jerusalem Church cared for the distressed churches.

Our young and upcoming churches must be nurtured and cared for by their mother churches to enable them grow. We are not happy about the neglect that a good number of them are suffering from their sponsoring churches. Mother parishes and their ministers should immediately change their uncaring, unsupportive posture towards these young stations. They should be lifted (Acts 15:41; 16:5; Isaiah 42:1-4).

In the words of Akin John, the big churches with their priests “must fan the small fire (i.e. Station Churches & Worship Centres and their teachers) into major conflagration.” Archdeacons and other priests with local stations under them should pay regular visits to those churches to monitor them. They should show empathy, care and understanding towards the peculiar challenges of these new and struggling churches and not leave them to fend for themselves. Mother churches should from now on prayerfully set growth goals for each church station and teacher under them and give them the required moral support to pursue and attain such goals.

Finally, all limiting and inhibiting factors that frustrate the growth of churches at all levels must be carefully addressed across the Diocese.

We must guard against secularization of our churches. The church belongs to Jesus. We must be careful not to introduce teachings and practices that encourage the Evil One and his spirits and end up sending the Lord of the Church and His Holy Spirit out of it.

- viii. We must as local churches, be very clear in our understanding of the place of the **Lord's Supper** in our worship. We are to practise it intentionally as a means of spiritual grace for members of the church and the nurturing of the divine presence in our midst. Services of the Lord's Supper should not be held for the purposes of income generation. To get to the height where the presence of the Lord is assured and with evidence each time a local church assembles, we must say, is a great, if not the greatest sign of growth. Therefore, whatever it would take us to enthrone the Lord's presence in our churches and retain it, including the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper in spirit and in truth, should be done.
- ix. Have to revive, establish and strengthen all **critical ministry groups and units** of our local churches. Every priest and church teacher of our diocese and their wives are to consider this as a matter of ministry priority. Such groups and units would include the:
- Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF)
 - Mothers' Union and Women's Guild (MU/WG) and all Girls' ministries
 - Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)
 - Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)
 - Adult Sunday School, Discipleship, Literature and Publications ministry
 - Boys Brigade
 - Prayer, deliverance and counselling ministries
 - Missions, Evangelism, follow-up and visitation ministries
 - Foundation Bible Classes
 - Welfare ministry
 - Marriage and Family Life ministry
 - Prayer groups (societies) of the men, women and youths.
 - Home (House caring) Fellowship ministry, etc.

These groups and units should be better organized such that they are able to serve as avenues for church members' growth and maturity in Christ.

- x. The Early Church Christians met from house to house for worship, breaking of bread and sharing of apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42-46; Rom. 16:3-5' 1Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phlm. vs 2). In the same manner, our churches should break into neighbourhood **Home Fellowships and prayer groups** as a deliberate strategy for achieving spiritual, numerical and financial growth. House/group fellowships have remained an age-long biblical pattern of the Christian church.

Home Fellowships provide opportunity for members, especially local leaders, to care for one another, teach the Bible and pray together. It offers opportunity for soul-winning and drawing of those within the neighbourhood to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are very good places for members to worship God and experience His miraculous and supernatural power and bond with one another.

We had in the past directed all churches to establish House-caring fellowship centres where their members live. From the recently held Diocesan Home Fellowship fair, it became very obvious that not every church has complied with this directive. While we commend churches that are excelling in the running of the Home Fellowship ministry like St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery and some others, we hereby charge all others yet to comply to immediately do so without further delay.

xi. All hands must be on deck.

From the example of the early church Christians, we learn that the church can grow not only through the efforts of the 'Ordained ministers' of a local church, but equally by the contributions and bold missionary endeavours of all others within the church who believe in the saving name, power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and are willing and prepared to share it with others no matter where they may be. For example, the believers that went from Jerusalem to establish the church in Antioch seemed to be ordinary Christians (lay members). They were not apostles or some prominent members, but those who allowed God to use them as they were running for safety. That was how the likes of Barnabas were sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem Church.

We challenge all our lay Parishioners – men, women, youths, knights and ladies, lay readers and members of other groups in our churches, to draw inspiration from our brethren of the early church and begin to respond positively to the various calls and invitations to them to actively engage in actions that would bring about the speedy growth of our churches.

xii. Exercise of spiritual gifts

Our genuine spiritual gifts as ministers and those of other faithful members must be stirred up and exercised for the good of the people

and devoid of manipulations, intrigues and strange influences (2Tim. 1:6-7). Church ministers who are charismatic by the Holy Ghost, influence church growth greatly. We cannot afford to remain lukewarm and ineffective. Following the example of Jesus and the apostles, our ministers should boldly move on to exercise their healing, prophetic and deliverance ministries – (Matt. 9:35-38; Acts 5:15-16; 9:34).

- xiii. “Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). The early Church leaders did not encourage sin and corrupt practices in their fellowship (Acts 5:1-11; 8:20) as that was seen by them to be one of Satan’s ways of weakening the message of the Church and her influence on those outside. As clergy and lay members of today’s church, God is expecting us to respond to the challenge of sin in our midst in the same way as the church of old. If our churches would grow, everything must be done by all of us to rid ourselves and fellowships of every besetting sin and unwholesome practices which encourage Satan’s counter attack on the life and message of the Church. A Church that is truly growing and healthy would not encourage or enthrone secret or open sin bearing in mind that the Lord desires a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).

In conclusion, we must endeavour to **cultivate team spirit**. We have emphasized this point times without number. All of us, clergy or lay-who have leading role or the task of managing people must pray for the Spirit and imbibe the skills for collaborative ministry. Working collaboratively is a vital part of effective Christian ministry. We must avoid schisms, ethnic sentiments and the spirit of Absalom and Diotrephes (2 Samuel 15:7-12; 3 John 9). Similarly, all who are appointed to serve with others in the various Boards, Committees and Units of the Diocese/Church, should emulate the team spirit of the early church brethren and share ministry with their brothers and sisters amicably.

References:

- Adeyemo, Tokunboh *et al*; *Africa Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House 2006
- Bruce F.F; *The New International Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House 1975
- Eddie Gibbs and Ryank K. Bolger; *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. SPCK 2006
- Hayford, W. Jack *et al*; *The New Spirit-filled Bible Commentary*. Wellington: Thomas Nelson Inc. 2002
- Sally Nash, Jo Pimlott and Paul Nash; *Skills for collaborative ministry*. SPCK Library of Ministry Revised. 2011
- Scripture Union, Nigeria: *Daily Guide*. 2018

- Vine, W.E; *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. Wellington: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1961

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE DIOCESE SINCE THE LAST (2017) SYNOD

Second Session, Third Synod (Elelenwo 2017)

The Thanksgiving Service marking the end of the last Synod held at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery on Sunday, 30th July with the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, CON, GSSRS, his wife, Suzette and children in attendance. They were accompanied by some State government and People's Democratic Party (PDP) national, state legislators and officials.

On that occasion we made the following requests to the governor:

- 3 Buses for our schools;
- Rehabilitation of Mrs. Blessing Ogu and children whose new and about-to-be inhabited house, built by the Diocese at Unity Estate, Eneka which was demolished by the state government; and
- Funds to enable us complete our New All Saints' Cathedral building.

His Excellency has since responded to the first item on our list of requests. We remain hopeful that the two outstanding requests would receive His Excellency's attention in no distant time.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATIONS

1. The 2017 Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service

This annual diocesan day of thanksgiving to God took place at St. Nicholas' Anglican Church, Woji District on Sunday, 8th October, 2017. It was an excellent outing to the glory of God. The then Caretaker Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Council, Hon. Mrs. Goodnews Clinton Amadi read the First Lesson from Deut. 6:10-19 and also addressed the congregation on proper child upbringing. The second Lesson was read by Eze Emeka Ihunwo who also led his Woji traditional Council of Chiefs, elders, women and youths to the altar for the traditional presentation of special crops at harvest. The Venerable Alex Usifoh, Chairman of the Diocesan Harvest Committee preached the sermon while our Chief Harvester was the Hon. Chief O.C.J. Okocha, SAN.

We thank everyone, St. Nicholas', Woji, the Woji Community, our guests, the Harvest Committee and others for making the event a memorable one. This year's Diocesan Harvest thanksgiving service will hold on Sunday, 2nd December at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery.

2. **The 2017 Diocesan Discipleship/Revival Conference** was held at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District from Wednesday, 29th November to Sunday, 3rd December. The theme of the Conference was: ***“Living to Please God” (1Thess. 4:1-12)***. The Conference main Speaker and Expositor was The Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Egbunu, Archbishop/Bishop of Lokoja, Province/Diocese. We, the Diocesan Bishop also ministered alongside Evangelist Nnamdi Eze, Elder James Onwa, The Rev. Canons Kingsley Ohajianya and Cephass Okarefe; Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu, Lady Ahunna Imoni, Mrs. Kabor Obowu and others.

The Conference also featured special presentations by the Diocesan team on Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue led by The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchuku; enlightenment on HIV/AIDS by The Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Owbor, Chaplain of the Social Welfare Directorate to mark the World AIDS Day, special Conference - **On the Highway and Hedges** – mass evangelism within Woji community by the conferees, prayer sessions and revival hours to end each day's proceedings.

In order for the message of the Conference to reach the entire Diocesan Community, a team of ministers (both clergy and laity) was dispatched to all the churches of the Diocese on Sunday, 3rd December to minister at the decentralized Conference thanksgiving services.

In terms of attendance to the Conference, Woji Archdeaconry recorded the highest with 535 participants, followed by Rumuobiokani Deanery with 155 and the All Saints' Cathedral bloc with 132. As in other years, Oginigba Deanery recorded the least participation with 49 conferees and also did not participate in the pre-conference rally held across the Diocese. We look forward to improved performance in future conferences particularly in the areas of commitment by churches and attendance by both the clergy and laity of the Diocese.

We commend the efforts of the Conference Planning Committee at the Diocesan level led by The Rev. Canon Kinsley Ohajianya and Sir Chief Ernest Chinwo, the St. Nicholas', Woji Local Organising Committee Chairman, the Priests and members of St. Nicholas' for a good job done by them in the planning and execution of the Conference activities. May the Lord bless them.

The 2018 Discipleship/Revival Conference will hold at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Rumuomasi Deanery from Tuesday, 27th November to Saturday, 1st December with the Diocesan Band leading in Evo Advent Praise on the last day. The theme of the Discipleship Conference is **“I**

will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18). The Conference and Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service will hold at the same venue on Sunday, 2nd December.

Sir W. W. Onunwor Memorial Lecture

Olive Plants Anglican Youth Church initiated and successfully hosted the maiden “Sir W.W. Onunwor, JP Memorial Lecture Series” in memory of the late Nyerisi Mbam Oropotoma on Saturday, 16th December, 2017. It attracted personalities from all walks of life. The Ven. Dr. F.N. Akah, JP delivered the maiden lecture on the late monarch’s churchmanship. We commend the members of OPAYC under Bro. Chika Amadi for their thoughtfulness.

3. **Diocesan Mega Vigil.** This took place at St. Andrew’s, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Friday, 22nd December, 2017. Happening few days to Christmas, the vigil featured the traditional service of 9 lessons and Christmas Carols as well as Holy Communion. This combination was the first of its kind and the experiment came out very successful. We look forward to making it even better in the future.
4. **Diaconate/Priestly Ordination Service.** The 2017 Diocesan Service of Ordination was held on Christmas Eve, 24th December, 2017 at St. Jude’s Church, Oginigba Deanery. Those ordained Priests were The Reverends Henry Chidi Odu and Maduakona Paul Ezigbo, while Richard Omoni-Alete, ThankGod Amadi and Frankincense Chukwuma were Ordained Deacons. We congratulate these brothers and their wives and pray that the Lord will grant them the life of fruitful service in His Vineyard.
The service also featured the formal disengagement (from active service of the Diocese) of The Venerable & Mrs. Sunday Opara, the former Diocesan Financial Secretary, Rector of Oginigba Deanery and Supervising Archdeacon of Woji Archdeaconry. He preached the Ordination Sermon and was prayed for and given a parting cash gift by the Diocese.
5. **The 2018 Diocesan Rededication Service** was held at the new Cathedral Building on Sunday, 21st January, 2018. The Guest Preacher was The Venerable Professor Sam Ike from Enugu Diocese. In attendance as well was The Rt. Rev. Foreman Nedison, Bishop of Jalingo who also led some of the rededication prayer sessions. The service featured the unveiling of our teaching/devotional manuals for 2018.
6. **Special Passiontide services** on Maundy Thursday, 29th March and Good Friday 30th March, 2018 at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School field, Rumuobiokani. It featured the service of Holy Communion,

Washing of Feet and Consecration of Chrism (Anointing oil) on Maundy Thursday and Revival/Service of Seven Words of Christ on the cross. We thank the Diocesan Missions, Evangelism and Church Planting Board for facilitating this special Diocesan convocation.

7. Service of Collation/Installation/Commissioning of Archdeacon, Canons and Church Teachers

On Sunday, 10th June, 2018 we collated, installed and commissioned 1 new Archdeacon, 11 Canons and 3 Church Teachers at a Diocesan service that took place in All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. Those collated and installed Archdeacon and Canons whose preferment we had earlier announced at the meeting of the Location and Appointment Board of the Diocese which took place on Saturday, 24th March, 2018 at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District are:

Archdeacon

The Ven. Dr. Ikechukwu Godwin Anene

Canons

1. The Rev. Canon Cephas Okerefe
2. The Rev. Canon Roland Benjamin
3. The Rev. Canon Chukwuma Anukem
4. The Rev. Canon Samson Abada
5. The Rev. Canon Ahamefule Olluor
6. The Rev. Canon Chukwuemeka Okonkwo
7. The Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor
8. The Rev. Canon Bright Welekwe
9. The Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu
10. The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchuku
11. The Rev. Canon Ugochukwu Nwahaghi

The newly commissioned Church Teachers are:

1. Mr. Benjamin Peterson
2. Mr. Nwabueze Daniel
3. Mr. David Wopara

We wish them well in their ministries.

Service of Enrolment, Admission and Induction

This Diocesan service was held on Saturday, 14th July, 2018 at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo. It was a formal service of initiation of new members into the Diocesan women and men's ministries. We thank the Priest and members of the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge for hosting the Diocese.

TRAININGS AND HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Clergy/Laity Continuing Education

1. **Sessions of the Clergy, Church Teachers & Wives Schools** were held as scheduled for the year. Among the several lessons taught were those on “Report Writing” (with emphasis on the writing of handover notes), handled by We, the bishop and “The Management and Structure of Meetings” by Sir Victor Dania.
2. **Annual Post Vestry Meeting Leadership Training and Workshop.** In line with our Diocesan vision of equipping our church leaders for more effective discharge of their functions at their various churches, the Diocesan Council for Clergy/Laity Continuing Education organized a special training/workshop for all leaders from Thursday, 22nd to Saturday, 24th March, 2018 at St. Philip’s Church, Oroigwe District. The Conference theme was: **“Labourers together with God”** (1Corinthians 3:9-10). The Rt. Rev. Nathan N. Inyom, the Bishop of Markudi Diocese, The Ven. Dr. Fyनेface N. Akah, JP, The Rev. Dr. Basil Ibeh and Mr. Iyke Donald featured with us as major speakers on a wide range of topics at the training.
3. **Agricultural Wealth Summit.** The Diocese in partnership with Agro Wealth Africa organized a free 3-Day agriculture skills and entrepreneurship seminar/workshop from Thursday, 3rd to Saturday, 5th May, 2018 at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe. Areas covered in the training included: Agriculture product exportation, fish farming & hatching, snail/mushroom/rice farming, poultry, horticulture (plantains, vegetables, spices, etc.) and processing and packaging of agro-products. Excursions to farms took place on Saturday 5th May. The programme was organized to sensitize members of the Diocese on the need to return to the farm.
4. **A Special Training for Vicars, Treasurers, Clerks, Auditors and Secretaries of Churches** with the theme “Sustainable Financial Management” was organized by the Council for Clergy, laity continuing education from Wednesday, 30th –Thursday, 31st May, 2018 at St. Matthias Church, Atali District.
5. **A One-Day Diocesan Youth Summit on Anglicanism and our Heritage.** We convened a summit for all youths of the Diocese on Tuesday, 1st May, 2018 at New Wine Anglican Church, East West Road Parish, Okporo on the above subject matter. Though poorly attended by our youths, those present were however full of testimonies for the much insight they received from the talks, questions and answers bordering on our heritage at the summit.
6. **Retreat for newly preferred Archdeacon and Canons and appointed Church Teachers.** Two phases of a retreat were held for the newly preferred Archdeacon and Canons. The first phase was held from Wednesday, 16th to Friday, 18th May, 2018 at the All Saints’ Cathedral Conference Room. This was personally handled by us. The

second phase which included the Church Teachers took place at St Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery from Wednesday 6th to Sunday 10th June, 2018. We (The Bishop) also handled this second phase assisted by the Directors of studies, The Ven. Chris Chukwumati and The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu. The retreat featured daily Holy Communion services in the morning, Bible studies, teachings, expositions and discipleship.

DIOCESAN ACTIVITY GROUPS/CHAPLAINCIES

Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship

- The 2017 Diocesan Conference of the Christian Men's Fellowship was held at St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery from Thursday, 21st – Sunday, 24th September with the theme: *"A Good soldier of Christ Jesus"* – 2Tim. 2:13.
- Our Diocesan men played host to their counterparts from the 12 other Dioceses of our Province for a provincial meeting on Friday, 27th October, 2017 at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi.
- Members of the DCMF held their end of year love feast and Christmas cantata on Saturday, 16th December, 2017 at New Wine Anglican Church, East West Road, Okporo.
- Other meetings and outings of the fellowship at the Diocesan and Provincial levels were held between February and June this year. We commend the leadership of our EDCMF for ensuring our representation as a Diocese at these external meetings.

2018 Father's Week

Evo Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship observed series of activities to mark this year's Father's Week in all the Churches of the Diocese. The activities included a football competition with the result as follows:

- 1st position – Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry,
- 2nd position – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry, and
- 3rd position – Diocesan Churches

The fellowship also hosted a Couples Dinner on Saturday, 16th June, 2018 at the All Saints' Cathedral hall, Rumuokwursi. The dinner was sponsored by the men of Woji Archdeaconry.

We are not pleased to learn that the following administrative blocs: Cathedral; Woji, Evo South East Archdeaconries; Rumuobiokani, Elelenwo, Okporo and Oginigba Deaneries failed to participate in the football competition organized to foster healthy fellowship and friendship. Worse still, it is reported that some parish/administrative blocs' presidents have continued to deny the centre of needed funds by their non-payment of agreed levies. They also ignore the programmes of the Diocesan CMF in favour of their own programmes. This is quite

unchristian and does not encourage growth within the Diocese. We charge all those in this divisive practices to desist from it henceforth as it would no longer be tolerated.

New Entrants into the Evo Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF)

A total of 74 men were inducted by us on Saturday, 14th of July, 2018 at Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo, into the Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship. We and the Chaplain, The Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu spent quality time spanning several weeks to prepare the men for the service of induction. We congratulate the new members of the EDCMF and pray that their coming would influence the activities of the men's fellowship positively.

Diocesan Women and Girls' Ministries

To the glory of God, the Diocesan Women and Girls' Ministries carried out the following programmes during the synod year under review.

- **The 8th Diocesan Women's Conference** with the theme "*The Children, our Legacy*" (Psalm 127:3-5) was hosted at St. Matthias' Anglican Church, Atali District by the Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry from Thursday, 7th to Sunday 10th December, 2017. It featured evangelism, outreach/visitations, Bible study, special presentations and Conference/Harvest Thanksgiving Service, etc.
- **Clergy/Church Teachers' Wives Retreat.** A 4-day residential retreat/training was held for all clergy and church teachers' wives from 2nd to 6th April, 2018 with the theme: "*Look unto Sarah that bare you...*" (Isaiah 51:1-2). We commend some of the clergy wives for their weekly gathering in the Bishop's Court Chapel for prayers for their families and the Diocese. We have however observed that in recent times they have not been consistent in carrying out this spiritual exercise. We charge them not to be weary in standing in the gap for the rest of us.
- **Diocesan Women Leadership Training/Workshop.** The Diocesan Women's Work office hosted a 3-Day Leadership Training/Workshop for all clergy and church teachers' wives, members of the Women Ministry Executive Committees at all levels in the Diocese and other women, from Thursday, 17th to Saturday, 19th May, 2018 at St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery. The theme was "*Here am I, send me*" (*A fresh beginning*) (Isaiah 6:1-8). The training featured talks, crafts, special prayers and ministrations as well as a power-packed night vigil to bring it to a close.

