

CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

DIOCESE OF EVO

SECOND SESSION OF THE SECOND SYNOD

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS/ BISHOP'S CHARGE

DELIVERED BY

HIS LORDSHIP

**THE RT. REV. INNOCENT U. ORDU, JP
(DIOCESAN BISHOP)**

ON
SATURDAY 2ND AUGUST, 2014.

AT

**ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH,
RUMUOBIKANI DEANERY,
PORT HARCOURT,
RIVERS STATE.**

WELCOME

Our dear people of God, we bid you welcome to the 2nd Session of the 2nd Synod of our Diocese of Evo holding here in St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery. We are pleased to specially welcome to this synod our special Guest of Honour, His Excellency, The Executive Governor of Rivers State, The Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi; our Guests of Honour, Your Graces and My Lord Bishops or their representatives, members of the National and Rivers State Houses of Assembly, The Chairman, Caretaker Committee of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Hon. Dr. Lawrence Chuku who is the Chief Launcher at this occasion, other Government functionaries or their representatives here present, Traditional Rulers, our dear Diocesan legal officers, eminent brothers of the House of Clergy, Diocesan officials, our nominees and invitees to this Synod, delegates from churches, Anglican faithful from the Diocese of Evo and beyond, our friends and well-wishers, gentlemen/women of the press.

We thank you for finding the time to honour our invitation once again and to identify with us on this auspicious occasion. May the good Lord shower his abundant blessings upon you and all yours in Jesus name – Amen.

APPRECIATION

We sincerely thank all our Clergymen and their wives for holding forth at the Parish/Station levels; our Legal Officers and members of the Diocesan Board, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, JP, my wife and President of the Diocesan Women's Ministries, Presidents, Diocesan Men's Christian Association, Council of Knights, Anglican Youth Fellowship, Lay Readers Association and other arms of the Church, Diocesan office and other Church workers, the various Church Councils, the Chaplains, the Synod Secretaries and members of the Diocesan and Local Synod Planning Committees. We appreciate very specially the priests of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani led by the Rev. Canon Charles Mordi, the Deanery Council and the entire congregation for accepting to host this year's Diocesan Synod. We sincerely appreciate and commend the extraordinary care you have taken to prepare this venue for this synod. May the Lord reward your labours.

We appreciate the prayers, support and solidarity extended to us by a vast majority of parishioners across the Diocese. We pray the Lord to reward all your toils and sacrifices of love aimed at making us succeed.

Thank you and God bless.

OUR SYNOD VENUE

ST. ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, RUMUOBIOKANI DEANERY

The history of Christianity in Rumuobiokani indicates that the first church denomination to appear in the community was the Anglican Church. The history of St. Andrew's can be traced back to the beginning of Christianity in Oro-Evo. About the year 1904 a group of fishermen and hunters from Oginigba, a neighbouring community started holding what was thought to be a Cultural Organization which met on weekly basis.

This 'meeting' as it was perceived to be, was known as the Church. In this endeavour, persons of the same professions from Rumuobiokani led by Chief Frank Ejekwu Woko joined and some elders from Rumuogba joined them. Later Rumuomasi people joined in this 'meeting'.

The first meeting place, a thatch roofed hall was built at Eliesera in Oginigba about 1904. As the Church grew in number members resolved to build a more spacious place in a more central location. This central location was in Rumuobiokani.

Thus in 1906 the first Church building was erected on Rumuobiokani soil near the railway tracks at Trans-Amadi. In 1928 the second building was erected in a small village square in Rumuobiokani known as Agbango. The third building was a mud building – an improvement on the previous two which were sheds without walls.

The Church moved to the present site about 1955 when the fourth Church building was dedicated by Rt. Rev. E. T. Dimieari, Bishop of the then Niger Delta Diocese. The building was demolished to make room for expansion in 1967 when the Rt. Rev. R. N. Bara-Hart laid the Foundation Stone. The fifth was dedicated on Saturday, 19th May, 1990 by the Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo and the station inaugurated a Parish church on Sunday, 20th May, 1990 with Rev. Innocent W. Wopara as its first Vicar. The sixth building in which we are today gathered was started late in the year 2001 and was completed and dedicated on 21st November, 2002 by the Rt. Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP.

Revival in the Church:

The history of St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery will not be complete without making reference to what God did in 1994. In that year, the Church witnessed a great move of God. A great revival broke out which affected not only the church but the community at large and swept the area like flood. This move of God was championed by the then Rev. Canon Isaac O. Tejevbo, (now a Venerable) who was posted to the church in January that year as Vicar by The Rt. Rev. S. O. Elenwo then Bishop of the Niger Delta Diocese. His coming and the new wave of God's move set the pace for the spiritual, numerical, physical and financial growth of the church up to the present day.

Deanery Status

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani was one of the initial eight Churches designated Deaneries at the Niger Delta North (our residual Diocese) Diocesan Board

meeting of 16th July, 2002 and ratified at a One-Day Synod of the Diocese held on Monday, 29th July, 2002. The formal inauguration of Rumuobiokani Deanery took place on 21st November of that same year and was performed by The Rt. Rev. Ignatius C. O. Kattey, JP (now Most Rev.). The Pioneer Rector was Venerable Dr. Emenike C. Ndu in whose tenure the sixth church building was completed and dedicated.

At this juncture, it could be said that St. Andrew's Anglican Church has since experienced consistent growth in all areas.

It is worthy to note that this church has produced five (5) Bishop in the last ten (10) years, they are: Rt. Rev. Issac Orama now late, Rt. Rev. Okechukwu Nwala, Rt. Rev. Chidi Oparaojiaku, Rt. Rev. Anga Nyanabo and we, The Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP with several ministers who have attained great heights in ministry who passed through this church.

The Vision and Mission of the Church

"To know Christ and to make Christ known" sums up the vision and mission of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani. The patron saint of the Church whose name the Church bears is Andrew. In John 1:35-42 we learn that Andrew came to know Jesus Christ from the mouth of John the Baptist (vs. 36 & 37). Andrew then made Jesus known to his brother Peter who subsequently became the leader of the apostles.

St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani is a *"purpose driven"* Church and Church of His vision. The results of her attempts in making Christ known are seen in the church's achievements in recent years in the area of missions.

External Mission

The first move of the church towards mission outside the state and country was in June, 1999 when We were here as Vicar. In that year, Rumuobiokani Parish in conjunction with St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Nkpogu Parish under the Vicar, then Rev. Canon Isaac Orama (later Bishop of Uyo Diocese and now late) sent the following parishioners – Brothers John Nkuene and John Ebebinwe (now priests), brother Godson Omeje and Sisters Blessing Ebenezer and Blessing Oledikwa on a one-month mission to Cameroun in Central Africa.

The following year, specifically on September 19th, 2000, the church commissioned a team of young persons on a long term mission to seven villages (Etekwuru Farm, Abacheke, Etekwuru Home, Mgbara, Obiakpu, Opuama and Obukofia) in Ohaji/Egbema in Imo State. They were Brothers Ngofa MacPepple, Moses Obinna, Chukwudi Theophilus (now priests in Etche, Niger Delta North and Evo Dioceses respectively), Sisters Grace Jaja and Ngozi Ebise. They were coordinated by Evangelist and Mrs. Iheanyi Ogwo.

The church was one of those assigned mission stations when the Diocese of Niger Delta North commenced the mission to the Republic of Cameroun in the year 2001. Later the church was assigned the Madagascar Mission field.

St. Andrew's Church has since the year 2000 planted not less than 20 churches within and outside Nigeria besides assisting several other weaker congregations. Some of the churches include:

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|
| a) Church of the Holy Spirit, Elioze | } | Now Parish Churches |
| b) Bethel Anglican Church, Rumuibekwe | | |
| c) Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba | | |
| d) Anglican Church of the Messiah, Iriebe | | |
| e) King of Glory Anglican Church, Mini-Ewa, Rumuobiokani | | |
| f) Anglican Worship Centre, Mgbuakara (Niger Delta North Diocese) | | |
| g) Christ The Redeemer Anglican Church, Eliogbolo | | |
| h) Anglican Worship Centre, Elioze Flyover | | |
| i) 2 Churches in Ogoni Diocese | | |
| j) 11 Churches in Etche Diocese | | |
| k) 2 Churches in Ohafia Diocese | | |
| l) 7 Churches Ahoada Diocese | | |

Madagascar

1. Mahabo Church
2. Tsimahavo Church
3. Bemahasia Church
4. Tawandave/Benjamin Church
5. Mangily Church

Cameroun

Six Churches were planted in Cameroun by St. Andrew's before handing them over to St. Peter's Rumuepirikom Deanery in 2007.