At the event, We inaugurated the 2018 Diocesan Women's Conference Planning Committee, with Lady Chibuzor Anyabele as Chairperson.

- **Welfare/Outreach Programs of the women**

The Diocesan Women within the year carried out welfare/outreach programmes to some orphanages, the Arikiri Foundation – an organization which specializes in reaching out to the poor and less privileged, support fund to Zambiri Mission Field in the Diocese of Jos as well as financial support to some individuals for medical treatments, etc.

- **New Projects**

The Diocesan Women's Ministry is about to commence the development of infrastructure for a soon-to-take-off Skills Acquisition/Adult Education Centre in the Diocese. We have since allocated five plots of land to them at our initial Diocesan landed property at Atali. We wish them speedy and safe construction and God's abundant provision of funds.

- **Diocesan Widows Unit**

The widows unit of our Diocesan Women's Ministry is waxing strong in their activities. They had their 2018 Diocesan Conference from Friday, 22nd to Sunday 24th June at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Elelenwo Deanery with a good number of widows across the Diocese in attendance. Many younger widows have also joined this unit and are cheerfully sharing fellowship with their older colleagues to the glory of God.

The Widows, at their Elelenwo conference, received gift items from the Diocesan Women's Ministry and also from the Diocese through the Directorate of Social Welfare. The Diocesan Council of Knights also gave cash support to some needy widows in the Diocese to help with their petty businesses.

We are quite happy to note that the widows as a fellowship unit in the Diocese are equally striving hard to support themselves economically. In recent times they have been engaged in the making of various kinds of detergents, air fresheners and disinfectants which they sell for fund-raising to support their activities.

- **Diocesan Council of Knights' Ladies**

The ladies of our Knights are waxing stronger year after year in their service to God and in support of their husbands' ministry in the Diocese. Their well-attended, power-packed 4th Conference was held from 23rd to 24th September, 2017 at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Rumuomasi with the theme: *"The Lady: Fragrance of godly wisdom and love to mankind (A case study of the Shunamite Woman – 2 Kings 4:8-37."* They hold

monthly prayer meetings, and have also paid welfare visits to the prison, orphanages as well as to some needy persons. They are presently raising funds to purchase an Evangelism Bus to support the activities of the Diocesan Council of Knights.

- **Sisters' Forum (SF)**

The Sisters' Forum held their Conference in September, 2017 with over 150 members in attendance. We received reports that a good number of them both surrendered and re-dedicated their lives to the Lord. Part of their activities included making of perfumes which they sold to raise funds.

- **Diocesan Girls' Guild (G G)**

The Girls' Guild of the Diocese, like the Sisters' Forum, is supervised by the Women's Ministry which has continued to catch them early for Christ through the various activities organized for the girls. From August 25th – 27th, 2017 a Diocesan Conference was organized for the Guild with over 300 girls in attendance. It featured special teaching sessions on craft, custard production, personal hygiene and healthy relationships with peers.

Other special sessions were also held for the girls at the administrative bloc levels during the year.

New Entrants into the Mothers Union and Women's Guild (MU/WG)

We enrolled a total of 164 women into the Diocesan Women's Guild and also admitted 72 Guild members into the Diocesan/Worldwide Mothers' Union on Saturday, 14th July, 2018 at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo. We thank the clergy wives with the Diocesan President of the MU/WG, Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu, JP for their efforts in preparing these women for the service of enrolment and admission, and also towards their roles within the women and girls' ministries of our Diocese.

Council of Knights

We are glad to report that the Council has made significant physical and spiritual strides since the creation of the Diocese. The Council currently has a little above one hundred and twenty-five Knights with an almost equivalent number of Ladies. We are happy that some new Knights and Ladies have registered with the Council after their investiture into knighthood at various Dioceses in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). A good number of others have however failed to do so. We decry their non-participation in the

activities of the knights in this Diocese as well as in Diocesan programmes generally. Those concerned should have a change of heart.

We must however state here that we are not pleased with the way and manner some desperate members of this Diocese are busy going about acquiring knighthood from here and there without due recourse to our office. Henceforth, members of this Diocese who get offers of knighthood from outside without our knowledge and approval should no longer seek or expect to be recognized at any level of the activities of the Council of Knights in this Diocese. The Church, we must remind ourselves, is a disciplined body where things are expected to be done in an orderly manner and in respect to her laws. Those who insist on ignoring us are entirely on their own and we charge all our clergymen and church Councils NEVER to accord them any form of recognition.

For the year under review, the Council held its Annual Revival event on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th February 2018 at the Anglican Church of Resurrection, Rumuomasi Deanery with the theme *"Call to Defend the Gospel - (Cornelius and Dorcas Examples)." In all, 96 Knights and Ladies registered for the retreat. The Council also sponsored a 2-day Crusade at its mission station, Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo – Iriebe on 11th and 12th of May this year. The theme of the crusade was "The limitless power of God through Christ." The programme which was well attended saw 12 persons give their lives to Christ. The Council also used the opportunity of the Sunday worship on 13th May 2018 at the Church to raise funds in support of the Church's development.*

In the direction of empowerment, the Council last year, empowered 11 widows across the Diocese who got fifty thousand naira (N50,000.00) each to improve their existing petty trading and other small scale businesses. In the course of this year's synod, the Council has concluded plans to reach out to other deserving widows, one each from the 10 Administrative blocs and Diocesan Churches. The Council has also given scholarship grants and bursaries to the tune of one hundred thousand naira (N100,000) each to 20 deserving students from churches in the Diocese of Edo for the 2017/2018 academic session. 12 of the recipients were already in the previous scheme while 8 students are new beneficiaries. The presentation ceremony took place during the 2018 Diocesan Rededication Service held in the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi on Sunday, 21st January.

The Rector of Oginigba Deanery, The Ven. Chris Chukwumati recently reported to us that the Diocesan Council of Knights at their second quarter general meeting held at St. Jude's this year donated one big door costing Four Hundred Thousand Naira (N400, 000.00) to assist the on-going church building project of the Deanery. We thank the Council for this generous gift.

Evo Knights Charity/Welfare Luncheon

The Council held the 6th edition of the Annual Charity Luncheon on Saturday, 30th June, 2018 at the Cathedral, under the distinguished chairmanship of Sir & Lady (Prof.) Gibson Okeke with HRH, Eze Sir & Lady Simeon Chidi Wokoma as the Chief Launcher. The event also provided a robust platform for interaction among members and other invited guests as well as fundraising opportunity to support indigent students, widows and the less-privileged.

Ladies Conference

The Evo Council of Knights' Ladies had a successful 4th conference from 23rd to 24th September, 2017, at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Rumuomasi, with the theme "The Lady: Fragrance of godly wisdom and love to mankind - (A case study of the Shunamite Woman). As part of the pre-conference activities, the Ladies visited the Port Harcourt Prisons and Jesus Orphanage, Elelenwo. 84 ladies registered for the event while some Knights/Dames attended in solidarity with them.

Joint Council of Knights (JCK) activities

Evo Council of Knights participated actively in the Joint Council of Knights meetings and activities. The Council also attended the JCK Executive Committee meetings held at the Cathedral of St. John, Ekwulobia, Diocese of Aguata. In addition, the Council also contributed their Quota in support of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria, JCK Projects in Paul University, Awka, as well as support for indigent Councils. At the Provincial level, the Council also participated actively in the Niger Delta Provincial Joint Council of Knights Executive meetings and also supported the Province in the hosting of the last Church of Nigeria General Synod in September, 2017.

Diocesan Lay Readers Association

The 2017 annual conference of the Diocesan Lay Readers Association was held at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery from Friday, 15th to Sunday, 17th September with the theme: "*Walk While it is Day*" (John 9:4). Key events of the Conference included visitation, talk, exposition and Bible study on the theme.

The 2018 annual retreat to begin the year was held at Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi. The theme was "*Living for God, (The mind of Christ)*" – 1 Peter 4:1-11; Philippians 2:5. A service of renewal of vows of license was held on Sunday, 4th February, 2018 at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. The service witnessed a large number of lay readers in attendance.

We commend the Lay Readers Association especially its members who supported the Association's donation of 10 new standard pews to their mission station – the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi during the church's 8th Anniversary celebration on the 13th of May this year as well as 1000 solid blocks for the on-going vicarage project of the station. We are quite aware that these efforts have been made by just a handful of the large number of lay readers in the Diocese.

In fulfilment of the Great Commission mandate and our directive, the Association held a 3-Day gospel crusade from Friday, 6th to Sunday, 8th April, 2018 at Mount Zion Anglican Church, Eliogbolo with the theme: "*Come to Me, for I am Your God... I will Heal Your Wounds*" (Jer. 30:10-20). Evangelist Isaiah Orji and other speakers ministered at the programme.

The Lay Readers Diocesan Service of Exchange of Pulpit took place last Sunday, 29th of July, 2018 at the various churches. They dwelt on the theme “*Occupy Till I Come*” (Luke 19:13). We thank the Chaplain, Canon Ahameful Olluor and the Executive Committee led by Sir Paul Chukwumati for planning the outings to churches.

It is however regrettable, that most of our lay readers have continued to see their positions as merely ceremonial in nature despite series of enlightenment on what their roles ought to be. Outside the glamour of appearing in robes and occasional reading of services and lessons, most readers have sadly abandoned their primary call to preach, teach and promote the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as enshrined in their mission statement.

There is a manifest lack of commitment on their part, particularly as regarding activities of the Lay Readers Association at the Diocesan level. This perhaps is a reflection of their lukewarm posture to the ministry committed to their hands at the local church levels. This development, we must confess, is not encouraging us to consider licensing more lay readers in the Diocese. We therefore call on all lay readers to awake from their sleep and begin to walk worthy of their calling as pastoral assistants to the clergy and the Bishop in the Diocese. We hereby charge the Diocesan Chaplain and Priests of our churches to ensure that from henceforth all lay readers are adequately sensitized and mobilized to faithfully assume their roles in the ministry of the Diocese and her churches. Where there are no existing associations at the Parish, Deanery, Archdeaconry and Cathedral levels, such should be immediately formed and the leaders should ensure that they work hand in hand with the Diocesan leadership of the association.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES

Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF)

The 2017 Diocesan AYF Bible Study Conference took place at St Philips Anglican Church, Oroigwe District, from the 13th – 16th July. It featured talks, exposition, seminars and prayers sessions. The Guest Preacher was The Rt. Rev. Dr. Chidi Oparaojiaku, Bishop, Diocese of Ohaji/Egbema.

The Diocesan Annual General Meeting of the AYF took place on the 10th of December, 2017 at St. Andrew’s, Rumuobiokani Deanery, with a good turnout of our youths.

Our Diocesan youths also participated at all national meetings of the Anglican Youth Fellowship, Nigeria, including the National Bible Study Conference/70th anniversary celebrations which held at the Diocese of Lagos Mainland from 8th – 13th August 2017.

We thank The Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu for supporting the Diocesan AYF Quiz contestants at the above National Conference with the sum of N50, 000, although they were not successful; and also St. Nicholas Church, Woji District for releasing her Coaster Bus to the youths for the Lagos trip.

The National Annual General Meeting/Election of the AYF took place at the Diocese of Ughelli from 23rd – 25th February, 2018. At the election proper, Brother Lloyd Brown of the Diocese of Ahoada emerged as the new National President

The 2018 National Youth Week of the AYF was observed across the Diocese in May this year. As part of the activities of the week, we invited all youths of the Diocese to a well-advertised summit on Anglicanism and our heritage on Tuesday, 1st May, at New Wine Church, East West Road Parish, Okporo. It is regrettable that only a handful of our youth honoured our invitation to that summit and those who did, did so at their convenience.

The Diocesan AYF had their 2018 Bible Study Conference from Thursday, 26th to Sunday, 29th July at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery. The theme was "*Power for Exploits*" (Acts 1:8). It featured talks, Bible studies, prayers, and the reading of the current President, Brother Chika Amadi's last Address in that capacity.

Our Youths in active politics

Our youths are gradually developing interest in active politics. This, we hereby encourage praying however, that they go about it decently and with the fear of God, bearing in mind that as Christians, they remain ambassadors of Christ and His kingdom wherever they find themselves. We also admonish them not to allow party affiliation to destroy the brotherly love and fellowship they share with one another in the church.

Recently, one of our youths, Brother Graham Elendu was elected the Pioneer Publicity Secretary of the African Youth Union Commission, Nigeria. We congratulate him.

Our Diocesan President, Brother Chika Habenuchi Amadi and Brother Henry Utchay vied for Councillorship positions in their various wards preparatory to the recently held Local Government Elections in Rivers State but lost at the primaries. They have however been appointed Liaison Officers to the Rivers State Governor in their respective wards. Brother Chika is also the Secretary of the Governor's Liaison Officers, Obio/Akpor Chapter. We congratulate them and pray that they shine as light in their new positions.

The tenure of Brother Chika Amadi as the Diocesan AYF President will be ending towards the close of this year. Consequently, the Diocesan Council will

be meeting to elect a new President and other officers for the Fellowship. We look forward to a peaceful election and handover to a new executive. We hereby commend Brother Chika Amadi and his team for the excellent and quality services they offered the youths and the entire Diocese of Edo these past seven years. We pray the Lord to bless them abundantly in all their future endeavours. It is our desire to have equally capable and even more zealous youths elected in their places into the executive committee of the Edo AYF particularly at this time that we are finding it extremely difficult to secure the commitment of our youths in the programmes of the Diocese.

Anglican Corps Fellowship (ACF)

The Ministry of the Diocese to Anglican Youth Corps members posted to Rivers State and serving in establishments within our Diocese has continued to flourish. The vision is to train evangelical Youth Corps members to become disciples and ambassadors of Jesus Christ who will in turn grow to render loving service to God and humanity. The Chaplaincy to Corps members, with the assistance of the Diocese, has continued to provide for the spiritual and physical needs of corps members who are serving within our Diocese as well as worship in our churches.

The 30-member fellowship meets regularly at Olive Plants Anglican Youth Church, Rumuomasi, for Prayers, Bible Studies, Retreats, Discipleship Trainings and outdoor evangelism. We thank St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery for providing a temporary lodge for the corps members in one of her old parsonages.

Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)

The Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) of our Diocese took part in the Niger Delta Provincial Teachers Conference/Children's Bible Quiz and Singing Competitions held at Okrika Grammar School, Diocese of Okrika from 17th to 20th August, 2017. Our Diocese, represented by the reigning Diocesan Champions, – the All Saints' Cathedral Children's Choir, took the first position in the singing competition. Those who represented us at the Quiz competition also took the first position. We congratulate them all.

Our Diocesan Children Ministry team and children equally took part in the Church of Nigeria Anglican Children's Ministry Train-the-Trainers Course held at the Diocese On The Niger from Monday, 4th to Thursday, 7th September, 2017; the National Teachers Conference held at Basilica of St. Andrew's, Odoakpu, Onitsha, from Thursday, 7th to Sunday, 10th September, 2017.

At the Diocesan level, the following events took place:

Evo Children Rejoice on Saturday 16th October 2017 at St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery.

The Children's Christmas Party was held in December last year in all Churches as directed by us. Teachers Prayer Retreat to begin the year 2018 was held from Friday 9th to Saturday, 10th February at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District. The 4th edition of the Diocesan Teenstar Conference was held in conjunction with the Anglican Youth Fellowship from Thursday, 4th to Sunday, 8th April, 2018 at ACMGS, Elelenwo with the theme *"Living for God: You are a Leader"* (Dan.1:18; 1 Pet.4:10).

Diocesan Teachers Training held from on Friday, 20th and Saturday, 21st April, 2018 at Faith Community, Eliowhani. The 2018 Diocesan Children's Week/Singing Competition took place from Monday, 21st to Sunday, 27th May. The Cathedral Children's Choir won the 1st place trophy for the third year running.

The 9th Diocesan ACM Teachers Conference was held at King of Glory Anglican Church, Mini-Ewa, Rumuobiokani Deanery, from Thursday 12th to Sunday, 15th July, 2018. The theme was *"They that Know Their God"* (Dan. 11:32^b). The Diocesan Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Olufemi Ejoro, presided over the Conference.

Clergy and Church Workers' Children's Ministry

As the name implies, this ministry caters for the spiritual wellbeing of children and wards of all clergy and church workers in our Diocese. Under the leadership of Mrs. Oluwaseun Ijaware and The Rev. Samuel Fedigha as the Chaplain, the children meet from time to time for fellowship, exhortations and prayers.

The ministry held a Conference for the children from 16th - 17th December, 2017 at ACMGS, Elelenwo. The theme of the Conference was *"But who do you say I am?"* (Matthew 16:15b). We thank the coordinator and chaplain for their efforts so far and charge all clergy and church workers whose children should be benefitting from the activities of this ministry to always release them when the need arises.

Boys Brigade

Our Diocese hosted the 2018 Rededication Service of the State Council of the Boys Brigade, Nigeria, on Sunday, 4th February. We presided over the service which held in our new Cathedral building in our capacity as the Grand Chaplain of the State Council.

Public and Private Secondary Schools' Ministry (PPSSM)

Visit to Schools

This ministry exists to take the gospel of Christ to staff and students of all public and privately owned secondary schools within Evo kingdom through

proclamation, capacity-building, partnerships, purposeful Bible teachings, Bible quiz and debates and special holiday camp meetings. We thank God for the increase in the number of volunteer evangelists which has enabled the ministry to extend their outreaches to as many as 47 schools.

We are glad to hear that the activities of the ministry are now gaining wide acceptance across the Diocese such that the ministry is now receiving invitations from schools to come and establish their presence. Worthy of note is the invitation from the authorities of **Pamo University of Medical Sciences** at TAP, Iriebe to the ministry to come and offer spiritual care/weekly (Sunday) services to Anglican students of the institution.

The ministry's Bible Quiz competition was twice organized within the Synod Year at Paternoster Schools, Iriebe and at FAASAA Group of Schools, Rumuodara with 12 schools participating. Doma Group of Schools, Woji took the first position and overall trophy.

We commend the Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Ozioma Iheanetu and his team also for the publication in March this year of ***“Christo-Intellectual”***, a magazine/newsletter which further serves as the ministry's instrument of outreach to those it serves.

At the beginning of this year, the Diocese through the Ministry, distributed free copies of the Scripture Union Devotional guide – *The Daily Power* to students of 22 secondary schools. The sum of five hundred and sixty thousand naira (N560, 000.00) was spent on this. The Diocese will appreciate the involvement of more volunteers as well as generous sponsors for the activities of this ministry.

DIOCESAN MUSIC MINISTRY

The Diocesan Music Ministry was not engaged with many activities within the current Synod year. Some of the activities of the Ministry which ought to be reported here have been put forward for some obvious reasons. However the following were the much the Ministry could achieve within the above period:

2017 Diocesan Carols of Nine Lessons

The above programme was an integral part of the last Diocesan Mega Night Vigil hosted by St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery, on Friday, 22nd December, 2017. About 120 choristers participated in the colourful event.

Beginning of Year Retreat

The above retreat to start off the year was held at St. James Anglican Church, Iriebe Parish, on Saturday, 3rd February, 2018. The programme was poorly attended.

2018 Diocesan ACM Singing Competition

The finals of the above annual event took place on Saturday, 26th May, 2018 at the Cathedral Church of all Saints. The result of the well contested event is as follows:

- All Saints' Cathedral – 1st (for the third year running)
- St. Jude's Oginigba Deanery – 1st runner up
- St. Mark's Elelenwo Deanery – 2nd runner up

2018 Adult Choir Singing Competition

The 2018 Diocesan Adult Choir Singing Competition finals took place on Saturday, 21st July at the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi. At the end of the keen contest, the finalists performed as follows:

The winning choir, St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery Choir with 681 points
1st runner up (second position) New Covenant, Eliminigwe Parish with 654 points

2^d runner up (third position) Anglican Church of The Advent, Rumuewhara-Oroigwe with 622 points

The Choirmaster of the winning choir - St. Andrew's, was also adjudged the best conductor. At the end of the competition, these choirs were awarded their trophies as well as cash gifts.

We congratulate the choirs as well as others that participated right from the preliminaries, the Diocesan Music Ministry Chaplains, The Ven. Dr. Ikechukwu G. Anene and The Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor; the Diocesan Music Director, Mr. Wilcox Abbey and all the choirmasters and organists for their impressive performances.

The children's choirs of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi and St. Mark's, Elelenwo were the special guest choirs for this year. The house was thrown into ecstasy by the rendition of the UEFA Champions' League theme song by the All Saints' Children's choir.

We stand in total condemnation of the ugly report of the use of Mercenaries among our choirs during the singing competitions. We admonish the choirmasters and organists to use only choristers from their own churches within the Diocese of Evo when going for singing competitions.

We are also glad to report to this Synod that the overall standard of singing within the Diocese has generally improved; this shows that the competition is yielding the desired results. We were told by the adjudicators that in general, the Diocese of Evo appears to be the best among the Dioceses within this region.

INDUSTRIAL CHAPLAINCY

We commend the efforts of the Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Ugochukwu Nwahaghi and members of the Diocesan Industrial (Business/Workplace) Chaplaincy in taking the message of the gospel to offices and business places within our Diocese.

The quarterly Market Evangelism activities took the members to Oil Mill, Rumuokwursi, Elioza Flyover and Eliobolo markets.

The chaplaincy also visited and prayed with management and members of ten business and industrial outfits during the Rogation days of Monday, 7th to Wednesday, 9th May, 2018.

In the year under review, ministry activities of the chaplaincy were taken to new grounds such as Eredon Motors, East/West Road, Rumuokwursi, Dabies Bread by Pipeline, Rumuokwursi and Earth-Watch Integrated Technology services at Rumuokwursi.

We are quite pleased with the activities of this chaplaincy. There are many more companies and business organizations around us to reach out to. We therefore charge the Chaplain and members to redouble their efforts in order to cover more grounds. Members of the Diocese desiring to serve the Lord through this chaplaincy are hereby invited to join them.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL, DISCIPLESHIP, LITERATURE & PUBLICATIONS MINISTRY

This ministry exists in the Diocese to ensure that the word of God is given its due place in our lives and our churches through conscientious mobilization, preparation and effective delivery at every available opportunity.

During the synod year, the Chaplaincy anchored a number of crucial programmes such as:

A 2-Day Adult Sunday School Teachers Conference held at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish, from Friday 7th to Saturday, 8th July, 2017. It was very well-attended!

The 2017 Diocesan Bible Week/Sunday activities which held from Monday, 23rd to Sunday, 29th October had as theme “*Rightly dividing the word of God in these perilous times*” (2 Tim. 2:15). Highpoint of the week’s activities was the Bible Quiz held at local churches, Administrative blocs and at the Diocesan level. The Cathedral Bloc tied with Oroigwe/Eliobolo Archdeaconry in the 1st position with 41 points each. They were followed by Okporo Deanery with 36 points.

Some members of this ministry participated in the 2018 National Writers Workshop for the Church of Nigeria Publications hosted by the Diocese of Nsukka from Wednesday, 21st to Saturday, 24th March.

The Chaplain, The Rev. Canon Samson O. Abada and some members of this Ministry have continued to significantly contribute articles to the various publications of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). They also

featured prominently in the various Bible study sessions during the last April International Christian Leadership Conference held at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt.

We charge all ministers and their church leadership team to ensure that the ministry of the Adult Sunday school continues to maintain its prominent spot in the Sunday Worship programme of their churches. Once again, We direct all churches to ensure that Sunday School classes should last for at the least one hour within the church services.

DIOCESAN PRAYER MINISTRY

Within the last synod year, this ministry has undertaken the following programmes:

- Beginning of the year retreat for Bishop, Clergy, Church Teachers & wives at Church of the Messiah, Iriebe, St. John the Evangelist Church , Atali and Rose of Sharon, Atali
- Prophetic prayer and fasting in preparation for the Diocesan Mega Crusade and post- vestry meeting, Monday, 19th – 27th March, 2018 at St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani,
- Special vigil to address issues in our churches, Friday 10th May, 2018 at Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo,
- Mid-year fasting and prayer for the Bishop, clergy, Church Teachers and wives on July 2nd – 4th, 2018
- Diocesan Mega Vigils
- Pre-Synod vigil at St. Jude's, Oginigba

In addition to the above, the ministry holds its regular Diocesan Monthly Prayer meeting for the prayer squad every last Sunday of the month at St. Michael's Rumuomasi and vigil every first Thursday of each month at church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba. At the national level, members of this ministry attended the 20th National Prayer Convocation held at the Cathedral Church of St. Stephen, Diocese of Umuahia, on Monday, 26th February, 2018. The theme was *Standing in the place of prayer for the church renewal and national transformation* (Ezekiel 22:30). We urge them, and of course, all faithful in Evo, to do more to stand in the gap of prayer for the spiritual and physical well-being of the church and the nation at large, especially in the face of the unceasing onslaught against the body of Christ by murderous Fulani herdsmen and Jihadists. Failure to pray is an invitation to the enemy to have a field day.

FAMILY LIFE AND HOME FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Within the last synod year, this unit had the following activities:

1. *Family Life/Home Fellowship Retreat*, November 10, 2017 at St. Mark's Deanery, Elelenwo; 56 participants attended.
2. *Family Life/Home Fellowship Retreat*, February 24, 2018 at New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road; 91 attendees drawn from 31 churches participated.

3. *Diocesan Home Fellowship Fair*, April 27 & 28, 2018 at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Rumuomasi Deanery. The first day's attendance was 505 persons while the last day had 540 persons in attendance.

We commend their efforts and urge them to do more in the coming years.

From what we saw at the Home Fellowship Fair, it is apparent that a good number of churches are still to start the Home Fellowship Ministry. It is equally obvious that they do not have any reason for their non-compliance. This cannot continue. Every church in this Diocese is to establish neighbourhood home cell fellowships without further delay. We shall hold all clergy and church teachers responsible where this directive is not obeyed.

With effect from January 2019, Home Fellowship meetings will hold in all our churches on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. No Church is at liberty to alter this. The Family Life/Home Fellowship Ministry is to ensure total compliance by all churches and send us regular reports.

SPORTS MINISTRY

The Clergy football club of the Diocese played 2 friendly games within the synod year and lost both to Etche clergy team (1-0) and Trinity College, Umuahia (3-0). They ministry also participated as a block in the 2018 Father's Day Football competition and came out 4th. The sports ministry also officiated fully at Diocesan Schools' Inter-house sports competitions. Furthermore, in conjunction with the DCMF, the ministry organized a football competition for men, from 12th May to 16th June, 2018.

BOARDS, COMMITTEES, INSTITUTIONS AND DIRECTORATES

Evo Diocesan Education Board and Schools

To the glory of God, the Diocesan Education Board has continued to provide leadership and governance in uplifting the standards of the three existing Diocesan Schools – Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS), Rumuobiokani, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls School (ACMGS), Elelenwo, and Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools (WOFGS), Woji.

Towards improving the general and personnel management of the Diocesan schools, We have re-assigned The Rev. Canon Femi Igbamerun who until recently was the Vice Principal (Administration) of ACMGS, Elelenwo to the newly created desk of Performance Improvement Coordinator. His duty is to coordinate the efforts of the three Diocesan schools towards securing the Association of Christian Schools International ACSI (accreditation, personnel & organisation management system and ICT-enhanced operations of the schools). As a follow up to the ACSI requirements for accreditation, the Education Board has established Governing Councils for each of the schools. They consist each of 3-4 members of the Education Board (one of whom is the

Chairman), the Principal of the school, School Chaplain, a representative each of the Alumni Association, PTA and the host community. We pray that the Lord will lead us to a successful accreditation of our schools.

In the interim, the Diocese hosted Mr. Mike Epp, the Global Vice President of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) who came from the US head office of the Body on a pre-accreditation and candidacy visit to ascertain the level of preparedness, readiness and qualification of our three schools for international accreditation by the ACSI. The visit lasted from Wednesday, 24th to Friday, 26 January, 2018.

Students' Academic, Spiritual and Extra-Curricular Activities

We are pleased to announce that our Diocesan schools have continued to record steady all-round growth. The three schools now have a combined population of 1,582 students in all levels, compared to 1,514 last year, while staff population has marginally increased to 261.

Our schools have continued to improve in their success rates at external certificate examinations, WAEC and NECO. A breakdown of the percentage performance of our students in 5 subjects or more, including Mathematics and English is below:

- BCMSS, Rumuobiokani performance improved from 62% and 71% Credit passes in WAEC and NECO respectively in the 2015/2016 academic session to 70% and 73% respectively in the 2016/2017 session.
For 2018, the school recorded an overall performance of 71% in the recently released WAEC examination results.
- ACMGS, Elelenwo performance improved from 60% Credit passes in WAEC in 2015/2016 academic session to 75% and 80% in WAEC and NECO respectively in 2016/2017 session.
For 2017/2018 the school recorded 79% success in mathematics in the recently released WAEC examination results. This is a major improvement on the previous years. The summary of the performance in some other subjects is as follows: English Language - 70% pass; Civic, Technical Drawing, Agricultural Science, Geography, Food and Nutrition and Christian Religious Studies all recorded 100% pass. Other subjects performed as follows: Physics- 96%, Chemistry-79%, Biology-81%, and Data Processing (DP)-83%. The overall performance in the remaining subjects was not impressive.
- WoFGS performance improved from 64% and 83% Credit passes in WAEC and NECO respectively in 2015/2016 academic session to 86% and 87% respectively in 2016/2017 session.
For 2018 the school recorded 100% success in eleven subjects including English and Mathematics.

We trust God to enable our Schools to maintain this steady progress towards achieving our Vision for them.

We are pleased to report that one of our students, **Master Cassius Ejekwu** of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani emerged 3rd out of 490 other participants in the 2017/2018 Einstein Science Challenge organized by the Rotary Club International, GRA, Port Harcourt District on the 8th of May this year.

On the 9th of July this year at the Shell Residential Area, Rumuokwursi, some science students of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani participated in a science-based competition NXPLORER which aim was to identify a world problem and proffer solution to such using water, energy and agriculture. The competition was organised by Shell/Mind Africa. At the competition our students were quite ingenious. They invented a Mini-Hydro-Electricity Project which is to be used to solve the problem of food and energy shortage in the Niger Delta region – problems said to be caused by the excess water and seasonal flooding in the area.

At the event were the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) Rivers State branch and the British Council among other observers.

We are glad to inform the Synod that the Rivers State branch of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) has chosen our students with their project to represent the State at the National Conference of STAN coming up from 13th to 9th August this year in Katsina State.

The students of ACMGS equally took part in several external competitions during the last Synod year. Worthy of note is the Quiz competition organized by the Rumuokwuta Old Girls' Association on 31st July, 2017 at Nigerian Television Authority premises, Mgbuoba in which they took the first position and received a cash award of ₦50,000; and the Choir Singing Competition organized by the Rotary Club, on 10th February, 2018 at Archdeacon Brown Education Centre, Woji in which they took the 4th position.

2018 Joint Evo Diocesan Children's Day Celebration: The Evo Diocesan schools on Monday, 28th May jointly celebrated this year's National Children's Day at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani. The day's events included March-past, drama presentations, cultural dances and choreography by students of each of the schools. Earlier that day at ACMGS, Elelenwo, a non-governmental organization, the Chocolate Heart Foundation in collaboration with Suzzette Family First Foundation (S3F) & RivEthics, celebrated our Children. Led by the founder, Mrs. Ediseye Elizabeth Mukoro, members of the Chocolate Heart Foundation delivered talks and also presented the children with books and light refreshments.

They also qualified for the finals of the debate competition organized by the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) on Friday, 25th May, 2018 and also took the first position.

ACMGS Special Anniversaries Celebration

The Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo celebrated her 75th anniversary of inception and 10th year anniversary of its handover to the Anglican Church (Evo Diocese) by the Rivers State Government.

This epoch-making event witnessed a massive turnout of persons from all walks of life notable among whom were the Old Girls of the School led by the national president, Lady Professor Stella Ogbuagu. Equally in attendance were government officials from Rivers and Bayelsa States, some clergy and members of the Diocesan Community, traditional chiefs and elders of Elelenwo Community led by the Eze Elelenwo-Etor, HRH Amb. Sunny Weli-Chuku, parents/guardians, friends of the school and representatives of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

The event was chaired by Sir Chief Mike Ejims-Enwukwe.

It was a day of speeches, special presentations by the Old Girls and current pupils/students of the school and award of prizes by the Diocesan Education Board, some Old Girls, management of the school, and the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) to both the best performing graduating and returning students as well as members of staff. We prayed for the graduating students and also unveiled the school's Magazine and Annual Year Book, THE PEARL.

WFGS marked the Founder's Day in memory of Late Dame Beatrice Eke (the founder of the school) at Christ Harvest (Ang.) Church, Faith Avenue. The school also went on excursions to Ojukwu Bunker at Umuahia, Pepsi Bottling Company at Aba and Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt.

Staff Development

The Education Board in its commitment to the training and retraining of staff, has continued to support their attendance to both internally-organised and 3rd-party retreats, seminars and conferences. To this end, staff of the schools participated in the following major training programmes, among others:

- ❖ Termly compulsory pre-resumption retreats and trainings.
- ❖ Kingdom School Institute (KSI), an affiliate of Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) three-year part time course for some of the staff held in August, 2017.

- ❖ One-Day training for teaching staff of Anglican Schools in Port Harcourt organized by the Cambridge University Press on 25th April, 2018 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu.
- ❖ ACSI-organized Africa Round Table 3 on Christian education in South Africa held on 19th – 22nd February, 2018 with the theme: *African Development and Partnerships*. The event was attended by the Lord Bishop, the Chairman, Education Board and the Principal of ACMGS, Elelenwo.
- ❖ West Africa (Anglophone) Round Table on Christian Education 2018 which held at the Redemption Camp, Ogun State from the 9th to 12th of May, 2018 with the theme: Called to Rebuild, Repair and Restore (Isaiah 58: 12b). In attendance were the Lord Bishop, Principals of the three schools and The Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, the Performance Improvement Coordinator.
- ❖ A Two-Day training session for all staff on Biblical Integration held on 14th and 15th June, 2018.
- ❖ One-day workshop on “Contemporary Mathematics methods for effective teaching” for mathematics teachers of the three schools on 17th April, 2018 at Viontel Hotel, Stadium Road, Port Harcourt.

Infrastructural Developments

A series of capital projects are presently underway in the three Diocesan schools to the glory of God. They are:

- ❖ ACMGS: Work is progressing steadily on the construction of the two-storey eighteen-classrooms and Administrative offices complex. Inter-lock pathways have been put in different parts of the school compound to avoid dirt paths.
- ❖ BCMSS: Inter-locking and landscaping of the hostel/classroom environment have been completed. The 2-storey administrative block is at 90% completion and will very soon be ready for dedication.
- ❖ WFGS: The construction of a 2-storey classroom block has commenced. The building has exceeded first decking and is now being prepared for the second.

Special Donations and Support

Our gratitude goes to all those, too numerous to mention, who have supported the schools with donations in one form or the other. We pray that God will continue to enrich them all. We note specially the following;

We thank the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, GSSRS for his generous donation to the Diocese towards the purchase of school shuttle buses for our three Diocesan schools. For this and many other acts of goodwill extended to our Diocese by the Governor, we say THANK YOU to him and pray that God will continue to bless and prosper the government of the State under his care.

BCMSS, Rumuobiokani

- Similar donations and a cash of N100, 000 were made to Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School (BCMSS), Rumuobiokani by the same RSUBEB under the Venerable Dr. F. N. Akah. We thank The Ven. Dr. Fyeface Akah, JP very much for his kindness in including our Schools as beneficiaries of these notable gifts.
- The Parent-Teacher Association of BCMSS undertook the restructuring and expansion of the Dining Hall with tiles and GMP windows to cope with the increasing number of students and towards the accreditation visit by ACSI Vice President (Global).
- Other donations to the school in cash came from Hon. Martin Amaewhule, House Leader, Rivers State House of Assembly and Sir Godfrey Nnamdi Oluabunwa.

ACMGS, Elelenwo

Different sets of ACMGS, Old Girls Association have made varied donations at different times to the school. A new Mathematics laboratory equipped by the **Old Girls' Alumni Association in North America** was dedicated by us on Monday, 16th October, 2017. The project cost both the Alumni and the school the sum of N959, 650. The goodwill of the Old Girls is part of the efforts of the school to address the growing phobia of mathematics amongst the students of the school. The Association also gave a scholarship of N35,000 to each SS3 student.

- **The 1980 set** of the Old Girls donated 50 Science laboratory stools; while **the 1991 set** constructed a modern kitchen and also donated some computers and books.
- **The Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)** on Friday, 20th October, 2017 made a generous donation of the following items to the school: 150 pieces of classroom/students' desks, 1 fridge, 1 filing cabinet, 1 book shelf, 1 executive table, 1 executive chair, 5 sets of teachers' tables and chairs, 5 visitors' chairs.
- The Presidency National Trust Fund, Abuja, through the Rivers State UBEb donated the following sporting equipment to the school: 8 pairs of spike boots, 20 pieces of whistles, 8 pairs of jerseys for boys & girls, 7 pieces of red cones, 7 pieces of yellow cones, 2 pieces of large measuring tapes, 8 pieces of relay batons, 1 carton junior size skipping ropes, 4 pieces of hammer and two pieces of stop watches.

WTWoF Group of Schools, Woji

- The Parent-Teacher Association donated 8 plasma Television sets to Woji Town Word of Faith Group of Schools for the commencement of e-learning in the school.

On her part, the Diocese has disbursed a total sum of One Hundred and One Million, Nine Hundred and Thirty Five Thousand Naira (N101, 935,000) only within the last two years to the three schools as follows:

- BCMSS, Rumuobiokani – N37, 467, 500
- ACMGS, Elelenwo – N37, 467, 500
- WTWoFGS, Woji – N27,467, 500 for their on-going capital projects.

The Diocese hereby appeals for more support to our schools from the government and other well-spirited individuals, groups and organizations towards addressing their numerous developmental needs with a view to them becoming centres of academic, spiritual and moral excellence. Such supports will always be appreciated.

Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital (BEMH)

We are glad to report that since the inception of the hospital, certain milestones have been achieved. Currently, Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital provides the following medical services:

- General consultation & drugs
- Laboratory investigations & diagnostic tests
- Hospitalization
- Annual physical examination
- Maternity care (including delivery)
- General surgeries
- Accident & emergency services
- Eye clinic (in view)

PATIENT'S DIARY

S/N	Description	Number of patients, May-Dec. 31, 2017	Number of patients Jan. - July, 2018	Remarks
1	Adult in-patient	6	4	Folders created
2	Adult out-patient	58	125	Folders created
3	Children in-patient	16	7	Folders created
4	Children out-patient	42	83	Folders created
5	Ante Natal	13	7	Folders created
6	Number of deliveries	1	7	Normal delivery
	Total number of out-patient	136	233	Folders created

	Total Number of in-patient	17	26	Folders created
--	----------------------------	----	----	-----------------

The hospital has recorded eight (8) deliveries-7 Spontaneous Vaginal Deliveries (SVD) and 1 Caesarean Section, C/S).

In terms of personnel, the hospital has a total 19 dedicated and hardworking staff, who, in line with our vision as a missionary hospital which is to provide medical services to the society at a minimal cost, have been able to generate some income from the operations of the hospital. We urge them to work harder to place the hospital on the front burner in the league of first class medical providers in Nigeria.

The Diocesan Health Management Board hosted a 2-day Medical Outreach at the hospital from Friday, 20th to Saturday, 21st October, 2017. The outreach attracted over 800 persons who were attended to in their various areas of health needs.

Bishop Elenwo Memorial Hospital is our collective heritage as a church community and we don't have a choice than to nurture it to success. We depend on the staff and all members of the Diocese to run with this vision. Let us repeat, for emphasis sake, that non patronage of the hospital by all of us, is tantamount to disobedience to godly directives. The hospitals we patronise now over our own, have been built by others. We must build our own.

Activities of the Diocesan Investment Board and Project Committee

This Board is chaired by Sir Chief Gilbert E. Chuku. It superintends the operations of all business outfits of the Diocese on behalf of the Diocesan Board. The Investment Board is currently undertaking a reorganization exercise and financial audit of the Diocesan Printing Press for improved performance.

The Board has commenced farming activities on the 1.8 hectare Diocesan land at Atali. An initial 1000 plantain suckers purchased from the Internal Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Ibadan are being planted on the land. This will be followed very shortly by an additional 1, 484 suckers by the end of September this year.