The Mission of this church can be summarized as "To be the church of excellence where members fulfil their ministry through fellowship, worship, evangelism mission and discipleship".

We commend the Deanery for all the preparations put in place for the hosting of this year's Synod meeting of the Diocese of Eyo which is their second time of hosting a Diocesan Synod. The first being in the year 2007 under the Diocese of Niger Delta North.

Church workers that have served in St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery from inception to date

Agents

1. Mr. Okoye a.k.a Teacher Okoye (now late).
2. Mr. Wakama a.k.a. Gbe-gbeh (now late).
3. Mr. Ngwoke (now late).

Catechists

1. Catechist E. O. Agwuocha (later Ven., now late)
2. Catechist Okere
3. Catechist I. C. Amechi (later Ven., now rtd.)

4. Catechist I.A. Chezue (later Rev., now late)
5. Catechist Nwala (later Rev., now late)
6. Catechist Wokoma (now late)
7. Catechist S.N. Obasi (later Rev., now late)
8. Catechist J.O. Woko (now late)
9. Catechist Ajurunwo
10. Catechist M.O. Obi (later Rev., now late)
11. Catechist J.A. Awhenwa: later Curate (later Rev. Canon, now late)

Church Teachers

1. Mr. ThankGod Amadi (King of Glory, Mini-Ewa)
2. Mr. Maduakona Ezigbo Paul (AWC, Eliozu Flyover)

Priests

1. Rev. I.W. Wopara – From Curate to Vicar (Later Ven., now late)
2. Rev. G.O. Wodi – Vicar (now rtd. Ven.)
3. Rev. Canon H.T. Alison – Vicar (now rtd.)
4. Rev Canon I.O. Tejevbo-Vicar (now Ven.)
5. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu: From Curate to Vicar (now Rt. Rev.)
6. Rev. A. Omubor-Curate (now Ven.)
7. Rev. Anga Nyanabo-Curate (now Rt. Rev.)
8. Rev. O. Igbamerun-Priest (now Rev. Canon)
9. Rev. Samuel Eze-Priest (now Ven. Barrister)
10. Rev. I. G. Anene-Deacon (now Rev. Canon)
11. Rev. Canon E. C. Eleazu-Vicar (now Ven.)
12. Rev. J. O. W. Odimia-Curate (now Ven.)
13. Rev. J Ihejirika-Priest (now Rev. Canon)
14. Rev. G.U.M. Ozumba-Priest (Later Rev. Canon, now late)
15. Rev. Stephen Ekwunife-Priest
16. Ven. Dr. E.C. Ndu-Rector (rtd.) now Ven. Prof.
17. Rev. Dr. Ngochindo-Curate (now rtd. Rev. Canon)
18. Rev. Loveday O. Njoku-Priest (now Rev. Canon)
19. Rev. Andy Nonyelum
20. Ven. Isaac E. Orama-Rector (now late Rt. Rev.)
21. Rev. Canon D.L. Emmanuel-Priest (now Ven. Dr.)
22. Rev. Bethel I. Mimi-Priest (now late)
23. Rev. Kingsley Ogbonda (now Rev. Canon)
24. Rev. Samuel P. Alozie
25. Rev. Mike Mba (now late)
26. Rev. Ifeanyi A.K. Aniagboso (now Rev. Canon)
27. Ven. Chidi C. Oparaojiaku-Rector (now Rt. Rev.)
28. Rev. Sullivan S.B. Odike
29. Rev. Amos Osaromkpe
30. Rev. Prince O. Ahukagha
31. Ven. A. Omubor-Rector
32. Rev. Cephas Okarefe-Curate
33. Rev. Ebenezer U. Owbor
34. Rev. Canon Charles Mordi-Current Supervisor
35. Rev. Sampson Abada-immediate past Curate

- 36. Rev. Canon Leo Nwachukwu-Current Curate
- 37. Rev. Moses Anyaefena-Priest

We acknowledge Sir, Chief Godspower I. Ebenezer for writing a greater portion of the history of this church to which we only made some additions.

OUR GUEST SPEAKERS

The Right Reverend Professor Emmanuel Bayode Ajulo (Our Preacher & Bible Study Leader)

The Right Reverend Professor Emmanuel Bayode Ajulo was born on 26th September, 1947 to Mr. Daniel Adebola Ajulo and Mrs Comfort Ojuolape Ajulo in Lampese.

He had his primary education in CMS Primary School, Lampese from 1953 to 1959 and his secondary education in Anglican Grammar School, Igarra from 1962 to 1966. Emmanuel Ajulo has a BA degree (English) from University of Ife, Ile-Ife in 1973; and MA (English Studies) from the same University in 1977 (degree was conferred in 1978); PhD (English Language) from University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England in 1980. He also has Diploma in Theology from Immanuel College of Theology and Christian Education, Ibadan in 1994.

Emmanuel E.B. Ajulo worked as a clerk in Central Police Pay Office, Lagos, June-September 1967 and in Central Police Pay Office, Benin City from September 1967 to September 1969. Mr. Ajulo was born again in 1969. He worked as a Graduate Assistant and grew up to Lecturer I in the Department of English, University of Ife, Ile-Ife from 1974 to 1985, and worked in University of Jos, from 1985 and became a Professor (English Language) in 1995.

Professor Ajulo's journey into the Holy Orders started with his posting as a postulant to The Church of St Piran on the Plateau, Jos by (then) Right Reverend B.A. Kwashi, Bishop of Diocese of Jos in 1992. He was made a Deacon in Diocese of Jos by Right Reverend B.A. Kwashi (now Archbishop of Jos Ecclesiastical Province); was priested in 1993; preferred a Statutory Canon in 1996, and appointed a Venerable Archdeacon in the Cathedral Church of St Luke, Jos in 2007, all by the same Bishop (now Archbishop). Venerable Professor E. B. Ajulo was elected and consecrated Bishop for Missionary Diocese of Okene in 2008.

As a Deacon, Rev Dr E. B. Ajulo served in The Church of St Piran on the Plateau, Jos, 1992-2000; and was appointed the vicar of the church and the Supervising Priest of Jos South Archdeaconry from 1996-2000. He was transferred to New Covenant Church, Laranto, Jos 2000-2003, and then to St Michael's Anglican Church, Jenta-Katako, Jos 2003-2007. He was transferred to Cathedral Church of St Luke, Jos in 2007 and served there up to May 2008. It was while serving there, he was elected a bishop.

Right Reverend Professor Ajulo is married to Mrs. Apeke Victoria Ajulo and blessed with five children and four grandchildren.

We thank His Lordship for accepting our invitation to this synod as the Main Preacher and Bible Study Leader. May God bless you, your family and ministry in the Diocese of Okene.

Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah Catholic Bishop of Sokoto

1: Date of Birth: August 31, 1952

2: Year of Ordination: December 19th, 1976

3: Education:

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Certificate/Degree</i>	<i>Year of Qualification</i>
St Joseph's Minor Seminary	Secondary Sch. Certificate	1970
St Augustine's Seminary	Dip, Rel Studies, and BD	1976
University of Bradford, UK	MA Peace Studies	1981
London University	Ph. D	1990
Oxford University (St Antony's College)	Senior Rhodes Fellow	2001-2003
KSG/Harvard University	MA (Public Policy)	2003-2004

Working Experience

<i>Position Held</i>	<i>Location/Institution</i>	<i>Period</i>
Associate Parish Priest	Kaduna	1977-78
Lecturer, Dean of Students	St Augustine's Seminary, Jos	1978-79
Rector	Junior Seminary, Zaria	1981-82
Cardinal's Special Assistant	Catholic Church, Abuja	1982-86
Deputy Secretary- General	Catholic Bishops Conference	1990-93

Secretary General	Catholic Bishops Conference	1994-2000
Member, Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission	Federal Government of Nigeria	1999-2001
Secretary, National Political Reform Conference	Federal Government of Nigeria	February –July 2005
Chairman, Ogoni-Shell Reconciliation	Federal Government of Nigeria	August 2005-till date.

Member, Electoral Reform Committee	Federal Government of Nigeria		2007-till date.
Vicar General,	Archdiocese of Kaduna		August 2004 - 2011
Chairman, Interreligious Commission	Catholic Bishops conference of Nigeria		2012 till date
Chairman, Interreligious Dialogue	Conference of Anglophone and Francophone, Bishops		2012 till date
Member, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue	Vatican City		2013 till date
Special Delegate/Observer	ECOWAS Headquarters (Conference of Anglophone and Francophone Bishops)		2013 till date
Bishop of Sokoto	Nigeria Bishop		Sept 8 2011 till date

We thank His Lordship for accepting the invitation to deliver the Synod Lecture on **“Politics, Christians and good governance in Nigeria: the challenge to be different”** regardless of the fact that it came from outside the Catholic Church. May God bless Your Lordship and ministry in the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto.

Mrs. ANAGBOGU IJEOMA AKUELUE.

Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu was born in Markurdi in present day Benue State on 21st December, 1954 to the family of Mr. & Mrs. C.N.O. Anerobi.

She attended St. Michael's Primary School, Zaria from 1961 – 1966 and Graduated from the Girls' Secondary, Enugu in June 1973.

She was admitted into the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) in 1974 and graduated in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Botany. In 1986 she obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Education at the University of Benin.

Mrs. Anagbogu did her National Youth Service Corps programme in Oyo State between 1978 and 1979.

Working Experience

Between 1978 and 1986, Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu taught Biology and other science subjects in the following secondary schools in Nigeria:

- Ibadan City Academy
- Government Secondary School Gwaram, Jigawa State
- Delta Steel Technical High School (Head of Department, Science)
- May Day Academy, Lagos – Administrator/Registrar.

She has since 1995 been working as the Managing Director of Grace Noly Enterprises as well as the Director of Administration, A.A.C. Ltd.

Kingdom Work

In the last 20 years she has been involved in the teaching of the word of God. She has been very active in the Home Fellowship and Marriage Ministries of St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery and also in Aglow – an International Women's Ministry.

She's a marriage Counsellor and enjoys mentoring younger women especially in the areas of family life and children upbringing.

She was appointed Coordinator of the Diocese of Edo Home Fellowship and Family Life Ministry by the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Innocent Ordu at the last Diocesan Synod in August 2013.

Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu has been married since the past 34 years to Engr. Ajulu Anagbogu and their union is blessed with 5 children and 3 grandchildren.

We thank her for accepting to deliver one of the talks in this synod: **“The Downward Course of Man”**. May the Lord continue to bless her, the family and all her endeavours in life, in Jesus name – Amen.

Our Chief Launcher

Our Chief Launcher is Hon. Dr. Lawrence Chuku, Caretaker Committee Chairman, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State and Senior Lecturer in University of Port Harcourt. We thank him for accepting our invitation the responsibility to be our Chief Launcher.

OUR SYNOD THEME

Our Synod theme for this year **‘CALLED TO BE DIFFERENT’** taken from Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:17, is a call on all of us Christians to be and remain distinctive, retaining our Christian identity and be clearly seen to be on the side of the Lord in word and in practice particularly in a world of declining spiritual, moral/ethical standards.

Paul’s letter to the Romans has two natural divisions: namely, the Doctrinal Part and the Application Part. Chapters one through eleven consists of the doctrinal part. Here, Paul took time to talk about human problem which is sin: the provision God made for man’s redemption, which is Christ; the power of victory over sin which is the Cross and the Jewish response to the offer of Salvation. From Chapters Twelve through Sixteen, his teachings centre on what ought to be the believers’ response to all that God has done through Christ for the redemption of man.

The word ‘therefore’ in 12:1 simply points to all these things God has done for us which Paul calls *God’s mercy*. The best we can give to Him is ourselves, by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices. The offering of the living bodies of believers as sacrifices contrasts with the OT offerings of dead animals. Here, the ‘body’ represents far more than just our belongings or our money. It means the totality of our life, plans and activities. The offering of ourselves is a spiritual act of worship we can give to God.

It is only when we have offered our 'body' in this sense that we can 'not conform any longer to the pattern of this world' (verse 2). The natural man cannot attain this height of consecration. The starting point for him is to *offer* himself, to surrender all to the Master.

The New Living Translation of Rom. 12:2 is so explicit: 'Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into new persons by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect'.

Again, Paul (quoting from Isaiah 52:11) admonished the believers: '*Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*' (2 Cor. 6:17).

The two biblical texts (Rom. 12:2 and 2 Cor. 6:17) from where our theme is drawn are pointing at one thing, which is coming out of the world and living a consecrated life. In fact, according to the latter passage, it is a condition that must be fulfilled before God can accept us.

The Problem of the World

It will be good for us to look at reasons behind the strong admonitions of these Scriptures (and indeed the entire Scriptures) why we must not conform to the pattern of this world. The Greek word, *cosmos* which is translated 'world' points to three things:

1. The material earth or universe as it is orderly arranged

Certain scriptures allude to this;

- 'The God that made the *world* and all that is in them'. Acts 17:24
- 'The foundation of the *world*'. Matt. 13:35
- 'He was in the *world* and the world was made by Him'. John 1:10
- 'Go ye into the *world*'. Mark 16:15

2. The people in the world

Scriptural examples include

- 'The *world* knew Him not'. John 1:10
- 'God so loved the *world*'. John 3:16
- 'The *world* is gone after Him'. John 12:19
- 'That the *world* may believe'. John 17:21

3. The things of the earth or worldly affairs.

We have these examples

- ‘The things that are in the *world*’. 1 John 2:15
- ‘...if he shall gain the whole *world* and forfeit his life’. Matt 16:26
- ‘The wisdom of this *world*’. 1 Cor 3:19
- ‘The spirit of the *world*’. 1 Cor 2:12
- ‘The fashion of the *world*’. 1 Cor 7:31
- ‘The corruption that is in the *world*’. 2 Peter 1:4
- ‘The defilement of the *world*’. 2 Peter 2:20
- ‘All that is in the *world*, the lust...the glory...’ 1 John 2:16-17

Our subject matter has more to do with the latter. The Christian is ‘to keep himself unspotted from the world’. James 1:27

‘The world’ is a very critical subject matter in the New Testament as it has 167 references. Jesus talked about it 9 times in Matthew, 3 times in Mark and 3 times in Luke. Paul referred to it 47 times in all his epistles. John however made reference to it much more than the other New Testament writers and particularly in the sense we are looking at it. It appeared 78 times in his gospel, 24 times in his (brief) epistle and 3 times in Revelation. (We may say that while Apostle Paul was given a special revelation of the Church of God, John had a special understanding of the nature of the world).

A Call to be Different

‘Do not love the world or anything in the world’, says John. Why? Because ‘if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him’ (1 John 2:16). Again, ‘everything in the world-the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life comes not from the Father but from the world’ (verse 17).

As Christians we are called to break with our sinful past and to be different from the world around us. Paul in his epistle to the Romans writes, ‘Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world’ (By which he means the world that has shut God out). Or as J.B. Philips translates this verse, ‘Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould’. This is not easy; there is a pressure to conform, to be like everybody else. It is very hard to be different.

As believers in Christ Jesus who are living in a perverted world system, the Scripture admonishes that we be conscious of who we are and the world wherein we dwell. Ekklesia, which is the Greek word for ‘Church’ literally refers to people that are called out. Once you have been called by God, you are first of all called out of the

world. That is the starting point. According to Watchman Nee, 'There is no such thing as a call from God that is not a call out of the world'. In other words, you cannot claim to have become a Christian and still live the life of the unconverted world. If you are a called one, then you are a called-out one. This is where the making of the difference starts. Simply put, we are called 'out of darkness into His marvellous light'. (1 Peter 2:9).