The Board is also proposing to include fish ponds within the farm for optimal use of the land.

Establishment of a Diocesan Stationery/Clergy Vestment Shop

Preparations have reached advanced stages on this investment outfit with the construction of bookshelves and acquisition of office tables and chairs. A team has also been commissioned by the Investment Board to draw up a feasibility study/business plan for this outfit for the purpose of opening up all grey areas and to ensure that we invest appropriately. We are looking at the beginning of October this year for the take-off of this shop.

Our Tour of Diocesan Lands

We undertook a facility assessment visit to all landed properties acquired within our jurisdiction for the Diocese since our inception to ascertain their current status. On these visits with us were the legal team, other principal officers of the Diocese and members of the Investment Board and Projects Committee.

From our observation, some of the lands have either been seriously or marginally encumbered. Appropriate steps are however being taken to address the challenges. These include the fabrication and erection of sign posts on all the lands/property, the clearing and fencing of some of them which are still on-going by the Diocesan Project Committee led by Sir Charles Chuku.

DIOCESAN YOUTH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CENTRE

Computer Training

To the glory of God, the Diocesan ICT Centre has been on the path of steady growth. The Centre has continued to train and equip our youths with relevant skills to meet the information need of our churches and the society at large through the sponsorship of the churches.

For the period under review, 9 candidates underwent computer training between August and September, 2017; 22 others completed their training for the session that lasted from February to June this year and shall be graduating here in this synod.

Live Streaming/CCTV and solar installation training

Training of church media workers on programme live streaming techniques is on-going. The aim of this training is to empower them with the requisite knowledge to live-stream Diocesan programmes and events.

Currently the mobilization of interested members of the Diocese on CCTV/solar installation has commenced and the training will hold from 8th – 13th of August, 2018.

BISHOP'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT

The Diocese of Evo does not only aim at raising members to be spiritually equipped through the sound teaching of the word of God, but also seeks to lift them out of hardship. Through the Advisory Committee, the Diocese seeks to improve the economic condition of her indigent members. Members who apply are usually screened, selected, trained and empowered with needed resources to enable them start or grow their businesses and then become wealth creators.

So far the Advisory Committee has trained selected members in the following areas – catering, fashion design, hair styling, laundry & dry cleaning, interior decoration/events management.

During the Diocesan Rededication Service of Sunday, 21st January this year, a total of Nineteen (19) persons who benefitted from the various skills acquisition programmes of the Committee in the last quarter of 2017 received tools to start-up their own small businesses. A breakdown of persons trained in the various skills and empowered is as follows:

- Catering – 14 persons empowered with gas cookers and cylinders
- Interior Decoration – 1 person empowered with a sewing machine
- Dry Cleaning – 1 person empowered with a washing machine
- Welding – 1 provided with a business space
- Fashion Designing – 2 persons empowered with sewing machines
- Hair Dressing – 1 person empowered with hair dryer and other accessories

We are pleased to inform the Synod that a good number of those who have so far benefited from these trainings and empowerment schemes of the Diocese are reportedly doing very well. We are also aware that some of them merely came to defraud the Diocese as we have equally discovered that they are not into any self-sustaining business.

We commend the efforts of Dame Priscilla Nosiri and Sir Chidi Osuji, both Advisers to the Bishop on economic empowerment for the great work they are doing. We appeal to members of the Diocesan Community who are in a position to support the activities of this Committee to please come forward and give a helping hand by providing either cash or materials to support those of our members who are economically vulnerable.

DIRECTORATE OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS (DCPA)

The Diocesan desk office of this Church of Nigeria Directorate is chaired by The Rev. Canon Chuka Peter Opara. It has as its mission to create a conducive environment for the enthronement of responsible citizenship and good governance at all levels. It aims at achieving this through programmes of mass mobilization, sensitization and social orientation of the citizenry.

The Directorate held a School Hall meeting on November 7th, 2018 with the theme “*No More Shall Our Young Be Cast*” (Exodus 23:26). This outreach to secondary school students in the State was for the purpose of addressing the growing social malaise of negative sexuality, cultism and drug addiction among our teenagers and young adults which have in recent times led to loss of direction and premature death on the part of our impressionable youth.

In addition to our keynote address on the theme, other speakers presented talks on the various aspects of the above three vices. There was also a debate between students of Federal Government Colleges in Port Harcourt, Edo Diocesan and some privately-owned Schools on the topic: “The School, not the Church is culpable for the declining morality in our schools.

The Directorate also hosted a Church Hall meeting for the entire Diocese at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Elelenwo Deanery on 26th May, 2018. The focus this time was on *"The Politics of Creed and Tongue: Whither the Nigerian Christian?"* Speakers on the occasion which was chaired by Prince John Bazia included Hon. Barr. Nimi Walson Jack, Mr. Oliver Wolugbum (Director, National Orientation Agency) and Evangelist Dr. Barr. Tony Francis.

FINANCIAL REMITTANCES TO THE DIOCESE

Awards to High Performing Churches/Group

We continue in this Synod with our practice of announcing and appreciating churches, Archdeaconries and groups with outstanding (high) record of income generation and remittance to the Diocese in the preceding year.

Accordingly, we hereby announce the names of churches and groups that excelled above others in **2017** in their various categories. It is to be noted here that the performances here are based on the 10%/15% weekly, 100% Bi-monthly Diocesan offering in all churches and 100% special episcopal visits offering remittances by churches. The best performing churches and group are to receive our Diocesan awards in appreciation of their efforts.

They are:

- **Category A (For the Cathedral and Deanery Churches)**
1st position – St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery with N20, 915, 337.83
- **Category B (For Archdeaconry Headquarters Churches)**
1st position – Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District with N3, 105, 968.15
- **Category C (For Parish Churches)**
1st position – New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo with N4, 108, 278.48
- **Category D (For Station Churches)**
1st position – Holyhill Ang. Church, Eliozu with N1, 062, 077.00
- **Category E (For Worship Centres)**
1st position – A.W.C. (now Calvary Anglican Church) Apna-Ogwu, Mgbuesilaru with N258, 800. 50
- **Category F (For Activity Groups)**
1st position – Diocesan MU/WG with N3, 504, 383.20

The Diocesan Council of Knights belongs to this category. Their 0% performance for 2017 is most embarrassing to us. The same goes with the Diocesan AYF. We commend the Diocesan Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM) for their remittance of N27, 874.36 even when we did not call for it.

- **Category G (For Archdeaconries)**

1st position – Woji Archdeaconry with N250, 000.

In this category, 2 Archdeaconries – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo and Trinity Missionary remitted nothing to the Diocese. For some years now, the Archdeaconries have been generally dismal in their performances. It is either that this is deliberate or a case of someone (persons) not living up to their responsibilities. We will no longer allow this to continue.

The Diocesan Audit team should immediately move into action and verify the true state of income of all Archdeaconries and the Council of Knights for 2016 and 2017 including that of the 2017 winner, Woji, with a view to knowing what ought to have been paid to the Diocese and compel them to comply. This should be handled urgently and the outcome reported to the Diocesan Board at its September meeting.

We have a duty in this Synod to remind all Archdeaconry Boards, Deanery/Church Councils/Steering Committees, clergy, church teachers, activity groups and their leaders that payment of either 10% or 15% remittance of their weekly/monthly/annual income is mandatory. It is not left at the discretion of anyone to decide whether or not to pay.

Those who are treating this matter lightly or are persisting in their act of deliberate or inadvertent under-remittance should now advise themselves and consequently put an end to this ignoble act that has continued to challenge the income generation strategies of this Diocese. God's Kingdom business interests are at stake here and we should not expect the King Himself to fold His arms and watch us run down His Estate.

ROSE OF SHARON, ATALI

New Approach to Sustaining Our Ministry at Rose of Sharon, Atali

Our Rose of Sharon Anglican Church which was built and handed over to the Diocese by the Diocesan Women is yet to enjoy the type of support and response to her weekly services as we had envisioned. In order to correct this, we proposed to the Diocesan Board in December last year a new approach towards maintaining a regular presence and sustaining our ministry in that secluded area of our Diocese. This new approach we trust, will save that beautiful edifice from decay and vandalization by some hoodlums who operate in that area.

Our new strategy which is already in place since January this year involves a monthly schedule of duty in which a minimum of 40 worshippers from each of

the Administrative Blocs supported by some major activities groups are to be chosen by the Archdeacon or Rector to go there to maintain weekly (Sunday) worship services supervised by the priest in charge of the station.

All Archdeacons and Rectors, supported by their clergy and church teachers as well as leaders of the selected Diocesan activity groups are to ensure that our expectations are met whenever their respective blocs or groups are on duty.

Each Archdeacon or Rector is to mandatorily write and submit a detailed report of the performance of his Admin Bloc at the end of their assigned month to the Bishop and the Diocesan Board. It should be noted here that failure on any one's part in this matter shall be visited with severe penalties.

Each Archdeacon/Rector should set up a 5-man Committee in their various blocs to ensure the faithful compliance of all churches under them in the month of their assignment. The current schedule of visits for worship and mission duties for 2018 is as follows:

- January – Cathedral Group of Churches
- February – Rumuomasi and Elelenwo Deaneries
- March – Rumuobiokani Deanery
- April – Evo Southeast Archdeaconry
- May – Woji Archdeaconry
- June – Oginigba Deanery/Diocesan CMF
- July – Okporo Deanery/Diocesan AYP
- August – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry
- September – Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry
- October – Chapel of Grace & Diocesan MU/WG
- November – New Wine/Diocesan Council of Knights & Lay Readers
- December – Diocesan Board Members and Diocesan Women Executives up to 3rd Sunday in December.

Every Bloc/Group on duty is to end their monthly mission with a thanksgiving service with offerings in cash/kind for the upkeep or support of the Station Priest or church teacher.

The Diocesan Security Adviser, Sir Captain Clement Ejiofor should kindly provide security to members.

We thank all the administrative blocs and groups that have so far covered duties there since January for their very satisfactory performance. Those for the remaining months of the year should ensure that they faithfully play their parts and according to specifications.

LOOKING AHEAD

➤ Reorganisation of prayer groups of Men, Women & Youth

In the coming year, we shall be reorganising the various church prayer groups of the men, women and youths with a view to making them assume a Diocesan

outlook as well as become more ministry-focused or centred. By this, we mean that all churches (where possible) will have prayer groups of CMF, MU/WG/AYF that bear the same names across the Diocese and each group shall be responsible for a specially assigned ministry at the Diocesan level under the supervision of a Chaplain and Diocesan a Co-ordinator.

Already, we have met and extensively discussed this matter with the clergy, their wives and leaders of the existing prayer groups from all the churches where we settled to set up a team to work out the modalities for dissolution of present groups, reconstitution and mode of operation of the new ones when established.

In our December meeting of the Diocesan Board, we set up a committee headed by the Venerable Chidi Worgu to work out details of this re-organization exercise. This Committee has since concluded its assignment and submitted its report to the Diocesan Board which has in turn deliberated extensively on it in two sittings. Consequently, we hereby direct all the presently existing Prayer Groups of the CMF, MU/WG & AYF in all our churches to begin their winding up processes as they shall stand dissolved at the end of this year to make room for the new Groups that will be constituted by January, 2019.

The soon-to-be-reorganised Prayer groups of our churches will meet only once a month immediately, after services on the last (4th or 5th) Sunday of the month.

➤ **Towards a more impactful Discipleship ministry in our Diocese**

Our vision as a Diocese has been and still remains “to love, teach and preach Christ; bringing up members filled with the Holy Spirit, rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ and prepared to make heaven at the end of their earthly sojourn.” We have purposed and tried to achieve this over these nine years by emphasising the need for and actually engaging in in-depth study of the Word of God and discipleship in our churches and groups (although some clergy and their churches have not fared well in this area).

The challenges we have battled with notwithstanding, we are determined however to fulfil our ministry and this and other areas, so that every member of this Diocese, young or old, is fully equipped to become a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this end, we shall be revising some of our existing teaching/discipleship manuals so that they can become more impactful and spiritually beneficial to those for whom they are prepared to serve. In the same vein, we shall be developing new manuals for the preparation of candidates for enrolment or licensing into some groups of the church.

1. Consequently, the Adult Sunday School, Discipleship, Literature and Publications Ministry (ASSDLPM) led by The Rev. Canon Samson O. Abada is hereby charged to revise our current preparatory manual for confirmation candidates. The Rev. Canon Cephas Okarefe should work

with Canon Abada and his group in this revision exercise. In addition, another manual for Adult baptism preparatory classes and that for those sponsoring candidates for both infant and adult baptisms should be equally developed.

2. The ASSDLPM should work together with the Family Life and Home Fellowship Ministry of the Diocese co-ordinated by Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu to revise the existing preparatory/counselling manual for intending marriage couples.
3. The Manual for candidates preparing for induction into the Christian Men's Fellowship is to be developed by the following persons:
 - a. The Ven. Thompson Onyewuotu
 - b. The Rev. Canon Ugochukwu Nwahaghi
 - c. Mr. Kiki Briggs
 - d. Sir Barr. Othuke Okpoghe
 - e. Pharm Ijeoma Okey-Ewurum
4. The Manuals for candidates preparing for induction into the Women and Girls' Ministries (MU/WG/SF/GG) are to be developed by:
 - a. Mrs. Happiness Worgu
 - b. Mrs. Priscilla Usifoh
 - c. Dr. Mrs. Joy Chuka-Opapa
 - d. Barr. Mrs. C. Otuka
 - e. Lady Uzor Onweluzo
 - f. The Ven. C. D. Nwachukwu
5. The Manual for the preparation of candidates for licensing as Lay Readers to be developed by:
 - a. The Ven. Godwin I. Anene
 - b. The Rev. Canon Joseph Ofoegbu
 - c. The Rev. Canon Ahamefule Olluor
 - d. Sir Paul Chukwumati
 - e. Lady Maureen Osuagwu
6. The Manual for Churches' **Fortnightly** Home Fellowship Meetings (For the next 3 years) is to be developed by members of the Diocesan Family Life/Home Fellowship Ministry co-ordinated by Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu.

These publications are to be ready for use in this Diocese as from the first quarter of 2019. We therefore implore all those appointed and assigned with these tasks to work very hard in order to deliver their assignments on schedule.

➤ **10th Anniversary of our Diocese**

By July next year, our Diocese will be 10 years old. May we remind us that our Diocese was created on 8th March, 2009 and we, elected Bishop on 22nd May; consecrated on 12th July; the Diocese inaugurated and We enthroned the

following day, 13th at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi. The faithfulness of God for these past 10 years has been remarkable and so, if the Lord tarries, we desire to roll out our drums in elaborate celebrations and thanksgiving to God for how far He has led us.

It is equally our desire to constitute a high-powered Anniversary Planning Committee (APC) to commence early preparations towards the envisaged celebrations of next year. Consequently, we hereby constitute that Committee as follows:

1. Sir Chief Ike B. S. Chinwo – Chairman
2. Sir Barr. Chief Mike Ejims-Enwukwe - Vice Chairman
3. Sir Barr. Mike Epelle
4. Sir Chief Barr. G. O. Dike
5. Sir Chidi Osuji
6. Lady Bridget Dania
7. Mr. John Okene
8. Sir Clement Ejiofor
9. Mr. Iriah Edeghere
10. Brother Mike Azuonwu
11. Barr. Christiana Utchay
12. Mrs. Baridon Chika-Chinda
13. Lady Precious Dimkpa
14. Mr. Lawrence Chinda
15. Sir P. W. O. Owzor
16. Ven. Chidi Worgu
17. Ven. Alex Usifoh
18. Ven. Dr. Ikechukwu Anene
19. Rev. Canon Samuel Obialor
20. Sir Richard Chike-Ehie
21. Mr. Promise Minimah
22. Lady Margret Poloamina
23. Sir Barr. Emmanuel Izuehie
24. Miss Sonia Ariolu
25. Mrs. Priscilla Usifoh
26. Barr. Mrs. Chidinma Otuka
27. Dame Meg Orianwo
28. Mrs. Joy Madume
29. Sir Chief Ernest Chinwo
30. Dr. Kasarachi Innocent
31. Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchuku
32. Dr. George Echeonwu
33. Mr. Silas Ekezie
34. Mr. Emmanuel Wopara
35. Lady Patience Wokoma

36. Lady Wobiandu Morgan-Amadi
37. Barr. Igochukwu Onukem
38. Mrs. Choice Wodi
39. Sir Promise Adele
40. Mrs. Christie Laguda
41. Lady Rita Okuguni
42. Mr. Rogers Ntegun
43. Dame Forstina Aririsuku
44. Mrs. Ichebadu Denis Emmanuel
45. The in-coming Diocesan AYF President

➤ **10th Anniversary Projects Commissioning**

In the coming 10th anniversary celebrations of our Diocese in July next year, we shall be looking forward to dedicating for use a number of on-going projects in some of our churches. This serves as advance notice to the priests and councils and leaders of the churches and groups concerned for them to speed up construction work on the affected edifices some of which have lingered unduly since or before our inception in 2009 as a Diocese. We shall not be comfortable to still see these projects deface our church premises in their uncompleted state by the time of our anniversary. Furthermore, the leadership of these churches and groups should regard this as a positive challenge and work hard enough to position these facilities to be a part of our joyful celebration. The projects in question include but are not limited to the following:

1. All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi new church building
2. New parsonage building by the CMF of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi
3. New St. Jude's Anglican Church building, Oginigba Deanery
4. St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery new church hall complex
5. New vicarage complex of New Wine Church, East West Road Parish, Okporo
6. Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo-Iriebe new church building
7. Church of the Messiah, Iriebe new church building
8. St. James', Iriebe new church building
9. Upper Room, Eliozu new Church building
10. Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara new church building
11. Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahia-Woji new church building
12. Woji Archdeaconry House
13. St. Nicholas', Woji church halls and residential complex by the CMF
14. New Daystar Anglican Youth church building
15. St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery workers and teenagers' church complex
16. Parsonage building of The Great Shepherd, Mgbuesilaru
17. Christ, The Redeemer, Eliogbolo new parsonage building

18. True Vine Church, Iriebe new church building

Church planting

In our address to Synod at Rumuobiokani in 2014, we assigned the task of planting (nesting) of new churches to some Archdeaconry, Deaneries and Parishes including the Cathedral, Diocesan Missions Board and the AYF in preparation for our seventh and tenth anniversaries in 2016 and 2019 respectively. We have since taken an inventory of compliance or otherwise by those assigned this noble task which should be regarded as one of our strategies for evangelisation and re-evangelisation.

Our findings reveal that for the 7th anniversary, Woji Archdeaconry, St. Mark's, Elelenwo and St. Simon's, Okporo Deaneries; New Wine, East West Road, Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioza and Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parishes; Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Board and the Anglican Youth Fellowship ALL FAILED to carry out this task.

Towards the tenth anniversary of next year, the following were equally assigned the task of planting at least one new church:

St. Michael's, Rumuomasi, St. Mark's, Elelenwo and St. Jude's, Oginigba Deaneries; St. James', Iriebe, Holy Trinity, Elingbu, Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba, Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Anglican Church of the Messiah and Church of The Epiphany Parishes and Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara.

This special charge/commission both for the 7th and coming 10th anniversaries still stand. We therefore remind the churches listed in both categories that this remains a task they have to fulfil to the glory of God and the expansion of His kingdom here in Evo. Failing to do so would amount to disobedience to the Great Commission mandate of our Lord and so we expect all affected churches and others to ensure faithful compliance as their 10th anniversary gift to the Diocese.

Meanwhile, we commend Holy Ghost Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish, Iriebe, for being the only Parish that planted a new church in the Diocese within the last twelve months. We pray that the new church would grow rapidly.

➤ **Proposed New Administrative Blocs**

As we look forward to the year ahead, we have already communicated to the Diocesan Board at its meeting of June this year our desire to create some new administrative blocs in the Diocese which, all things being equal, should take effect after our next year's 10th anniversary celebrations.

The new administrative blocs we are proposing will be the following:

- Elelenwo Archdeaconry
- Okporo/Rumuogba Archdeaconry
- Iriebe Archdeaconry
- Paraclete Deanery (Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo)

In the subsequent meetings of the Diocesan Board after this Synod, churches that will make up these new administrative blocs apart from the last one will be determined.