Do not Take off your Christian uniform

Rev. Nicky Gumbel in his book *'How Can I Make The Most of The Rest of My Life?'* narrated the story of a young police officer who was taking his final exam at Hendon Police College in North London. Here is one of the questions he was asked: *You are on patrol in outer London when an explosion occurs in a gas main in a nearby street. On investigation you find that a large hole has been blown in the footpath and there is an overturned van lying nearby. Inside the van there is a strong smell of alcohol. Both occupants- a man and a woman- are injured. You recognize the woman as the wife of your Divisional Inspector, who is at present away in the USA. A passing motorist stops to offer you assistance and you realize that he is a man who is wanted for armed robbery. Suddenly a man runs out of a nearby house, shouting that his wife is expecting a baby and that the shock of the explosion has made the birth imminent. Another man is crying for help, having been blown into an adjacent canal by the explosion, and he cannot swim. Bearing in mind the provisions of the Mental Health Act, describe in a few words what actions you would take.*

The officer thought for a moment, picked up his pen, and wrote: 'I would take off my uniform and mingle with the crowd'.

We can sympathize with his answer. As a Christian, it is often easier to take off our Christian uniform and 'mingle with the crowd'. But we are called to remain distinctive, to retain our Christian identity, wherever we are and whatever the circumstances.

A Christian is called to be a chrysalis rather than a chameleon. A chrysalis is a pupa which turns into a beautiful butterfly. A chameleon is a lizard with the power to change colour: many can assume shades of green, yellow, cream or dark brown. It is popularly thought to change colour to match its background. Similarly, chameleon Christians merge with their surroundings, happy to be Christians in the company of other Christians, but willing to change their standards in an environment which is not Christian. Legend has it that an experiment was carried out on a chameleon. It was put on a tartan background, could not take the tension, and exploded! The chameleon Christian experiences an almost unbearable tension in his or her life and, unlike the chrysalis Christian, does not reach his or her potential.

Christians are not called to fit in with their background, but to be different. Being different does not mean being odd. We are not called to wear weird clothes or to start

speaking in peculiar religious language. We can be normal! The abnormality that some people feel to be a necessary part of Christianity is complete nonsense. Indeed, a relationship with God through Jesus should bring integration to our personalities. The more like Jesus we become, the more ‘normal’ we become- in the sense that we become more fully human.

When we follow Christ, we are free to shed patterns and habits that bring us and others down. For example, it means that we should no longer indulge in character assassination behind people’s backs. It means we do not need to spend our time grumbling and complaining (if that is what we were like before). It means we are no longer free as before to run our businesses in dubious ways – inflating prices, importing, making/adulterating and selling of fake and harmful products, lying to our customers, breaking of business partnership agreements – all for selfish gains. It means we are no longer free to play truant or idle away at work or school only to make the loudest noise when salaries are not quickly paid or engage in shameful malpractices during examination. This might all sound very negative, but it should not be so. Rather than being backbiters, we should be encouragers, constantly looking to build others up out of love for them. Rather than grumbling and complaining, we should be full of thankfulness and joy. Rather than distort our consciences through fraudulent business practices, negative attitude to work, cheating in the examination hall, God calls us to be different from others who do these things and be so infused with godly principles that we become His fragrance to our lost world. He calls to be upright in all our dealings.

Others areas Christians are called to be different

In an age of twisted values, such as ours, Peter’s admonition to his Pentecost Day audience is most apt: *‘And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation’* (Acts 2:40).

We should therefore distinguish ourselves as Christians in the following areas:

- **In the Observance of Customs and Traditions**

As Christians, our compliance with the customs, laws, mores, traditions, lifestyles, music and art of our communities and the wider society should be such that heaven does not see us as transgressing the commandment of God (Matthew 15:3). God’s word is supreme and it provides appropriate guide to the Christian on all matters of life. We must endeavour not to lay it aside in order to uphold heathen practices which are fast assuming modern posture (Mark 7:8). Let us heed the warnings and admonitions of Apostle Paul: *‘Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy*

and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ' (Col. 2:8);

'This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth' (Titus 1:13-14).

God's people are strongly warned against diluting their Christian culture with that of the world. This warning is equally applicable in marriage. There is no room for intermarriage with nonbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

- **In Sexual Immorality and other Vile Passions**

In an age when family life, pure and holy lifestyles are being set aside through growing acts of sexual perversion, abuses and other vile passions such as adultery, fornication, rape, pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, masturbation, incest, etc - practices that present such offenders very dirty and abhorred before God; the Christian man, woman, youth should choose to be different from others by living a clean, pure and holy life regardless of what passion he or she may feel. Christians are to prize the sanctity of sex. God the inventor of sex has told us how it can be enjoyed to the full. The biblical context of sexual intercourse is the lifelong commitment in marriage between one man and one woman (Gen 2:24, Mark 10:7).

See how Apostle Peter described the victims of the sin of sexual immorality: *'Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children; which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved wages of unrighteousness'.* (2 Peter 2: 14-15).

Very harsh description, you would say. But that is exactly how God feels towards all sexual perverts. Paul made special mention of sins related to the body. He clearly stated that the body of the believer belongs to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:19). It is His temple (1 Cor. 3:16). A believer who would not want to be included in the list of those Peter tagged 'cursed children', is to use both his/her body and spirit to bring glory and praise to God (1 Cor. 6:20). As Christians we are not free to conform to the world's standard of sexual morality. Rather than indulging in sexual immorality, we should be demonstrating the blessing of keeping God's standards.

- **In Our Clothing (Fashion) and Appearance**

A Christian is called to complement the Kingdom of God in every aspect of life, including in his/her appearance (2 Cor. 3:2, 3). The Christian should take it as a sacred duty to God to be clean, neat, modest, and appropriate in his/her appearance and not allow the world to squeeze him/her into its own fashion standards. We should not neglect how we look, as indecent dress pattern (even when it is acceptable

to the society) is capable of diminishing our total effectiveness. The scripture describes our bodies as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20). Appropriate attire is essential for those, (men/women/youth) who represent Christ. A man was forbidden by the law (Deut. 22:5) to wear a woman's garment and vice versa. Women in particular, are admonished not merely to have outward adornment but to use such adornment to emphasize their beautiful inner spirit. (1 Pet. 3:3, 4). We are not by any means condemning style and beauty; however, it must be noted that a Christlike spirit is preferred to excessive make-up, vulgar jewellery, or revealing clothes. While others feel incomplete in their attire unless the sensitive parts of their bodies are exposed to all who care to see; the Christian should note that he/she is called to be different. What a Christian wears should not provoke lust in others. A true Christian should, in the fear of God, be normally ashamed to appear partly or fully naked. This sense of shame and fear is at the core of modesty – the need to cover our bodies. In His grace, God provided clothing for the first couple and ever since, believers who fear God have covered themselves (Gen. 3:21).

- **In our attitude to Wealth and Talents**

The Bible teaches that wealth comes from God and will return to Him. Wealth should bring praise to God. At times, God chooses to bless some people with wealth. Material wealth is given to mankind as a stewardship. Regrettably, some wealthy persons, including Christians, who lack this understanding, have wrongly used their wealth to promote causes that offend God and hurt the human society, e.g. oppression of the poor and helpless, sponsorship of political propaganda and thuggery, fomenting of violent/bloody crimes like militancy and religious fundamentalism and other tensions worth our concern. And of course, some others spend their wealth on wasteful and riotous lifestyles.

God, the Owner and Giver of all things, expects His children to be better managers of His possessions which He has graciously committed to their hands. The rich/talented believer as opposed to some of his unbelieving counterparts should use his wealth and or talents to bring praise to God. They should give generously towards causes that promote kingdom agenda and generally bless others. The purpose of wealth or any other gift of God is sharing (Acts 20:35). As those called to be different, Christians should not allow themselves to be ruled by money. Apostle Paul instructs: *'Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life'* (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

- **In our attitude to Politics, Governance and Citizenship**

Government which exists on many levels and in virtually all areas of life, involves management, oversight, policy-making, and administration. It is not limited to state, federal or even to secular jurisdiction. It begins with one's self. People are called to govern themselves- to rule their spirits (Proverbs 25:28). This stands in sharp contrast to the self-indulgent spirit of the present age.