SPECIAL GRATITUDE

- We specially thank the Diocesan Board, Churches, Clergy, Church workers, Groups and several other individuals for the immense support extended to us at the time of our mother, Mrs. Eunice Oroma's death and burial early this year. Your solidarity, love and care were unprecedented and would never be forgotten. And so we use this medium to once again express the deep gratitude of our hearts to everyone for standing by us. May the Lord forever identify with you in your hour of need. Amen.
- We thank Sir Godfrey and Lady Angela Ohuabunwa for their annual Education scholarship grant to the Diocese in support of Senior Secondary School Students of our Diocese from indigent families. We presented cheques to the beneficiaries for the 2017/2018 academic year during Sir Godfrey's 50th Birthday thanksgiving service on Saturday, 10th February this year at St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani. A cheque for another **N2.5m** for the 2018/2019 academic year has since been issued to the Diocese for would-be-recipients.
Sir Godfrey and wife started this scheme in 2014 with a promise to sustain it for 5 years. This is the 5th and final year. To God be the glory for the many lives that this scheme benefitted.

We thank this couple and pray for the outpouring of God's blessings upon their family.

- We are grateful to Mr. Austin Chinda and his family for initiating, building and donating in perpetuity a 2-storey church workers complex to St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery. May God bless him for this massive sacrifice and gift to the church and Diocese.
- We also express our gratitude to Mr. Emeka Awanye and his family for supporting our sponsorship and those of other Evo delegates to the 2018 GAFCON Conference in Jerusalem with the sum of Three Million, Four Hundred Thousand Naira (**N3, 400, 000**). We pray the Lord to lavish him with His bountiful blessings. Amen.

- We thank Mr. Chike Essom who embarked on fresh electrification and lighting of the Bishop's Court Chapel with LED for better illumination.
- We thank Sir Emeka Ihunwo, Eze Woji for singlehandedly roofing the on-going Woji Archdeaconry House project and with a strong promise to undertake its ceiling. May the Lord equally reward him without measure.
- Our gratitude also goes to Eze Sir Robinson Jonathan, Chiefs and elders of Rumuegwumegwu of Elelenwo for their very generous pledge of 5 plots of land to the Diocese for use by the New Life Anglican Church, Rumuodani, Elelenwo.
- Similarly our gratitude is hereby expressed on behalf of the Cathedral Standing Committee, Archdeaconry Boards, Deanery and Parish Church Councils and Station Church Steering Committees to all in our Diocese who in the course of the year made one outstanding donation/contribution or the other towards the welfare of the clergy, church workers and the development of their respective churches. May the Lord abundantly bless all such persons, their families and their other endeavours.

Theological Education: Appeal for Sponsorship of Students

It is becoming increasingly difficult for our students in the various theological institutions where they are undergoing training for the ordained ministry of the church to cope with the financial requirements for their training. At some points, the Diocese has had to intervene. We use this medium to call on those willing to assist us adopt/support a student in training to please come to us, for detailed information on how to go about it. Such a relief will be most appreciated.

New Clergy

We welcome The Venerable and Mrs. Emmanuel Anyasodo to our Diocese. They joined us early in the year from the Diocese of Kwara and have since been posted to St. Simon's Okporo Deanery as Rector. May the Lord bless and prosper their ministry in our midst.

EPISCOPAL VISITS AND FUNCTIONS

Baptisms

We conducted the following services of infant baptisms in the Bishop's Chapel of Refuge and Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo during the year:

- Baby Celebrant Pascal of Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Osakwe on Saturday, 5th August, 2017.
- Baby Pavel Majirogehne Cole-Orife of Mr. Paul and Mrs. Pamela Orife on Saturday, 26th August, 2017
- Baby Chimdiogo Precious of Engr. Somto and Mrs. Uche Mbamalu on Friday, 22nd September, 2017

- Baby Goodnews Akachi of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Omoni-Alete on Saturday, 30th September, 2017
- Baby Idinmachi Charlene of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Egbu, on Sunday, 6th May, 2018 at The Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, Firstfruits Parish, ACMGS, Elelenwo
- Baby Daniel Somtochukwu of Mr. & Mrs. Ndunaka Chukwu on 2nd March, 2018

Confirmations

We held confirmation services as follows:

1. 15 candidates at the Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish on Sunday, 27th August, 2017. It was the first ever confirmation service in that church.
2. 52 candidates at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday, 3rd December, 2017.
3. 31 candidates at Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on Palm Sunday, 25th March, 2018
4. 23 candidates at St. Matthias Atali on Easter Sunday, 1st April, 2018.

Church Christening

We Christened the following churches:

1. The Anglican Worship Centre, Apna-Ogwu, Okporo was christened CALVARY ANGLICAN CHURCH, APNA-OGWU, MGBUESILARU-OKPORO on Easter Eve, Saturday, 31st March, 2018.
2. The Anglican Worship Centre, Ohiaowurum Eli-eli, off Igbo-Etche Road, Rumuokwursi was christened CHRISTUS VICTOR ANGLICAN CHURCH on Easter Sunday, 1st April, 2018

Foundation Stone Laying of new infrastructure

We laid the foundation stone of the following infrastructure:

1. New Wine Anglican Church, East/West Road Parish, Okporo New Parsonage building complex on Easter Monday, 2/4/2018
2. A 2-storey 8 classroom block at Word of Faith, Woji on 29th March, 2018. The Block also contains offices and toilet facilities. We were represented by The Venerable Charles Mordi.

Dedications

The following were dedicated by us within the period under review:

1. A new parsonage building by the Anglican Church of the Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish on Sunday, 27th August, 2017.
2. A 2-storey church workers complex solely initiated, built and donated in perpetuity to St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery by Mr. Austin Chinda on Saturday, 16th December, 2017 to the glory of God.

3. Three new buses to our 3 Diocesan schools from the Rivers State Government on Tuesday, 19th December at ACMGS, Elelenwo during the last meeting of the Diocesan Board for 2018
4. A new palace building of Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo, Eze Woji on Thursday, 15th February, 2018
5. A new Bus by Evo South East Archdeaconry on Friday, 2nd March, 2018
6. A new temporary site of AWC (now CALVARY Anglican Church), Apna-Ogwu, Okporo on Easter Eve, Saturday, 31st March.
7. Marble Altar Seat for the Archdeacon and Holy Table, both anonymous donations by a Parishioner at Anglican Church of Pentecost, Ahai-Woji (ACOPA), on Easter Monday, 2nd April, 2018.
8. A newly completed children's Church Hall building at Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi on Sunday after Ascension, 13th May, 2018.
9. A new Law Chamber - Utchay & Utchay at Elingbu on Tuesday, 15th May, 2018.
10. A fairly used L300 Bus purchased by members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) of the Anglican Church of the Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwursi Parish on Saturday, 19th May, 2018.

FELICITATIONS

For Child Births

- A baby girl to the family of Church Teacher & Mrs. Best Ekendia
- A baby girl to the family of the Diocesan Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi after 7 years of the birth of their 1st child
- A baby boy to the family of Mr. & Mrs. Ndunaka Chukwu
- Twin baby boys to the family of Rev. & Mrs. John Eze
- A baby girl to Evangelist & Mrs. Chinedu Opara
- A baby girl to the family of Paul and Pamela Orife.

We rejoice with these families and many others on God's gift and safe arrival of these babies.

We extend our hearty congratulations to the following members and friends of the Diocese for their individual happy moments within the Synod year:

- 1) Hon. Solomon Abel Eke on his recent election as the Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and commend him for his numerous efforts and plans to place our Local Government on the path of meaningful development.
- 2) The Rt. Hon. Ikuinyi-Owaji Ibani, Speaker, Rivers State House of Assembly on his 50th Birthday held in December last year.
- 3) Sir & Lady Francis Mbeledogu on their 40th wedding anniversary on Sunday, 7th January, 2018.
- 4) Sir Godfrey Nnamdi Ohuabunwa on his 50th birthday anniversary and 33 years in business celebration on Saturday, 10th February, 2018
- 5) HRH Eze J. A. Utchay on his 98th birthday celebration in May this year.

- 6) Mrs. Joy Chuka-Opara on her successful completion of studies and award of Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D) in Psychology and Counselling by the University of Calabar in June this year.
- 7) The Rev. Reginald Chinweze, the Supervising Priest of the Upper Room Anglican Church, Elioza, also on his successful completion of studies and award of Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D) in Banking and Finance by the Imo State University.
- 8) The Rev. Canon Hosanna Naenwi, Vicar of Holy Anglican Church, Iriebe Housing Estate Parish on his successful completion of studies and award of a Master of Theology by Crowther Graduate Seminary, Abeokuta.
- 9) HRH, Eze Amb. Dr. G. B. Odum, JP on his Sunday, 1st July, 2018 celebrations of his 81st birthday and 24 years on the throne as the Paramount Ruler/Nyenweli of Oginigba Community.
- 10) Mr. Edwin S. Pepple on his recent thanksgiving and celebration of his 71st birthday.
- 11) Dr. Moses Idehen of Church of The Holy Spirit, Elioza Parish on his coming 80th birthday Thanksgiving/celebration.
- 12) Sir Hon. Ike and Lady Justina Chinwo on their 10th of July, 2018 25th marriage anniversary.
- 13) Hon. O.C.J. Okocha SAN, MFR, GSSR, JP on his celebration of 40 years of legal practice on Tuesday, 24th July, 2018.
- 14) The Ven. Alex Usifoh, Rector of Rumuomasi Deanery and Chairman of our Diocesan Clergy Welfare Association on his very recent appointment as Chaplain of the Obio/Akpor Local Government Council (OBALGA) by the Executive Chairman, Hon. Solomon Abel Eke. We pray that the Lord would grant him the spiritual grace to carry out his duties. We also thank the Executive Chairman of OBALGA for this privilege extended to our Priest to serve the Local Government.

DEATHS AND OUR COMMISERATIONS

1. Mr. Clifford Amadi, of the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo on Thursday, 17th August, 2017.
2. Mrs. Beatrice Ogonda Nlerum, 91, mother of Sir G. C. Nlerum of All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusu on Friday, 18th August, 2017.
3. Mrs. Monica Ekwutos Abada, 82, mother of The Rev. Canon Samson O. Abada, on 14th September, 2017.
4. Mrs. Philomena Onyiewu, mother of Mrs. Catherine Ejekwu, wife of Rev. Samuel Ejekwu, 72, on Sunday, 24th September, 2017
5. Mrs. Janet T. George, 90, mother/mother-in-law of Mrs. Beauty & The Rev. Canon Roland Benjamin on 8th November, 2017.
6. Madam Adaba Arthur Romeo, 75, on Saturday, 25th November, 2017, mother/mother in-law of Mrs. Orininaemi E. & Surv. Gaius Assor
7. Dame Joanah Aderinola Oweka Dania - 98, mother/mother-in-law of Sir & Lady Victor Dania on Friday, 22nd December, 2017
8. Sir Jacob Ebuzor, 70, father/father-in-law of Mrs. Divine & Rev. Chukwuemeka Udeh on Monday, 1st January, 2018

9. Engr. Emmanuel A. C. Onyekwelu, 78, father of Mr. Chukwuebuka Onyekwelu, of St. Nicholas, Woji District on Thursday, 4th January, 2018.
10. Madam Matilda N. Ohuabunwa - 90, mother of the Ohuabunwa brothers and sister, on Saturday, 13th January, 2018
11. Mrs Eunice Ordu – 84, mother of the Diocesan Bishop on Monday, 15th January, 2018.
12. Mr. Isaac Assor, a senior clerk in the Diocese, 65, on 3rd February, 2018.
13. Prince Francis Mordi, elder brother of The Ven. Charles Mordi, 55, on 5th February, 2018
14. Eze Anson Ndamati Ikeani, 95, traditional Ruler of Mgbuori Community, Rumuokwurusu and father of Dame Meg Orianwo on 22nd February, 2018.
15. Madam Beatrice Ariolu, 87, mother of Hon. George Ariolu of Oginigba Deanery on 15th March, 2018
16. Ezinne Unoaku Christiana Ezigbo, 84, mother of Rev. Maduakona Paul Ezigbo on 25th March, 2018
17. Sir Charles Chinda, 76, a former pastor's warden of St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery, on Tuesday, 17th April, 2018
18. Ezinne Irene Nwachukwu, 83, mother of The Ven. C. D. Nwachukwu on 6th May, 2018
19. Mrs. Patricia John Chinda, 39, wife of The Rev. John Chinda on 8th May, 2018.
20. Mrs. Lady Stella N. Ejilemele, 76, on 18th May, 2018.
21. Dr. Benneth O. Ordu, half-brother of the Bishop, 69, on Monday, 21st May, 2018
22. Elder Chubuzo Christian Ihunwo, 56, elder brother of Eze Sir Emeka Ihunwo on Friday 15th June, 2018.
23. Lady Patience Wodi, 53, wife of Sir Mike Wodi on Saturday, 16th June, 2018
24. Mrs. Roseline Umenna, 73, mother of The Rev. Chukwujekwu Umenna on Monday, 18th June, 2018.
25. Mrs. Estella George, 77, mother of Lady Amonia Ama-Hart

May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace, and to their families we pray for the continuing comfort of the Holy Spirit.

NIGER DELTA PROVINCIAL MATTERS

- The meetings of the **Episcopal Synod, Provincial Council and the Mothers' Union Executive Committee** of the Niger Delta Province were hosted by the Diocese of Niger Delta North at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu from Tuesday 29th – Wednesday, 30th August, 2017. The theme was *"Rehab, the good harlot"* – Joshua 2.
- Our Province hosted the **12th General Synod** of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt, from Monday, 18th – Saturday, 23rd September, 2017. The Synod drew

delegates from across the Church of Nigeria and the Convocation of Anglicans in North America CANA.

Presided over by the Primate of our church, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, the Synod with the theme *“Thou Shalt not Steal”* (Exod. 20:15) deliberated on a number of issues affecting the church and our nation.

We thank His Grace, Archbishop Kattey and wife for the privilege to serve as the chair of the Provincial Local Organizing Committee. We also extend our gratitude to all from across the Province who faithfully served with us in various capacities during the event.

- The first meeting of the **Niger Delta Provincial Council for 2018** took place at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Diocese of Calabar from Tuesday 16th – Wednesday 17th January. The theme was *“Great is Thy Faithfulness”* (Lamentations 3:22-23).

- **Thank You Visit to His Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State:**

His Grace, the Archbishop of our Province, The Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP, led a delegation of the Bishops and wives of our Province on a visit to the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON on Friday, 19th January, 2018 in the Executive Council Chambers of Government House, Port Harcourt.

The purpose of the visit was to thank the Governor for his support and assistance to the Province during the hosting of the Church of Nigeria General Synod in September, 2017. The delegation on behalf of the entire Province presented the Governor with the award of **‘Eminent Personality’** in appreciation of his contributions towards the development and growth of the Anglican Church in general and the Province in particular.

- **Provincial Lay Readers Exchange of Pulpit**

The Provincial Lay Readers Association held an exchange of pulpit among lay readers in the Province on Sunday, 18th March, 2018. Some lay readers from our Diocese were among those deployed to various parts of the Province for the exercise.

- **Emergency meetings** of the Provincial Council and the Women Executive Committee were held on Thursday, 19th April, 2018 at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt at which His Grace and wife, The Most Rev. & Mrs. I. C. O. Kattey, outgoing Archbishop formally introduced their successor, The Rt. Rev. Tunde & Mrs. Dorothy Adeleye, Bishop of Calabar Diocese following the latter’s election to that office on Tuesday, 6th April, 2018 by the House of Bishops which met in Benin, Edo State.

- Also at the meeting, a Provincial Committee to prepare for the service of presentation of the new archbishop was set up, with the Bishop of Etche,

The Rt. Rev. Okechukwu Precious Nwala as chairman. Our Registrar, Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi is a member.

- Archbishop Kattey's Disengagement

The Provincial Send-forth in honour of our retiring Archbishop and wife, The Most Rev. Ignatius C.O. and Mrs. Beatrice G. Kattey, JP is holding on Saturday, 11th August, 2018 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt by 11am. All are invited. Similarly, our Diocesan Board has planned to host His Grace and his wife in a special send-forth session in their honour on Wednesday, 15th August, 2018 at 4:00pm in the All Saints' Cathedral Church hall. The Diocesan Committee planning for this event headed by Sir Ike Chinwo has completed their plans in readiness for the event. Consequently, we encourage all who shall be invited to the event to please endeavour to be in attendance.

➤ **The National Christian Leadership Conference 3**

The third National Christian Leadership Conference organized by the Evangelism, Leadership & Missions Institute International (ELMI), the training arm of the Great Anglican Revival Team of the Province of Niger Delta was held from Monday, 9th to Friday, 13th of April, 2018 at St. Pauls' Cathedral, Diobu, Diocese of Niger Delta North, Port Harcourt, with the theme: *"The Christian Leader in the Market Place"* (Matthew 5:14). Members of our Diocese were in attendance.

JOINT PROVINCES OF THE EAST

Paul University, Awka

The University held her combined 3rd and 4th Convocation Ceremony for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic sessions graduating 134 students comprising 8 First Class, 51 Second Class Upper Division, 59 Second Class Lower Division and 16 in Third Class. The Convocation activities began on Tuesday, 5th and climaxed on Monday, 11th December with the Convocation Ceremony chaired by the Primate of All Nigeria, His Grace, The Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Okoh, who is also the Chancellor of the University.

During the ceremony, some deserving and well accomplished friends of the University carefully chosen based on their invaluable contributions to the University, the Anglican Church and the Nigerian State were conferred with awards of Honorary Doctoral Degrees of the University. Our Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh was among the recipients. We congratulate him and others for this honour.

We have paid our annual investment support fund of N5m to the University for its development. This 3rd payment is in keeping with our pledge as a regular stakeholder Diocese which is to last for 4 years.

Superannuation Fund

The Superannuation Fund Office organized a seminar/training/workshop for all Financial Secretaries/Accountants across the fifty five (55) Dioceses of the Joint Council of the Provinces, East of the Niger from 7th to 9th February, 2018 at Goshen Anglican Retreat Centre, Owerri. Our Financial Secretary, Mr. Lawrence Chinda and the Treasurer, Sir Promise W. O. Owbor, were in attendance.

Trinity Theological College, Umuahia

This year will mark the 70th Anniversary of the existence of our Trinity Theological College, Umuahia. Information and details of activities to mark this event will be communicated to us in due course. Trinity College has contributed immensely to the growth of our church and the body of Christ at large in the past 70 years through her trainings in theological education from which our Diocese has greatly benefitted since our inception. We congratulate the Rector, The Ven. Prof. Udobata Onunwa (FNAS), staff and students of the institution on this landmark celebration. The school recently scaled through the accreditation exercise of the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC).

CHURCH OF NIGERIA

- 12th General Synod

The 12th General Synod of the Church of Nigerian (Anglican Communion) was held at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt. Hosted by the Province of Niger Delta, the synod dwelt on the theme: *"Thou shalt not steal"* (Exod. 20:15).

The Synod featured talks, seminars, Holy Communion/morning devotional services, Bible studies, the presentation of the new Archbishop of the Province of Kwara, The Most Rev. Dr. Olusegun Adeyemi; the Primatial Address and those of the Archbishop Kattey and the Executive Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Chief Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON. GSSRS.

- Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) 2017

The 2017 DIVCCON was held at the National Christian Centre, Abuja from Monday, 13th to Friday, 17th November under the theme: *"We Have The Man Jesus"* (John 5:1-11). The Conference drew participants from the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity from all Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria and beyond. It featured talks, seminars, revival hours, daily morning devotions, prayers sessions and opening/closing ceremonies presided over by the Primate of All Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Most Rev. Dr. N.D. Okoh.

A total of 173 persons registered for the Conference from our Diocese - an increase from the 125 of 2016. However, only 169 of these persons were physically in attendance.

This year's edition is holding from Monday, 12th to Friday, 16th November, 2018 at the National Christian (Ecumenical) Centre, Abuja. The theme is *"I will restore"* (Joel 2:25). We encourage everyone to plan to attend the conference this year. Early registration is currently on-going and so we advise everyone to take advantage of it.

- **Advent Sunday Offering, 2017**

Like all other Dioceses in the Church of Nigeria, our Diocese observed this special day of offerings and 100% remittance to the Church of Nigeria on Sunday, 3rd December last year. A total sum of **N5, 157, 480** was raised from all our churches and fully paid to Church of Nigeria. All monies realised from this exercise are being used to fund the building of the Church of Nigeria National Secretariat at Abuja. We are glad to inform the Synod that work on this monumental edifice is virtually completed.