God the Judge, Lawgiver, and King of kings (Isaiah 33:22; Rev. 19:16), commissioned government in its multiple forms to promote order and godliness. Christians in government have a duty to be self-disciplined and to promote a style of governance that unconditionally addresses the numerous problems of those they are called to serve. Government officials at all levels who profess faith in Christ should by their utterances, body language, policies and good conduct create a climate of love, peace and good neighbourliness regardless of their political differences with others. They should show example to others by being self-sacrificing, godly and people-centred in their governance instead of removing their Christian uniform and committing the atrocities some persons in government are guilty of against the people and State. Christians in government, who fail in their duties, who ignore the cry of the people and steal from the public treasury, have made no difference. Rather, they have allowed the world (prevailing lip service, corruption, etc) around them to squeeze them into its mould. They should rise up and break with the past pattern of service to the people.

Our duty as Christians is to obey, support and pray for all leaders (1 Tim 2:1-2). People in positions of authority are part of God's plan for orderliness in the world. We are directed to submit ourselves to the people who have risen to those positions of directing the affairs of our communities, State and Nation. To rebel against their authority is to rebel against God's order, which will bring God's judgement. The authority over us may even be incompetent or inadequate in some way, but that authority is still to be respected. When we lose elections or are not called upon to hold political offices we should not seek to destroy the system for those God has permitted to be in such positions. Others who do not have the mind of Christ may do that, but not the Christian politician. The believer in Christ in politics is called to sanitize the process and not to increase its 'dirtiness'.

Practical steps to becoming different

Part of ways we can be seen to be different or live up to our calling as Christians is to:

- **Give up** (the) habits that are clearly non-Christian. We should begin to live such high quality of life rooted in Christ that people who knew us before are provoked to ask us, 'What's different about you?' And when they do we should be ready to tell them.

- **Do not fear to be rejected.**

Many Christians today are not forthcoming in living differently from others because of the fear of being rejected. Consequently, they shy away from sharing their faith or letting the light of Christ in them to so shine for others to see. They prefer rather to live like others in order to win their acceptance.

The scriptures did not anywhere assure us of acceptance or approval of those in the world especially if we choose to live and uphold the tenets of our faith in Christ, rather we are repeatedly reminded that we shall be hated, persecuted, made to suffer. Our calling therefore is not unto a life that compromises, that seeks to be 'friendly' with or that loves the world. If we do that we make ourselves God's enemies.

We must overcome our fear of rejection by the world and seek to grow deep and strong in our love for God and commitment to His cause.

When our hearts are filled with love for God, the fear of the world's negative response to our Christian convictions will flow out.

- **We should endeavour to keep good company, be faithful and trustworthy** wherever we find ourselves.

The story is told of four football players from William Patterson University, New Jersey, USA, who on a Sunday afternoon went shopping at a general store. After spending several minutes trying to locate the store clerk, two of the players who needed sunglasses and batteries were captured on security cameras leaving money at the register. The store manager was surprised at their honesty. The store manager said "They picked up a few items and they left cash on the counter and waved to the cameras".

The head coach of the football team to which these players belonged said, "It doesn't surprise me that they did what they did. That's the kind of kids we try and recruit in here so we can obviously deal with a lot of less headaches, if you know what I mean". As it turned out the players had unknowingly entered a closed store. The store manager said a lock on the front door had malfunctioned and the half lit store made it look like it was open. Police phoned the lady store manager to tell her an alarm had been tipped but she found nothing missing. A few days later, the four young men were identified and rewarded with a \$50 shopping spree.

One may not know the background of these four football players but from what they did, they would probably have had a good parental upbringing. That drives home a lesson for parents. Solomon, the wisest man in his generation,

said – “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

H. Jackson Brown Jnr said “Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you”. On the other hand, the company they kept as young men was certainly a good one. If anyone of them was a thief, he would have probably encouraged/influenced the others to take the goods and ransack the store since nobody was there.

This also teaches a lesson on keeping good company. You must watch the company you keep because “evil communication corrupts good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). The third lesson is that they were faithful and trustworthy. These two virtues are rare to find in many today, not even in a world filled with people who profess and practice all forms of religion. Those boys were faithful to their consciences, parents, school and God their Maker even when no one was watching them.

What do you do when no one is watching? In a world where evil is growing on a daily basis, you can still be different like these four, young university footballers. As Christians we must keep good companies and show ourselves trustworthy to our consciences, parents, mentors, employers, churches, communities, state and nation and above all to God even when no one is watching or supervising.

- **Lastly, we should not let what the late Selwyn Hughes called the herd (i.e. the crowd) instinct determine our conduct/actions.** The herd can commend but we should not allow it to command us. We should not do things or act in a particular way because others do them or expect you to do them. Some people, it has been said, are like the dog that walks ahead of a procession – the dog looks back to see which way the crowd are going and then leads in the same direction.

One of the dynamics that put Christ on a cross was the herd instinct. Listen to this: ‘But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that (Jesus) be crucified, and their shouts prevailed’ (Luke 23:23). Mark records: ‘Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate...had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified’ (Mark 15:15).

Peter was thrown into prison because of the herd instinct: ‘When (King Herod) saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also’ (Acts 12:3).

Since the herd is such a powerful driving force what are we to do about it? There are four possible attitudes we can take:

- i. Withdraw from it;
- ii. Defy it;
- iii. Succumb to it; and
- iv. Overcome it.

If we withdraw from it we become antisocial and disengaged. If we constantly defy it we breed defensiveness and antagonism. If we succumb to it then we are no longer a voice but an echo. The only way for a Christian to overcome the pull of the herd is by being totally committed to God. God is to be God, and not the herd. Surrendered to Him, you surrender to nothing else. If you are herd-centred you are insecure; if you are God-centred you are secure. Don't be afraid of pulling away from the crowd when necessary. And always remember – one person with God, despite the maths, is in the majority.

Why we must be different from the world

When God in His word admonishes us to be different, this is not in order to injure us or deny us some pleasure. It is simply for our good. As the All-knowing God who knows the beginning from the end, it is clear to Him that the world will not offer us any good. As earlier quoted, Apostle John makes it clear that the world is the undoing of most believers. He says the component of the world is 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life'.

Clearly, these were the things the devil used to tempt the first Adam as well as the Last Adam: 'When the woman saw that the tree was *good for food* (lust of the flesh) and *pleasing to the eyes* (lust of the eyes) and also *desirable for giving wisdom* (pride of life), she ate and also gave some to her husband' (Gen 3:6). Unfortunately, the man failed. Again, when he went to Jesus, he told Him; 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread (lust of the flesh)...Throw yourself down (lust of the eyes)...All this I will give (pride of life)' Matt 4:3-9. A believer will do well to escape all these.

Another reason why this call to be different is so essential is because we are living in a generation where it has become very difficult to distinguish between believers and unbelievers. Both in character and in lifestyle, the world today is domineering the Church. The Church is so worldly and the world is so *churchy*. If you are a true believer in Christ, it is time to show it!

Again, living differently delivers us from the power and influence of Satan. Scripture says that 'the whole world is under the control of the evil one' (1 John 5:19). With this knowledge, a Christian who has been called out of the world and its ruler is not expected to submit to bondage and slavery again (Gal 5:1)

Finally, we are living in the end time- and it appears a special power has been let loose which is driving men about. A Christian should separate himself in order to

make heaven at last. Note the admonitions of Scriptures: ‘Nothing impure will ever enter it nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful’ (Rev 21:27). Since our ultimate goal is heaven, we must separate ourselves from the practices of the world so as to get there at last.

CONCLUSION

God has called and positioned his people in every sector of human society – government and in politics, civil service, business/marketplaces, educational institutions, community levels, the media, sports, etc, etc., to combat the decadence in these places simply by living Christianly in their society.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DIOCESE IN FIVE YEARS

We shall endeavour in this address to highlight in summary our collective achievements as a Diocese within the last 5 years.

The Diocese of Edo was inaugurated and We the Bishop enthroned on Monday, 13th July, 2009 at All Saints’ Cathedral, Rumuokwursi a day after our consecration at St. Peter’s Anglican Church, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Right from inauguration the train of both spiritual and infrastructural development has been on the very fast lane. There has hardly been any dull moment ever since.

We thank God for His grace, strength and courage which enabled us to get to where we are presently. We sincerely appreciate the giant strides of churches, groups and individuals and even non-members of our Diocese who allowed God use them in diverse ways to support our ministry and the growth of this young diocese at all levels.