The completion of this project notwithstanding, it was however resolved at the meeting of the Standing Committee held in February this year at Ilorin that the Advent Sunday collection and 100% remittance would still be observed this year for the sole purpose of developing a centre in memory of the mission and contributions of the Late Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther.

- **2018 Annual Bishops Retreat**

The took place at the Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State from January 8th to 12th. The theme was *"The Episcopate and the future of the Church of Nigeria."*

- **2018 Senior Clergy Management Course**

This was held at the Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta, State from Monday 15th – Friday, 26th January. The following clergymen from our Diocese took part in the 10-day training: The Rev. Canons Joseph Ofoegbu, Samson Abada, Bright Welekwe, Ozioma Iheanetu and Rev. Samuel John Ejekwu.

- **Church of Nigeria Standing Committee at Ilorin, Diocese of Kwara**

The first meeting of the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee for 2018 was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Barnabas, Sabo-Oke, Ilorin, Diocese of Kwara from 5th to 9th February with the theme *"Poverty of Riches"*, Rev. 3: 11.

- **2018 St. Matthias's Day Offering**

This annual offering and 100% remittance to the Church of Nigeria was observed on Sunday, 25th February, 2018 across the nation. The total amount remitted by our Diocese to the Church of Nigeria was **N7, 000, 000.00.**

St Matthias' Day offering is used to offer relief to distressed Missionary Dioceses, the Church of Nigeria PhD scholarship programme in special fields, theological, other academic and some church-owned health institutions.

- **New Dean, Archbishops and Bishops**

A new Dean has been elected in accordance with the amended constitution of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). He is The Most Rev. Buba Lamido, the Bishop of Wusasa and the new Archbishop of Kaduna Province. His election as Dean took place on Wednesday, 7th February, 2018 at the Cathedral of St. Barnabas, Sabo Oke, Ilorin, Kwara State, during the Standing Committee Meeting. He had in September last year been elected the Archbishop of Kaduna Province during the General Synod held at St. Paul's Cathedral, Diobu, Port Harcourt.

The new Dean has been formally presented at a service held in Benin, Edo State on Wednesday, 4th April, 2018. He is to serve for a period of five (5) years according to our Constitution.

- **Re-elected/New Archbishops**

The following were either re-elected or elected Archbishops:

1. The Most. Rev. Dr. Segun Okubadejo – Ibadan Province – Re-elected
2. The Most Rev. Dr. Caleb Maduoma – Owerri Province – Re-elected
3. the Most Rev. Henry Ndukuba – Jos Province – Elected

These were all presented with The Most Rev. Buba Lamido, the new Archbishop of Kaduna on Friday, 12th January, 2018 at All Saints' Cathedral, Ugheli, Delta State.

Others elected Archbishops include:

4. The Most Rev. Prof. Godwin Okpala – Province of the Niger (already presented)
5. The Most Rev. Gabriel Akinbiyi – Ondo Province (already presented)
6. The Most Rev. Tunde Adeleye – Niger Delta Province (to be presented in Minna at the September 2018 CON Standing Committee meeting)

We wish them well in their Arch-Episcopal ministry.

- **Translated Bishops**

The following Bishops were translated to new Dioceses:

1. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Humphrey Olumakaye from Osun North East to Lagos
2. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Samuel Ezeofor from Ogbaru to Aguata

3. The Rt. Rev. Akintunde Popoola from Offa to Ibadan South

We pray that the Lord will grant them fresh vision, grace and zeal in their new places of assignment.

- **Newly Elected and Consecrated Bishops**

1. The Rt. Rev. Victor Amgbere – Diocese of Northern Izon
2. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Oni – Diocese of Ondo
3. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cornelius Adagbada – Diocese of Oke-Ogun
4. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Paul Olarenwaju Ojo – Diocese of Ijumu
5. The Rt. Rev. Godwin Awoke – Diocese of Ngbo
6. The Rt. Rev. Wisdom Ihunwo – Diocese of Niger Delta North
7. The Rt. Rev. Solomon Akanbi – Diocese of Offa
8. The Rt. Rev. Prosper Amah – Diocese of Ogbaru

We congratulate them.

- **Retired/Retiring Bishops**

1. The Most Rev. Christian Efobi – Diocese of Aguata
2. The Most Rev. Dr. Ephraim Ademowo – Diocese of Lagos
3. The Most Rev. Dr. George Lasebakan – Diocese of Ondo
4. The Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Kattey – Diocese of Niger Delta North
5. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cyril OKorocha – Diocese of Owerri
6. The Rt. Rev. Jacob Ajetumobi – Diocese of Ibadan South
7. The Rt. Rev. Solomon Amusau – Diocese of Oke-Ogun
8. The Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Kukpolati – Diocese of Ijumu
9. The Rt. Rev. Samuel Oke – Diocese of Ekiti West

We wish them well and pray that God grants them a peaceful life and robust health in retirement.

- **Bishops who have joined the church triumphant are:**

1. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Christian Ebisike – Ngbo
2. The Rt. Rev. Felix Akinbuluma – Irele-Ese-Odo
3. The Rt. Rev. B. A. Vanger – Zaki-biam
4. The Rt. Rev. Jonah Ilonuba – Retired Bishop of Nsukka

We commiserate with the families and Dioceses of these our fathers in God who have gone to be with the Lord after their earthly toils. May their souls and those of all the faithful departed continue to rest in peace in the bosom of the Lord. Amen.

- **Re-composition of the Eminent Anglican Committee**

The Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh has recomposed the Committee on Eminent Anglicans with the task of organizing a second meeting of the Primate with these persons. Members of this Committee are:

1. Senator Brigadier General Jonathan Tunde Ogbaha – Chairman
2. The Most Rev. Ali Buba Lamido

3. The Most Rev. Friday J. Imaekhai
4. The Rt. Rev. Duke Akamisoko
5. The Rt. Rev. Alexander Ibezim
6. The Rt. Rev. Timothy Yahaya
7. The Rt. Rev. Owen Nwokolo
8. The Rt. Rev. James Odedeji
9. The Rt. Rev. Christian Ugwuzor
10. The Rt. Rev. Jonah G. Kolo
11. The Rt. Rev. Praises Omole-Ekun
12. The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu,
13. The Rt. Rev. William Aladekugbe
14. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Fagbemi
15. The Rt. Hon. Austin Opara
16. Sir Solomon Ejase-Tobrise Udele
17. Ms. Amal Pepple
18. H.E. Prince Olangunsoye Oyinlola
19. H.E. Ikedi Ohakim
20. Chief Olukayoda Akindele
21. Mr. Sunday Ehindero, IGP (Rtd)
22. Mrs. Ajoni Kehinde

- **New Church of Nigeria Hymnal**

The Committee saddled with the compilation of the new church of Nigeria Hymnal headed by The Most Rev. Henry Ndukuba, Archbishop of Jos, has concluded its assignment. The office of the Primate is now in the process of production. As soon as this is completed, the hymnal will be ready for acquisition by our members in all Dioceses.

GLOBAL ANGLICAN FUTURE CONFERENCE (GAFCON) Jerusalem 2018

1. Bishops Training Institute 3, Kenya, 2017

A special training was organized by the GAFCON Bishops Training Institute (BTI) at Limuru (Brackenhurst Conference Centre), Kenya from Monday, 13th – Tuesday, 22nd November, 2017. We were among the 26 Bishops from Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, South Sudan and the USA in attendance.

2. Jerusalem, 2018 Conference

The third Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) was held in Jerusalem between Sunday, 17th and Friday, 22nd June, 2018.

Jerusalem has a special place in the heart of the GAFCON movement as it was the location of the very first conference back in 2008. The city stands as a constant reminder of the birth of the gospel and the GAFCON

movement's determination to remain true to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and His word.

In 2008, over 1,100 delegates from the laity, clergy and bishops attended the maiden conference. At the second conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013, this number grew to over 1,500 and in this year's edition in Jerusalem, close to 2,000 delegates attended from over 50 countries of the world.

The Jerusalem 2018 Conference was convened for a number of reasons, one of which is the problem of compromised leadership within the global Anglican Communion. In the opinion of the GAFCON movement, all the old forms of governance within the Anglican Communion – the Primates' Meeting, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, all of which the Archbishop of Canterbury is central in, have become increasingly compromised particularly with his inability to distance The Episcopal Church (TEC) of USA and other erring national churches from taking part in the Communion's decision-making processes.

The above stated reason however notwithstanding, the Jerusalem 2018 Conference was not held to declare a break with Canterbury. It was rather convened as the theme clearly stated to strategize on how all true orthodox Anglicans all over the world can continue with the mission of **“Proclaiming Christ faithfully to the Nations”** in the face of current denial (by some) of the critical instruments of our orthodox faith and doctrine as enshrined in the Holy Bible.

The GAFCON movement strongly believes that it has the true gospel and would therefore not be party to any move whatsoever to compromise or distort the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

The Conference in Jerusalem, like the two previous ones, sought rather to build the structures and relational networks amongst faithful Anglicans that can move the Bible-based gospel ministry of the Communion forward to do evangelism, discipleship, church-planting, and business as mission. The Conference, through the various talks, presentations, seminars and relational networks provided opportunities for our church leaders and other faithful participants to discern in concrete terms, how we are to carry the gospel to every part of the world. In summary, the Conference was a good ground where true Anglican leaders and delegates from different parts of the world came together to experience communion and unity; speaking and acting as a united family of churches centred on the biblical gospel.

The primary reason for GAFCON as formulated in its Jerusalem Statement of 2008 therefore remained **“to free our churches in order to be able to give clear and certain witness to Jesus Christ.”**

GAFCON Networks

In readiness to expand the GAFCON Movement's ability to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations in both word and deed and in demonstration of its readiness to fulfil the Great Commission (Luke 24:47), working continually to be a Communion that is fit for the purposes of the gospel in the twenty-first century, the Jerusalem 2018 Conference launched nine strategic networks. Each network is a growing global community of actively involved people with relevant knowledge and experience. They are:

1. **Church Planting :**
To expand Church planting as a global strategy for evangelisation and re-evangelisation,
2. **Theological Education:**
To enable access to sound theological training throughout the GAFCON movement,
3. **Bishop's Training Institute:**
To serve the formation of faithful and effective episcopal leadership throughout the Communion;
4. **Mothers' Union & Senior Women:**
To realise the potential of the Mothers' Union as a global ministry to promote patterns of biblical marriage and family life;
5. **Youth and Children's Ministry:**
To be a catalyst for mission to young people and children of all nations so that they may become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ;
6. **Global Mission Partnerships:**
To promote strategic cross-cultural mission partnerships in a globalized world;
7. **Intercessions:**
To inspire and develop globally connected regional and national intercessory prayer networks;
8. **Lawyers Task Force:**
For Anglican lawyers and chancellors to address matters of mutual concern and share resources for the support of GAFCON and furthering the aims of the Jerusalem Declaration;
9. **Sustainable Development:**
To establish global partnerships and work with the local church to bring sustainable and transformative development.

Appointments

At the Conference, the chairman and our Primate, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh announced the following new appointments:

1. In-coming Chairman – The Most Rev'd Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop, Anglican Church of North America. He will be taking over from the current Chairman in April, 2019.
2. In-coming General Secretary – The Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, Bishop of Jos, Nigeria. He will take over from Archbishop Dr. Peter Jensen, retired Archbishop of Sydney, Australia in January, 2019. Archbishop Kwashi will, as General Secretary, be assisted by five newly-created regional deputies,

one of them being The Rt. Rev. Henry Okeke, Bishop of Mbamili, Nigeria for West Africa region.

The Diocese of Evo was represented at this year's Conference by the following: We, The Rt. Rev. Innocent & Mrs. Chinyere U. Ordu (Bishop & Wife), The Ven. Alex Usifoh (Chairman, Clergy Welfare Association), The Rev. Canon Gospel Onuchuku (Acting Clerical Synod Secretary), Lady Lale Aminobiren (Assistant Lay Synod Secretary) and Mr. Lawrence Chinda (Diocesan Financial Secretary).

We thank the Diocesan Board for sponsoring the Evo delegates and a Bishop and wife from the Northern part of our country to the Conference. To the rest of the Diocesan Community, we thank you as well for your financial sacrifices, prayers and encouragements that saw us through the journey to Jerusalem and back.

OUR NATION NIGERIA: WHICH WAY TO GO?

In about 2 months' time, precisely 1st October, this year, we shall as a people be rolling out our drums and red carpets to celebrate another anniversary of our political independence as a nation from our British colonial masters. By that date, we shall be clocking 58 years.

Amongst humans, a child who has grown to attain the age of 58 in the family or community would no longer be regarded as a small person. In fact, he would have at this age joined the league of family/community elders and opinion leaders whose actions, words and achievements are readily reckoned with. Such a person is greatly respected and revered for a number of his/her positive accomplishments.

Politically, many nations in Africa and other parts of the world which also attained political independence in about the same time as Nigeria are enjoying high recognition within the comity of nations by reason of their advancements in various fields. The story is however, not the same with our dear country. Rather than being a highly respected nation, we are both from within and without, derided as a nation lacking in leadership and developmental direction. We have been so terribly bedevilled by all kinds of challenges in the last 58 years that one wonders if there is still any hope of survival for us as a country.

The late Nigeria musician and leader of the Ozzidi Band, Evangelist Sonny Okosun rightly captured the ugly state of affairs in the country and our search for a way forward when in one of his songs, he asked the big question: **“Which Way Nigeria, which way to go?”**

*Which way Nigeria, which way to go?
I love my father land;*

*I want to know, yes I want to know
Which way is Nigeria heading to, which way to
go?*

*Many years after independence,
We still find it hard to start
How long shall we be patient till we reach the
promised land?
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't die.*

*Every little thing that goes wrong,
We start to blame the Government
We know everything that goes wrong,
We are part of the Government
Inefficiency and indiscipline is ruining the
country now
Corruption here, there and everywhere
Inflation is very high
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't die*

*We made mistakes in the oil boom,
Not knowing that was our doom
Some people now have everything,
While some have nothing;
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't fall*

*Green revolution is a reality,
Let's give it a chance to grow
lets join our hands together to farm the land so
we can have enough food to chew.
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't die*

*Our ambition to become millionaires
Is running the country down
We all want to be millionaires,
We want to live in the earth
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't die*

*Remember that a single step is the beginning of
a million mile
Let's start right now to rebuild ourselves to
make the country smile
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't die*

*Heaven and earth will pass away, it is written
in the Book of God
The good people will surely find their way,
And the meek will inherit the world.
Let's save Nigeria, so Nigeria won't fall*

*One more time, which way is Nigeria heading
to?*

In the light of these intractable problems, Okosun's questions and lamentation in song have now gained even greater relevance than when they were first posed. In 58 years of nationhood, what do we have to showcase to the rest of the world? It is sad and painful to say that in the different fields of our national life, the testimony has been that of a nation fast drifting into a state of anarchy and failure.

In education, we have exhibited and supported very poor and low standards, particularly in those institutions owned and run by the different tiers of government. Our institutions of learning are today known to the rest of the world not for their reputation for teaching, research, raising of world class leaders in different fields of study, world-standard departments, modern infrastructure and equipment or for their stable academic calendar but rather they are known for almost everything that goes contrary to globally acceptable standards in similar institutions in other parts of the world. This has led to the exodus of many Nigerian students to foreign lands even to some less-endowed neighbouring countries in search of quality education.

This sad narrative equally runs in the healthcare sector. Most of our health institutions are merely existing and battling with the challenge of out-dated and substandard infrastructure and medical equipment and low morale of health workers due to poor treatment by successive governments. These challenges explain the reason for the high rate of medical tourism outside the country by Nigerians, especially the rich and political class, even at the slightest attack of the least life-threatening ailments!

In 58 years, we have developed only very weak political, social, judicial and economic institutions to showcase to the world. All these institutions and most regrettably, even the religious and traditional ones, have become victims of the sustained incidence of corrupt practices. We can boldly state here that political corruption appears to be the most persistent and is steadily creeping into every other sector of our national life. And so, we are forced to ask, which way Nigeria, which way to go?

In 58 years, we have remained consistent in telling the international community that we are not able to conduct free, fair and credible elections to choose our leaders in line with global best practices and standards. Our electioneering

processes have been characterised by violence and thuggery, vote buying (i.e. cash-at-hand politics), rigging and declaration of false results leading to imposition of wrong persons on the masses as leaders, biased and heavily compromised electoral umpires and security personnel who only act out scripts already prepared and handed over to them and militarisation of election areas as if the nation is at war with another nation.

In 58 years, we have demonstrated gross inability to police or monitor activities and movements at our land borders, making it easy for evil-minded foreign nationals, particularly those from far away Libya to freely come in to kill our people.

In 58 years, we the Nigerian electorates have only been able to enthrone governments that have proven inconsistent in their interpretation of the activities and operations of the different ethnic/regional-based pressure and attention-seeking groups in the country. Whereas on one hand the government is quick to brand the Niger Delta youths asking for equitable distribution or fair control of resources from their region as militants; the IPOB demanding self-actualization and a new nation for the people of the South East region without resort to violence and wastage of human lives as terrorists; the same government on the other hand chooses to either keep silent or when it speaks at all on the activities of the blood-thirsty Fulani herdsmen, it exonerates them of terrorism. Reporting on government response to the killings by herdsmen, a national newspaper headline quotes the Presidency as saying that “Killer herdsmen are not terrorists.” And so Nigerians have continued to endure governments that lack a fair sense of justice, equity, soundness of mind and sufficient leadership acumen in arresting the menace of criminality in the land and bringing the culprits to book.

In 58 years, we have repeatedly installed for ourselves, governments that are not moved by the daily groaning and sufferings of the masses due to the poor state of our economy, bad road networks, poor electricity supply and mindless killings of Nigerian citizens at home by fellow Nigerians and outside the country by their hosts. In most parts of the world, Nigerians are treated with much indignity since back home, they do not enjoy a better deal. The silence and negligent posture of government over many issues bordering on the general wellbeing of the citizenry have only heightened the sufferings and torments of most Nigerians. Again we ask, which way Nigeria, which way to go?”

In 58 years, we lament the existence of unstable, weak political parties, lacking in ideologies and credible manifestos. This largely explains the reason why our politicians violate with impunity our constitution and insult their constituents when like grasshoppers they jump from one political party to another in the name of defection. Should this not rightly be called political harlotry or prostitution?

In 58 years, we have perfected the inglorious act of appointing people into public offices and positions of trust not on the basis of their strength of character or clearly attestable capacity to handle the offices they are appointed to but on the basis of their ethnic or religious affiliations with the appointing officer(s), a case of flagrant abuse of the national policy on the reflection of the principles of federal character in all appointments.

In 58 years after independence, we can hardly boast of carefully planned and maintained cities or Developmental Master plans for our cities. In fact, where such plans exist, they are not followed. We have not been able to determine the best ways to manage our wastes and maintain clean environments.

In 58 years, we have a nation of “suffering-and-smiling” people. And this is where the political class has continued to enjoy and hold on to the advantage they have always had over the poor and largely ignorant masses.

How do we explain the reason for these many intractable problems? The only way to explain it is that generally we are a people not in a hurry to develop or catch up with other nations. In specific terms, God has blessed us with virtually everything – human and material - we need to enable us become a global leading nation; but with great pain, we realise that over these years we have not been able to raise sacrificial, honest, God-fearing, people-centred, responsible and purpose-driven leadership.

Where will our salvation and deliverance as a nation come from? Of course, it is going to come from God Himself who desires to come to our rescue. But there are very critical roles we have to play in order for us to partner with Him. For, as the saying goes, “Heaven helps those who help themselves.”

As greatly religious people, although stinking in our iniquities, we must return to God in prayer and genuine repentance for ourselves and our nation;

It is obvious that there is judgment on this land - judgment arising from the much blood of innocent citizens that has been shed through religious killings, ethnic clashes, the civil war, political violence, armed robbery attacks, cult activities and kidnappings.

The coming year 2019 is so critical for us as a nation. It offers every Nigerian who has come of age to participate in the electoral process, a fresh opportunity to take necessary critical steps to rescue our country from the hands of all those who have all along been pretending to be our leaders but are in real sense, enemies of this nation; leaders who through their actions, policies and failed political promises, have systematically grounded the country to a halt. These same persons are never tired of seeking democratic power from the same Nigerians they have unconscionably denied everything that makes for good life – quality education, healthcare, transportation, electricity, stable economy,

security, etc. They are warming up again, busy stuffing their campaign bags with their lies and deceit as well as looted funds from our common states and national treasuries.