We hereby announce in summary the following achievements in the Diocese within the past 5 years:

Diocesan Constitution

We now have a constitution of our own with the approval of the church of Nigeria Standing Committee.

Revised Burial Law

This is in place. It provides that the maximum number of days the Diocese will allow for the burial of a deceased member is only 28 days; after which the Bishop, clergy and members of the Church will have no business with such a burial.

Welfare Policy on the income and administration of Diocesan and church funds is also in place, with a slight revision being worked out to cater for the welfare of the clergy in the event of death in the course of service.

Registration of the Diocese and Evo Investment Company

Within the period under review we were able to secure the registration of the Diocese and the Diocese of Evo Investment Company Limited with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Investments

We have made investments in the following areas: Establishment of a viable Printing Press, the opening of a Garment Industry, the acquisition of machines for the production of Holy Communion wafers; acquisition of over 80 plots of land at different locations within the Diocese and at Abuja for future Church planting and development of other facilities; infrastructural improvement of our Educational Institutions. We have acquired two new additional machines: One Cutting machine to replace the old one and one new A2 Separating Machine both at the cost of N6m for the Printing Press. We have to the best of our ability endeavoured to be prudent in the management of the finances of the Diocese through the entrenchment of a culture of saving for the rainy day. From our savings, we are about to commence work on a Diocesan Business/Event Centre at Elimgbu on a piece of land willed to Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Elimgbu Parish by a deceased parishioner. This is coming after a fruitful discussion with the leadership of the parish.

Church Planting

Between October 2009 and July, 2014 a total of 24 new churches were planted across the Diocese. The new churches are:

- i. *Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo in October, 2009. This church is already a Parish with a vibrant congregation.*
- ii. *Anglican Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara, Oroigwe in December, 2009.*
- iii. *Great Physician Anglican Church, Atali*
- iv. *Great Shepherd, Mgbuesilaru*
- v. *Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi*
- vi. *Bethany Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi*
- vii. *Upper Room Anglican Church, Eliozi*
- viii. *Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwursi*
- ix. *True Vine Anglican Church, Iriebe*
- x. *Chapel of Restoration, Rumuogba*
- xi. *Redeemer's Cross, The Adolescent Project area, Elelenwo*
- xii. *Jericho Inn. Pre-eminence Hotel, Elelenwo.*
- xiii. *Our Saviour, Christ Anglican Church, Rumunduru, Oroigwe*
- xiv. *Anglican Church of the Beatitudes, Harmony Estate, Rumuokwursi*
- xv. *Cornerstone Anglican Church, Rumurolu*
- xvi. *Faith Community Anglican Church, Eliowhani*
- xvii. *Anglican Church of the Passion, Rumuodani, Elelenwo.*
- xviii. *Ebenezer Anglican Church, Woji/Slaughter Road*
- xix. *New Church Plant, Eliogbolo New Layout*

- xx. *New Church Plant, Eliozu Flyover*
- xxi. *Youth Church, Rumuomasi*
- xxii. *New Church Plant, Eliminigwe phase 2*
- xxiii. *New Church Plant, Eliminigwe phase 3*
- xxiv. *New Church Plant, Victory Estate, Elelenwo.*

These new churches are in addition to the 28 the Diocese started with at inauguration. By this development our target of having a total of at least 50 churches on our 5th anniversary has been achieved and surpassed by three.

New Administrative Units Inaugurated

- i. ***Archdeaconries – 4*** – *Woji, Evo South East, Oroigwe/Eliogbolo & Trinity Missionary.*
- ii. ***Deaneries – 2*** – *Okporo and Oginigba (already pronounced under the old Diocese).*
- iii. ***Parishes – 9*** – *Bethel, Rumuibekwe, Christ Church, FHE, Wojì, Holy Ghost Church, Iriebe Housing Estate, Church of the Epiphany, Rumuokwursi, New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe, Christ Harvest Church, Faith Avenue, Wojì, Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba, Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo, Anglican Church of the Messiah, New Haven, Iriebe.*

Foundation-Stone Laying of New Projects From 2009 – 2014 – 29

This covers new church buildings, children's/multipurpose halls, parsonages, school projects. It is heart-warming to note here that of the 28 churches this Diocese started with in 2009, construction work for new church buildings has either been completed or is still on-going (and nearing completion) in 23 of them. The only churches where construction for new church buildings did not take place are St. Michael's, Rumuomasi, St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani, St. Mark's, Elelenwo, St. Simons, Okporo, Church of Resurrection, Rumuomasi and Mount Zion Church, Eliogbolo where there was no immediate need for it.

In the 24 new church plants, construction of new places of worship and parsonages has either been completed or is seriously in progress in about 50% of them.

The foundation-stone of the following projects were specifically laid between the end of the last synod in August 2013 and July this year. They are part of the 29 recorded above in 5 years.

- i. Great Shepherd Anglican Church, Mgbuesilaru new parsonage building/children's church hall on Wednesday, 27th November, 2013.
- ii. Emmanuel Anglican Church, Okporo, Iriebe new church building on Friday, 20th December, 2013.
- iii. New Wine Church, East West Road, Okporo New Church Building on Monday, 23rd December, 2013.

- iv. St. James' Church, Iriebe Parish New Church Building on St. Matthias' Day, 24th February, 2014.
- v. St. Jude's, Oginigba Deanery New Church Building on Good Friday, 18th April, 2014.
- vi. New Parsonage and staff quarters building complex of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Elelenwo on Easter Day, 20th April, 2014.

As part of this Synod, we laid the foundation stone for the building of a six classroom block at Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School here in Rumuobiokani on Wednesday, 30th July, 2014. This was due to the review of our original plan for an 18-classroom, laboratories, and office complex which we are prayerfully hoping will very soon be undertaken by a multinational organization.

Projects Dedicated From July 2009 – July 2014: 155

- i. New Church buildings – 12
- ii. Churches offices – 7
- iii. Children/Multipurpose Hall – 6
- iv. Bishop's Court & Parsonages – 11
- v. Church Electricity generating sets – 12
- vi. Belfry – 1
- vii. Retreat/conference centre – 1
- viii. Baptistery – 2
- ix. Other interior church furnishings/Assets – 61
- x. Schools projects 12
- xi. Church & Schools buses/cars – 17
- xii. Interior church furnishings – 13

The under-listed projects were dedicated between the end of the last Synod in early August, 2013 and July this year:

- i. Anglican Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish new church building on Sunday 25th August, 2013.
- ii. ACMGS, Elelenwo, 60KVA brand new generator, electricity transformer acquired by the school; and an ultramodern School Library built and donated by Late Barr. Nwaobidike Nwanodi (SAN)
- iii. Upper Room Anglican Church, Eliozu – Priest's office, store, toilet and Bishop's Seat on Sunday, 17th November, 2013.
- iv. Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Stadium Road, Rumuomasi – church new site land on Sunday, 17th November, 2013.
- v. Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish final phase of New Parsonage Building, marble reading desk, generator and musical equipment on Saturday, 21st December, 2013.
- vi. Dedication of library facilities donated by Dame C. F. Chinda & family on 22nd December, 2013 at St. Marks' Church, Elelenwo Deanery.
- vii. Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani Principal's House built and donated in perpetuity to the Diocese by St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery on Sunday, 9th March, 2014.

- viii. 45 KVA Power generating set by St. Matthias, Atali Parish on Saturday, 22nd March, 2014.
- ix. Remodelled Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girl's School Chapel of Grace & Knowledge building and dedication of a new 60-KVA sound proof power generating set, 10 additional air conditioners and 4 circuit televisions for church use on Mothering Sunday, 30th March, 2014.
- x. General toilets and bathrooms, gate house, water borehole for public use, refurbished church sign board and 2 marble prayer desks at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Elingbu parish on the 22nd June, 2014.
- xi. Dedication of one Coaster and one Toyota Hias Buses purchased for Church use by the women of St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District on Monday, 23rd June, 2014.
- xii. New Church gate installed by a 'good neighbour', Mr. Precious Lale, a new vicarage and staff quarters, children's church hall; and 2 marble prayer desks donated by the retired Ven. & Mrs. L. N. Nwafor at Christ Ang. Church, Federal Housing Estate Parish, Woji on Sunday, 29th June, 2014.
- xiii. Dedication of 65-KVA generator at BCMSS, Rumuobiokani on Friday, 4th July, 2014.