As citizens determined to turn around the social, economic and political fortunes of our nation and shape a brighter future for her, we must not allow ourselves to be deceived for yet another time.

Every Nigeria should empower him/herself with his/her Permanent Voter Card (PVC) and use it to flush out of office all the present leaders at all levels **who have failed** to satisfy the huge (realistic, non-politically-coloured) yearnings and expectations of the millions of our countrymen/women.

To all Christians in Nigeria, we wish to warn ourselves that 2019 should not be a year to carelessly entrust power into the hands of anyone or those who will finally wipe out what is left of the church of God in this country. Party association should no longer be the consideration in the coming year but rather consideration must be given to aspirants who are coming as sacrificial servant-leaders, God-fearing men and women, incorruptible, defenders of all - whether rich or poor, just and equitable in their distribution of our commonwealth – those who will not heartlessly apportion same to persons of either their ethnic or religious divide.

God will hold us accountable and judge us should we by our misguided voting style or sale of our votes for temporary gain, hand over this country again into the hands of political leaders who are at the moment swimming in the ocean of the blood of slain Nigerians and are still feeling very clean.

We challenge all God-fearing Christians who have the true leading of the Holy Spirit to participate in active party politics to boldly step out and take their places in the political arena of our country. But they are to do so only if they are genuinely purposed to make a difference and not just coming as some of those before them to swell the band of thieves and leaders with seared consciences.

We must all therefore properly understand our spiritual and civic responsibilities as citizens and exercise them conscientiously. By so doing, this Nation will once again come alive.

RIVERS STATE

Recently, the current government of Rivers State under the leadership Chief Barr. Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, CON, GSSRS, celebrated 3 years of the administration. We congratulate His Excellency and specially commend him on the numerous people-oriented projects which he has undertaken and which were commissioned in the course of his 3 years anniversary. We also urge him not to relent even as elections loom on the horizon. Whatever he does is for Rivers people and posterity will certainly not forget him. In addition to roads

and other infrastructure, he should also turn his searchlight more to the environment and sanitation, in addition to security of lives and human capital development. We wish him another fulfilling year in office.

COMING SYNOD VENUES AND DIOCESAN CHIEF LAUNCHERS OF BISHOP'S ADDRESSES

Our decision in 2016 to start designating activity groups of the Diocese as Synod Chief Launchers took effect from last year (2017) when the house of clergy, supported by their wives confidently stood out as Chief Launcher of our Synod Address. What the clergy, led by The Venerable Alex Usifoh did last year (and very well too) remains highly commendable. As spiritual leaders, they have set a worthy example for all other individuals and groups to emulate. Once again we thank them.

For this year's launching of our Address, we have for over a year put the Diocesan Council of Knights on notice as the Diocesan Chief Launcher – a role they have equally accepted. We thank them and trust that they will take up the challenge ably today and honour the Lord both as individuals and as a group with their substances. The blessing of God will surely abound with them and everyone else who gives to support the work of mission, evangelism and physical development of our Diocese.

At the host Archdeaconry level, the Archdeacon, The Ven. Chidi Worgu has informed us that the Evo South East Archdeaconry Board has chosen to take up the burden of being the Local Chief Launcher of our Address. We equally commend them and trust that the Lord will use them greatly.

For the next 5 years, the table below shows our coming Diocesan Synod Hosts and the groups to stand as Chief Launchers.

Year	Host	Diocesan Chief Launcher Group	Host Chief Launcher
2019	Woji Archdeaconry	Diocesan MU/WG (All Women)	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2020	Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry	Diocesan CMF (All Men)	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2021	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi	Diocesan AYF (All Youths)	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2022	Rumuomasi Deanery	Lay Readers Association	To be determined by the Host Bloc
2023	Rumuobiokani Deanery	Prayer Groups of CMF & MU/WG	To be determined by the Host Bloc

End of Third Synod, Beginning of the Fourth

This year's session of our Synod will mark the end of the third since the inception of this Diocese. In keeping with our constitutional provision we shall later today be electing new officers to run the affairs of this Diocese with the Bishop for the life of the coming Fourth Synod of our Diocese, 2019-2021. Similarly, the Cathedral, Archdeaconries, Deaneries, Parishes and Church Stations as well as Diocesan activity groups and ministries would be expected by January, 2019 to elect their representatives to the Synod and various Boards of the Diocese where applicable for the period stated above.

In electing these officers today and early in the coming year, we must be careful not to bring into the leadership of the Diocese and as representatives of our churches persons whose understanding of the mission and ministry of the Church is still uncertain. We should prayerfully elect Spirit-filled, honest, God-fearing, respectful, purpose-driven men/women; good team players who have regard for speed and thoroughness as officers of the Diocese and her churches. The example of the early church is there to guide us *"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business"* (Acts 6:3).

CONCLUSION

In concluding this address, we shall like to use this medium to express our thanks to the entire Diocesan Community for your solidarity, support and encouragement through prayers, availability for various forms of service within the Diocese. We thank very specially all our legal officers led by Sir Barr. Nlerum Amadi, my wife and Mama Diocese-Mrs. Chinyere Ordu and the entire women of the Diocese, the clergy, church teachers and their wives; members of the Synod Secretariat, all other Diocesan Board members/officials, staff of the Central and Bishop's offices; members the Diocesan Synod Planning Committee, Sir Ike Chinwo, President of the Diocesan Council of Knights and their ladies; Mr Bishop Anderson Nwanekwu, the executives as well as members of the Diocesan Christian Men's Fellowship, the Lay Readers led by Sir Paul Chukwumati, the Anglican Youth Fellowship led by Brother Chika Amadi as well as all heads, members and staff of the various units of our churches, institutions and the Diocese as a whole for your unflinching support throughout the year. We pray that the Lord will reward each and every of you greatly for your sacrifices and labour of love.

We also extend our special gratitude to The Venerable Chidi and Mrs. Happiness Worgu, Archdeacon of Evo South East Archdeaconry, members of the Archdeaconry Board including all clergy, church teachers and their wives; the Archdeaconry and Headquarter Church Planning Committees for this synod and the entire members of the Evo South East Archdeaconry for their huge personal and group sacrifices towards the hosting of this year's synod. May the Lord

remember the investments of your time, talents and treasure and reward you abundantly.

We would not forget to also thank some faithful parishioners of this Diocese and the Evo South East Archdeaconry who received and honoured us in diverse ways as we visited their office and homes on courtesy calls preparatory to this synod. We thank the following: Honorable Solomon Abel Eke, the Executive Chairman of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and members of his Executive and Legislative arms of government, Engr. Isaac and Mrs Rebecca Kolo, Surv. Gaius and Mrs Orininaemi Assor, Sir Adolphus and Lady Christy Opara, Engr. Chijioke and Dame Forstina Aririsuku and Eze Sir Robinson and Lady Rose Jonathan. May the Lord decorate them with greater honours in Jesus name. Amen.

We thank you all for listening patiently and pray God to bless you all.

+Innocent Ordu, JP
Evo

APPENDIXES



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (**ANGLICAN COMMUNION**)

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE 12TH GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 18TH TO FRIDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2017, AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH, DIOBU, PORT HARCOURT RIVERS STATE.

INTRODUCTION

The General Synod of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria with his wife, Mrs. Nkasiobi Okoh, President of the Women and Girls' Organisations in attendance at St Paul's Cathedral Church, Diobu PortHarcourt, Rivers State from 18th-22nd September, 2017. One Hundred and Seventy-Four Bishops, Two Hundred and Sixty-Four clergymen and Two Hundred and Forty-Four members of the House of Laity were present. At the opening ceremony, the General Synod welcomed His Excellency, Barrister (Chief) Ezenwo Nyesom Wike, The Executive Governor of Rivers State of Nigeria, his wife Hon. Justice Suzzette Eberechi Nyesom-Wike, the Deputy Governor, Dame Dr Mrs Ipalibo Jarry-Banigo, the Hon. Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Rt Hon. Ikuinyiawaji Ibani and the former Secretary to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olu Falae. Goodwill messages were received from the immediate past Primate, The Most Rev'd Peter Akinola and some of our ecumenical partners. At the end, the following Communiqué was issued:

THE THEME OF THE SYNOD

The theme of the Synod was 'THOU SHALL NOT STEAL' chosen from the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20.15

Bearing in mind that stealing of all sorts and guises at any level is a breach of God's law, cancerous to our national development and inimical to human relations. Synod enjoins Christians and all Nigerians:

- To passionately shun stealing, robbery, misappropriation, embezzlement and to remain steadfast in their faith in God even in the face of threat to our physical life, loss of job and uncertainty of the future.



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

- Security institutions to be fair, transparent and accountable in their judgments having in mind God's judgment on thieves and treasury looters on the LAST DAY.
- To be guided by the counsel expressed through Apostle Paul to the effect that Godliness with contentment is a great gain (1 Timothy 6:6).
- To continue with their struggle against every manifestation of stealing in the society, including piracy and plagiarism.

FELICITATION

Synod expresses gratitude to God and rejoices with our President, His Excellency, Mohammadu Buhari on his recovery and safe return to the country recently and prays God to grant him renewed grace to carry out his cardinal programmes especially the fight against stealing and corruption, without favour.

COMMENDATION

Synod congratulates the Governor of Rivers State, Barr (Chief) Ezenwo Nyesom Wike for his visionary and committed leadership that has witnessed giant strides towards the growth and development of the State since his assumption of office despite obvious handicaps, and urges him not to relent. We call on all the good people of Rivers State to give him their maximum support for the transformation of the State.

CORRUPTION

Corruption has remained a national monster ravaging our nation at all levels and in all departments of the civil/public service, even in private lives and institutions. Against this back ground, the Synod congratulates the Federal Government on its unrelenting fight against corruption and calls for more robust actions in tackling corruption at all levels and in all spheres of our nation without respect for relatives and party affiliations.

The decision of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) to constitute Special Courts to try cases of corruption was received with great joy as this is a major step in the fight against corruption. In appreciation and recognition of this concerted effort, Synod urges that the modalities and feasibilities upon which these Special Courts would operate be well spelt out in order to ensure that justice is manifestly achieved in a timely fashion.



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

STATE OF NIGERIA ECONOMY

The Synod received the news of the technical exit of the country from economic recession with mixed feelings. However, it is concerned that at this stage of our national development, a wholistic approach towards growing the economy to improve the living condition of our people is of paramount importance. Synod accordingly calls on the Federal Government to formulate economic and fiscal policies (BACK-UP-PLAN) aimed at diversifying the economy so as to remain afloat in the emerging post-oil era. In this regard, the ever-increasing population of this country must receive attention.

AGITATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

It is now a common knowledge that there has been wanton destruction of lives and properties in the South East. While condemning the leadership of The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) for their excesses that have resulted in the loss of lives of innocent people, Synod calls on the military to always apply the rules of engagement in their operations and to endeavour to clamp down on all criminally-minded organisations in the country especially the killer Herdsmen that have done a lot of harm to this nation and her citizens. The Federal Government is also called upon to ensure fairness to different ethnic groups across the country in the distribution of public offices, in order to reduce the tension and agitation.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Climate change has become a world-wide subject for contentious debate and drawing attention to possible human practices that have continued to worsen the situation. The devastation and the monumental losses caused both in human and materials by natural disasters, in recent times, in different parts of the country and across the globe, with particular reference to the flood in Benue State and Hurricanes, are attestation to this fact. Consequent upon the foregoing, the Synod sympathises with those who lost their loved ones in these incidents and calls upon governments at all levels, to be more stringent with municipal control by preventing people from building on water channels, avoid indiscriminate dumping of refuse and above all, encourage improved behavioural pattern and to expedite action in ensuring that the effects of flooding are mitigated. It calls on the Church and public spirited individuals and organisations to come to the assistance of victims of natural disaster.



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA **(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)**

INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS

That our national economy is being adversely affected by incessant industrial actions is no longer a secret. The General Synod therefore notes with serious concern the huge proportions of strike embarked upon by various trade unions across the country and the unbearable consequential hardship created by same. Synod identifies the "systemic injustice in remuneration" as the basis for re-occurring industrial actions and urges the Federal Government to as a matter of national urgency introduce a remuneration scheme or regime that will ensure equal pay for equal workers. This will to a reasonable extent help to forestall aspiration to both political offices and perceived juicy positions across board. In addition, Government should always honour agreements with labour unions.

UNPAID PENSION AND GRATUITY ACROSS THE NATION

The Synod notes with pain the failure of governments at all levels to pay the *salaries, gratuities and pensions* owed across the country and pleads with the various tiers of government to urgently revisit this matter with a more effective approach, by ensuring prompt payment of pensioners before they die.

TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO THE NORTH EAST

The insecurity situation in the North East which has refused to abate has become a constant flashpoint of a frequent source of embarrassment to Nigeria and the international community particularly as the operational forces no more occupy a territory. As much as Synod appreciates the concerted efforts of the Federal Government against terrorism that has seen reasonable peace and normalcy now returning to the North East of Nigeria, the Federal Government is advised to re-strategize its operations while residents are encouraged to team up with the security agencies as stakeholders by promptly volunteering useful information.

THE CALL FOR RESTRUCTURING

The Synod calls upon the opinion leaders to explain in simple terms what they mean by restructuring so that the ordinary persons may understand clearly what restructuring is all about, as fellow stake holders in the Nigeria project.

GAFCON 2018

The General Synod gives thanks to Almighty God for the faithful biblical ministry and unity of GAFCON and waits with prayerful anticipation for



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

the Third Global meeting in June 2018. This gathering in Jerusalem will be a witness to the faith that was once for all entrusted to the Saints.

STANDING FIRM IN THE FAITH

Synod renews its earlier resolutions supporting our declaration of being a church that is Bible-based, spiritually dynamic and committed to evangelism. The Bible remains the foundation of our church and the need to uphold its primacy and orthodoxy in every aspect of the church's life has never been more urgent and compelling than now. It therefore encourages its leadership to be firm and resolute in pursuing this course.

The General Synod further calls on all Anglicans in the world to return to biblical foundation of the Anglican Church and reject the theological innovations of this present age. It is only by upholding the faith of our fathers that the church will honour God and impact current and future generations.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we look unto God for a national rebirth. We call on all to remain prayerful and to live a life devoid of stealing wherever we find ourselves.

May we all die to sin and rise to newness of life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

"Thou Shall Not Steal" (Exodus 20:15).

The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh
(SAN)
Primate of All Nigeria

Henry Odien Ajimogobia
Chancellor, Church of Nigeria

The Rt Revd Dr Stephen A. Fagbemi
Saidu
General Secretary, CoN

The Ven. Isuwa Daniyah
Prolocutor



CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH, MA, FCS, MES, LL.D
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2018 ANNUAL EPISCOPAL RETREAT, CHURCH OF NIGERIA, ANGLICAN COMMUNION, HELD AT IBRU ECUMENICAL CENTRE, AGBARHA-OTOR, DELTA STATE FROM MONDAY, JANUARY 8 – FRIDAY JANUARY 12, 2018.

INTRODUCTION

The House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) met under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, Archbishop Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria for their Annual Retreat at Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State from January 8 -12, 2018. 145 serving Bishops and 6 retired Bishops were present. We were blessed with the opportunity to fellowship together in prayer, worship, and learning, addressing our minds to the responsibilities and the roles of Bishops in advancing the Kingdom of God, prophetic ministry to the nation, maintaining Church discipline and ensuring resolution of conflicts with the theme: **“The Episcopate and the Future of the Church of Nigeria”**.

Rising from the retreat, the House of Bishops issued the following communique:

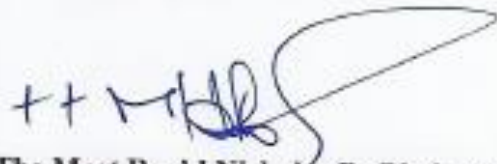
1. The Bishops commend the Federal Government on the prompt response and the evacuation of Nigeria immigrants from Libya who are being enslaved.
2. Similarly the Bishops salute the sustained efforts of the Federal Government and the Armed Forces in curbing the activities of Boko-haram and other insurgent groups across the country.
3. The retreat x-rays the current situation of the Church and observes that Biblical standard has been compromised and that the Christian heritage is fast being eroded. The Bishops, therefore, called on Church leaders to provide leadership based on the examples of the Apostles and to be alive to their responsibilities of daily walk with God, soul-winning, discipleship, mentoring and obediently serving God without minding the cost, highlighting Christian virtues such as humility, self-denial, sacrifice, service and servanthood and righteous suffering.
4. It was also observed that homes, institutions, Churches and the society are crisis ridden. The Bishops call on secular and religious leaders at all levels to nip conflict in the bud before it escalates to crisis. Furthermore, government is hereby called upon to be proactive at the incipient stage of conflict and thus prevent it from developing into a crisis. This is safer than applying force as the life of every Nigerian matters.

5. The House of Bishops sympathises with the families of victims of Fulani herdsmen attack all over the country, notably Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Kwara and Benue States. The Bishops observed that as a result of the continuous inaction of the Government, people are beginning to suspect that there is complicity of the Federal Government in these despicable acts. We therefore call on the Federal Government, as a matter of urgency to address these ugly trends and ensure that the culprits are brought to justice. However, the Bishops strongly believe that the permanent solution to the killings by herdsmen lies in the establishment of ranches in line with world best practices and not grazing colonies. Besides, the young herdsmen deserve a better opportunity for education and advancement in life. The Bishops believe that it is unkind to design a life of perpetual wandering for these class of youth.
6. In addition, the Federal Government should use Federal establishments and Institutions, especially the Armed Forces and Nigerian Police for national interest and wellbeing of all Nigerians and not for personal, sectional or political interests.
7. As the tempo of political activities begins to rise in view of 2019 General Elections, the Bishops call on all politicians to exercise restraint in their pronouncements and actions; call on all Nigerians to register and obtain their permanent voter's cards in order to exercise their franchise; and also call upon INEC to avoid actions that might frustrate the enthusiastic voters.
8. The political office holders are also reminded of their responsibility to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in making appointments, to maintain federal character, equity, fairness, Justice, to enhance the unity of the Nation.
9. The House of Bishops calls on the Federal Government to as a matter of urgency initiate a constructive dialogue on the restructuring of Nigeria.
10. The current scarcity and high cost of Petroleum products have brought untold hardship on Nigerians. We therefore call on NNPC and all those concerned to resolve their issues in the overall interest of all Nigerians. Furthermore, the clamour for increase in the pump price of these products by the marketers must be jettisoned, as this will aggravate the enormous sufferings of the hapless Nigerian citizens.

11. As Bishops of the Church of Nigeria, we commend and applaud the work of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) under the leadership of Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria, The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh and especially for the plans to hold the third Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem, Israel in June this year, 2018. We further commit ourselves to the continuation of the Global Anglican Future Conference. We uphold the Jerusalem declaration which affirms *"the Holy Scripture of the Old Testament and New Testament to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation"* and call upon Christians everywhere to declare and defend the faith once for all entrusted to the Saints.
12. The Church of Nigeria which is Bible based, will continue to maintain fellowship with Churches, whose faith and practice are agreeable to and based on scriptural foundations, not necessarily on the basis of history. We reaffirm our theological position that same-sex marriage, homosexuality, lesbianism, bi-sexuality and trans-gender are unbiblical, unethical, un-natural, anti-reproductive, and against the progress of human society.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the House of Bishops on behalf of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) commiserate with the family of the former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Alex Ekwueme in particular and entire Nation in general on his demise. It is our prayer that God may grant them the fortitude to bear the great loss.



The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, FRS, Mss, LL.D, DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria



CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

THE MOST REV'D NICHOLAS D. OKOH, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

February 22, 2018

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY 5TH TO FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2018 AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. BARNABAS, SABO-OKE, ILORIN, KWARA STATE.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held From Monday 5th to Friday 9th February 2018 at the Cathedral Church of St. Barnabas, Sabo-Oke, Ilorin, Kwara State on the theme "Poverty of Riches" (Rev. 3:17).

The two operational words in our theme – 'poverty and riches' are household words in our society, often interpreted and misinterpreted depending on one's perception of life. The Bible however, gives attention, not to wealth and poverty as the accumulation or lack of riches as a commodity, but to the relationship between people which poverty and riches express. Poverty and riches are not only about money and material possessions. There is a sense in which individuals, societies and nations may be rich in money, goods, wealth and treasure but still be considered poor, if they are deficient in desirable elements that constitute true riches.