No. of persons confirmed as full members of the church from July, 2009 to June, 2014 – 1,325

Latest confirmation figures from August, 2013 to June, 2014:

- St. Michaels' Rumuomasi Deanery, 1st September, 2013 – **39**
- St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District, 8th September, 2013 – **39**
- St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery, Sunday 8th December, 2013 – **39**
- All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi, 25th December, 2013 – **61**
- Daystar Ang. Youth Church, Rumuokwursi, 2nd March, 2014 – **24**
- Chapel of Refuge, Bishop's Court, 28th April, 2014 – **3**
- Holy Trinity Ang. Church, Elingbu Parish, 22nd June, 2014 – **40**
- Christ Ang. Church, FHE Woji Parish, 29th June, 2014 – **26**

No. of Men Inducted into the Diocesan Men's Christian Association – 177

No. of Women Inducted into the Diocesan Women's Guild – 602

No. of Women Admitted into the Diocesan (Worldwide) Mothers' Union – 489

No. of persons Licensed Lay Readers – 69

No. of persons Invested Knights – 33

No. of persons Ordained clergy – 11

Statutory Canon Installation – 1

No. of persons collated Archdeacons – 3

Human Capacity Development

In order to help every member of the Diocese, particularly the clergy, lay leaders and other church workers who are frontline participants in the development process of the Diocese we have emphasized and actually directed our action on the education and training of these personnel with a view to increasing their knowledge, skills and understandings and developing in them the attitudes needed to bring about our desired spiritual and physical developmental change.

Over these past five years, we exposed ourselves – the clergy, church teachers and wives as well as other workers and groups of the church to periodic trainings, conferences, special schools within and outside the Diocese. Similarly, annual leadership trainings/workshops for all church leaders were organized after each year's vestry meetings. These trainings have largely helped in the day to day running of our churches and institutions.

In 2012, we partnered with a London based NGO – Focus Learning Support Ltd. to organize a motivational/socio-economic empowerment seminar for our youths and in 2013 (Thursday 15th – Sunday 18th August) we also partnered with Mr. Alex Ihama, the President/Provost, US-based School of Greatness Worldwide, an international speaker, trainer, coach, mentor and consultant to still build up the capacity of our youths. These youth programmes took place here in this church, St. Andrew's. Our thanks go to all sponsors. The resultant effect of this is that we have acquired some laptops with which to start a Diocesan Youth Development/ICT Centre shortly after this Synod as promised last year. We will welcome the donation of many more laptops from as many lovers of youth development as are willing to support our effort in this regard.

From the end of last synod to April 2014, the following human capacity development programmes took place:

- Church of Nigeria Senior Clergy Advanced Management Courses 4 & 5 at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor from Monday 12th to Friday 23rd August, 2013 and Monday, 20th to Friday 31st January, 2014 respectively. The following clergymen of our Diocese benefitted from these courses – Ven. Alex Usifoh, Canon Leo Nwachukwu, Canon Chuka Opara, Rev. Cephas Okarefe, Rev. Ahamefule Olluor (Course IV) and Ven. Dr. Fyनेface Akah, Rev. Bright Okocha and Rev. John Nkuene (Course V). We appreciate the Archdeaconries, Deaneries, and Parishes who graciously sponsored them.

The next session of this training, that is Course 6 will take place at the same venue from 11th – 23rd August, 2014. We'll be sending the following clergy:

- Rev. Canon Charles Mordi
- Rev. Canon Luke Odum
- Rev. Chukwuemeka Okonkwo
- Rev. Samuel Obialor
- Rev. Chimaobi Chieme

to represent us. Their churches are hereby directed to sponsor them for this training.

- ii. A Special orientation for all newly elected/appointed Diocesan officials and members of all Diocesan Boards, Directorates, Committees and Chaplaincies was held from Wednesday, 28th – Friday 30th August, 2013 at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi Deanery. Speakers were Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu, Mr. Kiki Briggs, Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, Ven. Chidi Worgu, Ven. Fyनेface Akah, Sir Victor Dania and We, the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu.
- iii. The 2014 Post Vestry Meeting Leadership Training for all Clergy, Church Teachers & Wives, elected/appointed church councils and Archdeaconry Board members, leaders of all arms of the Diocese was held from Thursday, 20th to Sunday, 23rd March, 2014 at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District. We had as external speakers, The Rt. Rev. Adeyemi, Bishop of Kwara, The Retired Bishop of Egba Diocese, Rt. Rev. Matthew Owadayo and Rev. Dr. Bola Akin-John from the International Church Growth Ministries, Lagos. From within the Diocese, key speakers were Sir Victor Dania, Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, Rev. Cephas Okarefe and We, the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP.

The highpoints of the training/workshop were Bible studies on the theme: **“Leaders and The Pursuit of Kingdom Task”** – Acts 6:3-4. And **Talks** on:

- “Urban Ministry”,
- “Church Protocols, Ethics, Etiquettes and Courtesies”,
- “The Role of Leaders in growing Healthier Churches”,
- “Duties and Responsibilities of an Effective Church Council”,
- “Appraisal of our Discipleship Effort since inception of the Diocese: Successes, Challenges and Cure”,
- “Proactive Budgeting”.

A total of **935** participants registered for the training programme.

We commend all leaders of churches, groups and Diocesan officials for tuning out in large numbers for the training. The effort made by the clergy in mobilizing their leaders is deeply appreciated.

- iv. Through the Council for Clergy and Laity continuing Education, we have commenced a special monthly training for all church teachers and local helpers to enhance their performance on the job of pastoring in their respective stations.

The Council has equally been consistent in the running of the Bi-monthly clergy & wives' schools respectively. We commend the Directors of Studies,

Canon Igbamerun, Rev. Cephas Okarefe & Sir Victor Dania for their invaluable roles so far.

- v. The Diocesan Lay Readers' School was organized in two groups: 1st Group which held at St. Mark's on Saturday, 22nd February, 2014 covered readers from Rumuomasi, Rumuobiokani, Elelenwo, Oginigba Deaneries and Woji Archdeaconry. The 2nd group covered the Cathedral, Evo South East, Trinity Missionary, Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconries and Okporo Deanery. It was held on the 1st of March, 2014 at St. James' Church, Iriebe Parish.
- vi. At the Niger Delta Provincial level, five of our clergy wives took part in a training programme hosted by the Diocese of Okrika from 2nd to 5th April, 2014.
- vii. Training/workshop organized by the Diocesan women's Training Unit for wives of clergy and church teachers from the 15th to the 17th of April, 2014 at the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge ACMGS, Elelenwo. A similar programme was packaged for Executive Committee members of the Women's Ministry at the Diocesan and other administrative block levels at All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi on the 16th and 17th of May, 2014
- viii. A one-day special training for all church drivers in the Diocese was held on 1st May, 2014 at the Songhai Rivers Farm, Bunu-Tai. We thank Sir Paul Chukwumati for facilitating the training for the Diocese.

Special Diocesan Services/Conferences

We have had to start each year since 2009 with a special, usually well-attended and spiritually uplifting Diocesan Rededication Service and ended the year with a Diocesan Harvest Thanksgiving Service.

The 2013 Diocesan Harvest thanksgiving was held at St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District on Sunday, 24th November with Dame Dr. Christie Toby (wife of the former Deputy Governor, Sir Chief Gabriel Toby) as the Guest Preacher.

We began this year, 2014 with a powerful and inspiring Rededication service in the new Cathedral Church building which at the time was yet to be roofed. Over four thousand worshippers from across the Diocese were in attendance. We were deeply touched to see all and sundry defy the scorching sun and heat to seek God's face on that occasion. The Bishop of Ughelli, Delta State Rt. Rev. Cyril Odutemu preached the sermon and prayed for everyone based on our Diocesan theme for 2014; "The Lord will bless us" – Psalm 115:12-15.