The Church in Laodicea was rich materially and financially, but was sadly poor in spiritual matters. They actually believed that they were in the best spiritual state possible, and so were relaxed and even boastful. Their arrogance is reflected in the stern words of rebuke the Lord gave them: "You say I am rich, I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing, but you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

The rebuke came to them because they became idle, self-satisfied, hardened, indifferent and unable to take any stand for Christ. Instead of growing, the Church was destroying itself from within.

Page 1 of 4

SECRETARIAT: EPISCOPAL HOUSE, 24 DOULA STREET, P.O. BOX 212, ADCP ABUJA, NIGERIA
Tel: 0803 7007 270, Email: episcopalhouse2009@yahoo.com, episcopalhouseabuja@gmail.com, Website: www.anglican-nig.org

Largely, the condition of the Church in Laodicea describes the state of the Church and the world today. Things look outwardly nice and wonderful in the world. However, many have lost the sense of spiritual earnestness and have acquired a sense of moral rottenness. For instance, relativism has propelled the revisionists' agenda against the foundational teachings of the Bible and the Church. Perversion in different forms – homosexuality, lesbianism, bi-sexuality, same sex marriage, etc, have now gained doctrinal acceptance in some quarters, while those who have rejected this are castigated and seen only from the angle of material poverty. This is nothing other than spiritual blindness. Believers who place their confidence in their wealth, rather than in God and the righteousness that comes by faith in Christ, have no eternal destiny different from unbelievers (Psalm 49:10-20).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has remained unwavering in her resolve in promoting Biblical orthodoxy. The Church is the lamp and conscience of the society. We must continue to take the lead in bringing the truth of God's word to the lost world. But we must guard against the pitfalls of the Laodicea Church. To fulfil the mission of the Church, individuals and Dioceses must not just be financially rich, but spiritual as well.

We wish to sincerely appreciate those of our Churches, Parishes and Dioceses for being proactive and co-operative in the remittance of the St. Matthias' and Advent Sunday collections. The proceeds have made tremendous contributions to the steady growth of our institutions, missionary Dioceses and National Church projects.

People of God, DIVCCON 2017 was very refreshing and enriching. More than 6,900 persons registered and participated in the event. The 2018 DIVCCON will hold from Monday 12th to Friday 16th November at the National Christian Centre, Abuja. We appeal to Bishops and Archbishops to mobilize their members to attend in unlimited numbers, knowing that this comes once in a year with great spiritual impact. Similarly, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) will hold from Sunday the 17th to Friday 22nd of June 2018, in Jerusalem. Pray for the success of these programmes.

The next meeting of the Eminent Anglicans will hold in late August, 2018. Actual date will be confirmed in due course. We urge the coordinating Committee headed by the Governor of Delta State, His Excellency, Senator Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, to continue to work hard towards the actualization of the founding dream of the body. We continue to express our gratitude to the Central Organizing Committee headed by the Most Rev. Dr Ephraim A. Ademowo, and also the Local Organizing Committee headed by Senator Brigadier Jonathan Tunde Ogbaha for their efforts.

Brethren, the 2019 General Elections is fast approaching. We urge all eligible citizens to register and obtain their permanent voters card and prepare to exercise their franchise right. In another development, we are not unaware of the pain and hardship being inflicted on our people by the activities of dreaded blood sucking killer herdsmen on innocent Nigerians. The carnage going on in places like Benue State and the unwillingness of the Federal Government to adequately address the issue calls for prayers and vigilance. While reminding us that good nutrition does not come from cattle alone, we charge you all to recapture the traditional method of growing animals for local consumption so as not to continue to promote this trade that give us meat and death at the same time.

We wish to draw the attention of all to the ever increasing need for relief materials due to the persecution being faced by some of our brethren. We commend Dioceses that worked hard towards the Church of Nigeria Relief Fund launching in the past and as well note that some did little or nothing.

The need is still as pressing as ever if not more, and we all need to be involved. In the meantime, we have raised some money which was used to purchase relief materials distributed to the IDPs of Benue State.

May we use this medium to congratulate all our members who experienced the goodness of God in various ways. We rejoice with you all, your families and your loved ones. On the other hand, we express our whole-hearted condolences to all those who were bereaved of beloved ones especially those who have been victims of sectarian violent attacks around the country, particularly in Benue State.

Also we condole with the Ekwueme family and indeed the nation over the demise of the late Chief Dr Alex Ekwueme GCON, former first civilian Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a soldier of Christ, who served the Church faithfully and sacrificially on so many different fronts. May the Lord grant the faithful departed eternal rest in Jesus name. Amen.

People of God, we heartily and sincerely thank the Archbishop of Kwara Province and the Bishop of Kwara Diocese, the Most Rev Dr Olusegun Adeyemi and his dear wife, Mrs. Grace Oluwafumilayo Adeyemi, the Bishops of the Province of Kwara and their wives, the clergy and the good people of Kwara Province for their contributions towards the success of the Standing Committee. We also thank Bishops and Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria for adjusting positively to the new hosting pattern of our national meetings. The attendance to the Standing Committee was very encouraging. May the Lord bless you all. Amen.

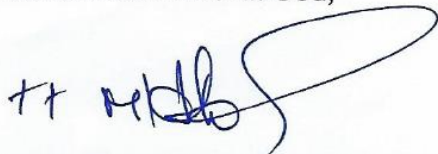
In conclusion, it is important to remind you that material blessings can become a curse if not rightly understood and applied. For people that come to Christ because of material prosperity, and who get disillusioned if it does not come quickly as they have prayed, it is easy to become spiritually blind and relapse into spiritual poverty. The Church in Laodicea, like many Christians today, was satisfied with riches and thought they needed nothing more, but were sternly rebuked by our Lord Jesus Christ for being spiritually blind. We must not allow worldly wealth to blind us or quench our hunger for the kingdom of God or seal our lips from testifying of Christ and His Cross.

Finally my brothers and sisters in Christ, take note that spiritual prosperity should precede material blessing. Any possession, gift or endowment that tends to make us independent of God is dangerous, and must be avoided. Our Lord Jesus Christ says;

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:32-34)

May the grace of the Lord abide with you all. Amen

Your beloved Father in God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a cross-like symbol followed by stylized letters, likely representing 'N. Okoh'.

The Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, MA, Fss, Mss, LLD, DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

**GLOBAL ANGLICAN FUTURE CONFERENCE (GAFCON)
JERUSALEM 2018 FINAL STATEMENT-
LETTER TO THE CHURCHES**

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Greetings from the land of the birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. The third Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) was held in Jerusalem in June 2018, a decade after the inaugural Gafcon in 2008. Gafcon 2018, one of the largest global Anglican gatherings, brought together 1,950 representatives from 50 countries, including 316 bishops, 669 other clergy and 965 laity. A unanimity of spirit was reflected throughout the Conference as we met with God in the presence of friends from afar. We celebrated joyful worship, engaged in small group prayer and were inspired by presentations, networks and seminars.

We met together around the theme of “Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations”. Each day began with common prayer and Bible exposition from Luke 22-24, followed by plenary sessions on God’s Gospel, God’s Church and God’s World.

PROCLAIMING GOD’S GOSPEL

We renewed our commitment to proclaim the gospel of the triune God in our churches and in all the world. Our Chairman reminded us in his opening address: “God’s gospel is the life-transforming message of salvation from sin and all its consequences through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is both a declaration and a summons: announcing what has been done for us in Christ and calling us to repentance, faith and submission to his Lordship.” It involves the restoration and reaffirmation of God’s original creative purposes. It is addressed to men, women and children and it is our only hope in the light of the final judgment and the reality of hell.

This is God’s gospel, the gospel concerning his Son (Romans 1:1–3). The centre of the gospel message is this one person, Jesus Christ, and all that he has done through his perfect life, atoning death, triumphant resurrection and glorious ascension. In our daily expositions, we followed Jesus’ path from the judgments by Pilate and the Jewish leaders, to his death for us on the cross, to his breaking the bonds of death on Easter morning and to his commission to the disciples to proclaim “repentance for the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:47). The uniqueness of Jesus Christ lies at the heart of the gospel: “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The gospel confronts us in the midst of our confusion and sin but it does not leave us there. It includes a summons to repentance and a call to believe in the gospel (Mark

1:15), which results in a grace-filled life. The ascended Christ gave his Spirit to empower his disciples to take this gospel to the world.

Yet faithful proclamation of this gospel is under attack from without and within, as it has been from apostolic times (Acts 20:28-30).

External attacks include superstitious practices of sacrifices and libations that deny the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. Some religions deny the unique person and work of Christ on the cross, and others are innately syncretistic. Secularism seeks to exclude God from all public discourse and to dismantle the Christian heritage of many nations. This has been most obvious in the redefinition of what it means to be human, especially in the areas of gender, sexuality and marriage. The devaluing of the human person through the advocacy of abortion and euthanasia is also an assault upon human life uniquely created in the image of God. Militant forms of religion and secularism are hostile to the preaching of Christ and persecute his people.

Internally, the "prosperity gospel" and theological revisionism both seek in different ways to recast God's gospel to accommodate the surrounding culture, resulting in a seductive syncretism that denies the uniqueness of Christ, the seriousness of sin, the need for repentance and the final authority of the Bible.

Tragically, there has been a failure of leadership in our churches to address these threats to the gospel of God. We repent of our failure to take seriously the words of the apostle Paul: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30).

We dedicate ourselves afresh to proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations, working together to guard the gospel entrusted to us by our Lord and his apostles.

REFORMING GOD'S CHURCH

The gospel of God creates the church of God. Through the invitation of the gospel, God calls all people into fellowship with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As the word of the gospel goes forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, they respond through the work of the Holy Spirit to repent, believe and be baptised, and are thereby joined to Christ's body which is his church (Acts 2:37-44; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). As members of Christ's body, they are sanctified in him, called to live lives of holiness and to be salt and light in the world.

One Conference speaker reminded us: "In the councils of the church, we should not mimic the ways of the world but gather to pray, to praise (i.e., to be

eucharistic), to consult, to decide, and if necessary to discipline. These gatherings should be properly conciliar in nature, decisive in moving the church forward in its mission and common life. There should be the will to exercise loving but firm discipline to bring sinners to repentance and restoration.” Likewise at the Communion level, there are times when the leadership must come together to exercise its responsibility to discipline an erring member province.

For some time, our Communion has been under threat from leaders who deny the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture. In the late 20th century, human sexuality became the presenting issue.

The 1998 Lambeth Conference by a huge majority (526 to 70) approved Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality, which affirmed the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19 that there are only two expressions of faithful sexuality: lifelong marriage between a man and a woman or abstinence. The resolution rightly called for pastoral care for same sex attracted persons. At the same time, it described homosexual practice as “incompatible with Scripture” and rejected both the authorisation of same sex rites by the Church and the ordination of those in same sex unions.

Lambeth Resolution I.10 reflected the rising influence of the Global South in the Communion. The ground for the Resolution had been prepared by the 1997 Kuala Lumpur Statement of the Global South Anglican Network. Our collaboration with the Global South Network has been ongoing, and its leaders took an active part in this Conference.

The subsequent rejection of Lambeth I.10 in word and deed by the Episcopal Church USA and later by some other Anglican provinces led to a “tear [in] the fabric of the Communion at its deepest level”, followed by ten years of futile meetings in which the four Instruments of Communion failed to exercise the necessary discipline. The Primates’ Meeting repeatedly called upon these provinces to repent and return to the faith. Yet their efforts were undermined by other Instruments of Communion, culminating in the failure of the Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury to carry out the clear consensus of the Primates’ Meeting in Dar es Salaam in 2007.

In the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration, the 2008 Global Anglican Future Conference took up the challenge of restoring biblical authority (and the teaching on human sexuality in particular) by affirming the primacy of the Bible as God’s Word written and going back to the other sources of Anglican identity – the Creeds and Councils of the ancient church, the 39 Articles, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. The Conference also constituted a Primates Council and authorised it to recognise Anglican churches in areas where orthodox Anglicans had been deprived of their church property and deposed from holy orders.

During the past twenty years, the Instruments of Communion have not only failed to uphold godly discipline but their representatives have refused to recognise our concerns and have chosen instead to demean Gafcon as a one-issue pressure group and accuse it of promoting schism, where in fact the schismatics are those who have departed from the teaching of the Bible and the historic doctrine of the Church. Slogans such as “walking together” and “good disagreement” are dangerously deceptive in seeking to persuade people to accommodate false teaching in the Communion.

We grieve for the situation of our global Communion as it has been hindered from fulfilling its God-appointed task of reaching the world for Christ. We repent of our own failures to stand firm in the faith (1 Corinthians 16:13). But we do not lose hope for the future, and note that there is strong support for the reform of our Communion. Prior to Gafcon 2018, delegates overwhelmingly affirmed the following propositions:

- • Lambeth Resolution I.10 reflects the unchangeable teaching of the Bible;
- • the Gafcon movement should continue to be faithful to the Jerusalem Declaration;
- • the Primates Council should continue to recognise confessing Anglican jurisdictions.

Over the past twenty years, we have seen the hand of God leading us toward a reordering of the Anglican Communion. Gafcon has claimed from the beginning: “We are not leaving the Anglican Communion; we are the majority of the Anglican Communion seeking to remain faithful to our Anglican heritage.” As Archbishop Nicholas Okoh stated in the inaugural Synodical Council: “We are merely doing what the Communion leadership should have done to uphold its own resolution in 1998.”

We give thanks for the godly courage of our Gafcon Primates in contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We applaud their decision to authenticate and recognise the provinces of the Anglican Church in North America and the Anglican Church in Brazil, to recognise the Anglican Mission in England and to consecrate a Missionary Bishop for Europe. This has become necessary because of the departure from the faith by The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Episcopal Church of Brazil and the Scottish Episcopal Church. At Gafcon 2018, we heard many testimonies of faithful Anglicans who have been persecuted by those holding office in their respective provinces, merely because they would not surrender to, nor be compromised by, the false gospel that these leaders profess and promote. We also recognise the Gafcon Primates’ willingness to assist faithful Anglicans in New Zealand where the Anglican Church has recently agreed to allow bishops to authorise the blessing of same sex unions.

As the Gafcon movement matures, it has also seen the need for a more conciliar structure of governance. We endorse the formation of Gafcon Branches where necessary and of a Panel of Advisors, comprising bishops, clergy and lay representatives from each Gafcon Province and Branch, to provide counsel and

advice to the Primates Council. Together with the Primates, the Panel of Advisors form a Synodical Council to bring recommendations to the Gafcon Assembly. The Synodical Council met for the first time at this Conference.

In light of the recommendations of the Synodical Council, we respectfully urge the Archbishop of Canterbury

- to invite as full members to Lambeth 2020 bishops of the Province of the Anglican Church in North America and the Province of the Anglican Church in Brazil and
- not to invite bishops of those Provinces which have endorsed by word or deed sexual practices which are in contradiction to the teaching of Scripture and Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, unless they have repented of their actions and reversed their decisions.

In the event that this does not occur, we urge Gafcon members to decline the invitation to attend Lambeth 2020 and all other meetings of the Instruments of Communion.

REACHING OUT TO GOD'S WORLD

Our conference theme has been “Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations.” We have received the gospel through the faithful witness of previous generations. Yet there are still billions of people who are without Christ and without hope. Jesus taught his disciples: “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (Matthew 24:14).

We repent for the times and seasons when we have only preached to ourselves and not embraced the difficult task of reaching beyond our own cultural groups in obedience to God’s call to be a light to the nations (cf. Acts 13:47). In faith and obedience, we joyfully recommit ourselves to the faithful proclamation of the gospel.

In order to expand our ability to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations in both word and deed, we launched nine strategic networks.

1. **Theological Education:** To promote effective theological training throughout the Anglican Communion
2. **Church Planting:** To expand church planting as a global strategy for evangelisation
3. **Global Mission Partnerships:** To promote strategic cross-cultural mission partnerships in a globalized world
4. **Youth and Children’s Ministry:** To be a catalyst for mission to young people and children of all nations so that they may become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ
5. **Mothers’ Union:** To expand the potential of this global ministry to promote biblical patterns of marriage and family life

6. **Sustainable Development:** To establish global partnerships which work with the local church to bring sustainable and transformative development
7. **Bishops Training Institute:** To serve the formation of faithful and effective episcopal leadership throughout the Communion
8. **Lawyers Task Force:** To address issues of religious freedom and matters of concern to Anglican lawyers and Chancellors and to further the aims of the Jerusalem Declaration
9. **Intercessors Fellowship:** To inspire and develop globally connected regional and national intercessory prayer networks

In the world into which we go to proclaim the gospel, we shall encounter much which will need us to walk in paths of righteousness and mercy (Hosea 2:19; Micah 6:8). We commit to encouraging each other to give strength to the persecuted, a voice to the voiceless, advocacy for the oppressed, protection of the vulnerable, especially women and children, generosity to the poor, and continuing the task of providing excellent education and health care. As appropriate, we encourage the formation of other networks to assist in addressing these issues.

OUR GLOBAL ANGLICAN FUTURE

To proclaim the gospel, we must first defend the gospel against threats from without and within. We testify to the extraordinary blessings on this Conference, which leads us to call upon God even more, that the Anglican Communion may become a mighty instrument in the hand of God for the salvation of the world. We invite all faithful Anglicans to join us in this great enterprise of proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations.

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
Ephesians 3:20-21*

GAFCON Chairman's July 2018 Letter



To the Faithful of the Gafcon movement and friends from Archbishop Nicholas Okoh, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria and Chairman, the Gafcon Primates Council.

'I will fulfil my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD – in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.'

Psalm 116:18,19

My dear people of God,

Like the psalmist of old, we came to Jerusalem in the presence of God's people with great thanksgiving. Since our first gathering in 2008 we have seen the Almighty God powerfully at work. By his grace, we have provided a home for the spiritually homeless and hope for orthodox Anglicans around the world who longed to see the reform and renewal of our beloved Communion.

We expressed our thanksgiving not only in joyful worship, but also by committing to a shared vision and shared action. The psalmist said 'I will fulfil my vows to the LORD' and that is our determination too. Building on the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration of 2008 and the Nairobi Communiqué and Commitment of 2013, we focussed our vision in a Letter to the Churches.

In this 'Jerusalem Letter' we affirmed that 'we dedicate ourselves afresh to proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations, working together to guard the gospel entrusted to us by our Lord and his apostles'. We also set out how this commitment will be demonstrated. We are reforming by creating new global structures where necessary, such as the Synodical Council, and by commending biblically principled engagement with the old structures. We are also renewing by reaching out to the world with the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and to facilitate this we have formed nine global networks.

In making these commitments, Gafcon claims no global jurisdiction. That is not the Anglican way. We are a family of independent Provinces, but we are not independent of the Lordship of Christ and we came together to seek the mind of Christ as we heard the Scriptures taught, as we prayed and as we worshipped. So although the commitments of the Jerusalem Letter do not have juridical force, they do have moral and spiritual authority. We have vowed to proclaim Christ faithfully. That is why we came to Jerusalem and 'in the presence of all his people' we have renewed our resolve to act together.

So I want to urge you to see the 'Jerusalem Letter' as a joyful yet solemn covenant commitment for the renewal and the reordering of the Anglican Communion. Our critics accuse of us of being schismatic and seeking to leave the Communion. Nothing could be further from the truth. The question is not staying or leaving, but will the leadership of the Anglican Communion be self-serving or gospel-serving? The spread of the gospel requires the authenticity of the gospel. We cannot separate mission from faithfulness. As I noted in my Chairman's address to the conference, when I ask people around the world to tell me what the gospel is, I do not find different gospels, but the same gospel meeting different challenges in different contexts.

It has been said that at our Jerusalem Conference, Gafcon has come of age. I believe that is true. This was the largest Anglican gathering for over fifty years, we represent the clear majority of active Anglicans globally, we are putting in place the structures that will enable faithful gospel proclamation throughout the world and we are adding new Provinces to the Communion. We are not leaving and we will not cease until the Anglican Communion has become fit for the great purpose of proclaiming God's gospel. We will fulfil our vow and covenant.

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh

Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria and Chairman, the Gafcon Primates Council

*DIOCESAN VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS TO COME AT THE BACK
COVER*