An annual general open forum – the **Discipleship and Revival Conference** has been created for everyone in the Diocese to come together to share in the study of the

Word, worship and prayer. The level of participation has been a steady rise as well as the standard of ministration by speakers. The last Discipleship/Revival Conference was held from Wednesday, 2nd to Sunday, 6th October, 2013 at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish with the Most Rev. Benjamin Kwashi; Archbishop/Bishop of Jos and Barrister Emeka Nwankpa as main speakers. The next conference is slated for November this year, at the Chapel of Grace and Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo.

Other Special Services

Special services aimed at following up on the spiritual progress of all those we have so far laid hands on in confirmation, enrolled into the Women's Guild, admitted into the Mothers' Union and inducted into the Men's Christian Association as well as fellowship with all our baptismal godchildren have been going on since December, 2009. Between December 2013 and June this year, these services were held as follows:

Dec. 26 th 2013	St. Stephen's Day <i>(Boxing Day)</i>	Eucharistic Service with those licensed Lay Readers, Admitted/Inducted into Diocesan MCA, MU/WG by the Bishop from 2009 – 2013.	All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi
Dec. 27 th 2013	St. John's Day	Eucharistic Service with all those confirmed by the Bishop from 2009 – 2013	St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery
Dec. 28 th 2013	The Holy Innocents' Day	Bishop & Wife Fellowship with All their Baptismal children/parents	Bishop's Court
June 1 st , 2014	Sunday After Ascension	Fellowship With All Those Confirmed since 2009.	Daystar Ang. Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi

The attendance to these crucial services has not been impressive due largely to poor publicity and lack of concrete commitment to them by the priests who fail to make arrangements for those concerned to attend. We have always given sufficient advanced notice through the Bishop's Engagement for these services but regrettably those expected to come are not adequately informed. We expect improvement in this regard in subsequent outings.

Diocesan Prayer Convocations/Night Vigils

These events have equally been held each year since 2010. Several Diocesan Night Vigils and monthly prayer meetings were organized for the whole Diocese and for members of the Prayer Ministry respectively between September last year and June this year.

MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

In addition to the traditional long-standing groups such as the MCA, MU/WG, AYF and ACM, Boys & Girls' Brigade & Guilds, we inaugurated others such as the Council of knights, Lay Readers Association, Adult Sunday School/Discipleship, Mission & Evangelism Board, the Council for the Clergy/Laity Continuing Education,

Prayer, Music, Royal Fathers, Chief/Elders, Retired Clergy, Industrial Chaplaincy, Public and Private Secondary Schools Chaplaincies, Social Welfare Directorate, etc. Each of these groups has taken their places in the overall ministry of the Diocese and has steadily contributed to her growth since inception. We commend them. However, there are still much more grounds to be covered. We charge the leaders of these arms not to rest on their oars but to strive more diligently to achieve even more for the Church of God.

Performances of Major Diocesan Activity Groups from August, 2013 – June, 2014

Diocesan Men's Christian Association

The ministry of the men in the Diocese has in the last five years aimed at sustaining the spiritual growth of the man and his family. The 2013 annual DMCA Conference with the theme “Let the Word of God dwell richly in you” (Col. 3:16) was held at St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery from Thursday, 26th to Sunday, 29th September.

As part of activities to mark this year's **Fathers' Day** a **Diocesan football competition** was organized for the men from the 10 administrative Blocks. Apart from Rumuomasi Deanery and Woji Archdeaconry all others participated in the competition aimed at encouraging the men to engage themselves in physical bodily exercise.

The final match was held at the BCMSS, Rumuobiokani football field on Saturday, 7th June, 2014. Trinity Missionary Archdeaconry won the first position, while the second and third positions went to Okporo Deanery and Rumuobiokani Deanery respectively.

The Church planted by the Diocesan Men's Christian Association along Woji-Slaughter Road just before last year's synod is making steady progress under the Church Teacher, Mr. Emmanuel Legborsi.

The DMCA has remained committed to the continued existence and growth of the new church plant by paying the annual rent of N700,000 for the use of the worship centre and also providing internal furnishings for the church. We christened the new Church, **“Ebenezer Anglican Church, Woji”** on Sunday 16th April, 2014. We commend the able leadership of the DMCA President, Sir Reginald Wagboso and pastoral care of the chaplain, Ven. Ow'honda Okechukwu.

At the Diocesan service of Induction at Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish, a total of 36 Men were inducted into the Men's Christian Association of the Diocese as new members.

Diocesan Women's Ministries

To the glory of God the women of our Diocese have completed work on the fencing of the land acquired two years ago at Atali for the opening of a new church. In addition, actual construction of the new church building has commenced. It is the plan of the women to present the project to the Diocese during their coming Diocesan Women's Conference in October this year. May the grace of God be with them.

At the Central Diocesan Service of enrolment/admission into the Women's Guild and Mothers' Union, held on Sunday, 6th July, 2014 at the Christ Harvest Anglican Church, Faith Avenue, Woji Parish, a total of 120 women joined the Women's Guild and 92 Guild members were admitted into the Mothers' Union.

We commend the encouragement and support our Women's Ministry has given in the past five years to some young people's groups in our Diocese such as the Sisters' Forum, the Girls' Guild and the Clergy/Church Workers Children's Ministry; as well as to the widows in the Diocese. By this praiseworthy action they have demonstrated that they are true mothers in the Church. We thank very specially the wife of the Bishop, Mrs. Chinyere Ordu, JP for her able leadership of the women of the Diocese and concern for the development of the girl-child and other children of the church.

- **The Widows**

The widows of our Diocese who are supervised by the Diocesan Women's Ministry have enjoyed so much empowerment from the Women's Work Office, the Diocesan Bishop and of late the Diocesan Council of Knights.

On their part, the widows have resolved not to remain perpetual receivers but would as a body also join in the empowerment of its more indigent members since it is more blessed to give than to receive. They have come up with a new project – the production of detergents, disinfectants and air fresheners-all for sale. Their products were formally launched at the last Diocesan Widows Conference held at St. Matthias' Church, Atali Parish from Friday, 27th to Sunday, 29th June, 2014.

- **The Sisters' Forum**

The Church of Nigeria Policy that all AYF members above the age of 40 years should join either the MCA, MU (if they are wedded ladies) or Women's Guild, which we as a Diocese faithfully implemented has settled to the point that all our married sisters in the Forum have cheerfully joined the Women's Ministry and a good number have been admitted into the Mothers' Union/enrolled into the Women's Guild.

The positive result of this development is that presently what is left of the members of the Forum are nearly 100% single girls and ladies.

The Anglican Youth Fellowship

The Anglican Youth Fellowship in our Diocese like other major activity groups is making steady progress. The Fellowship successfully held her 2013 and 2014 Diocesan Bible study Conferences at St. Michael's, Rumuomasi & Church of The Holy Spirit, Elelenwo District (Evo South East Archdeaconry) respectively and also participated actively in all Provincial and Church of Nigeria AYF Programmes.

On Friday 26th July, 2013 during the Diocesan AYF Bible Study Conference, members enjoyed free medical treatment from the Shell Petroleum Development

Company, Port Harcourt. New members were for the first time since the creation of Evo Diocese inducted into the Fellowship on Sunday, 28th July, 2013.

At the National Bible Study Conference which held at Oturkpo, Benue State from the 7th – 11th August, 2013, over 100 youths from our Diocese were in attendance and our contestants came first in the talent hunt group performance.

The Diocesan President, Bro. Chika Amadi chaired the Committee that planned and executed the first ever AYF National Leadership Training Seminar which was held at the Diocese of Oleh, Delta State.

Having successfully executed this first edition of the seminar, Bro Amadi has been asked to anchor the second edition this year.

Following the outstanding performance of the Evo Diocesan AYF since 2009, the National Annual General Meeting of the AYF which took place at Ondo from 14th – 16th February, 2014 upgraded our Diocesan Council to Grade A. The criteria considered in this upgrading included mass attendance to and contributions at national meetings, the quality of our Diocesan youth programmes, faithful and regular payment of all national levies, etc.

The Nation President, Bro Chukwuebuka Eze visited our youths at the Diocesan youth praise night held at St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani as part of activities to mark this year's National Youth Week.

We commend our youths for their decision to assist the Diocese of Uyo AYF Council in their hosting of the Provincial Annual General Meeting at St. Michael's and All Angels Ekong Eket and for the financial assistance given to the Katsina Diocesan Youth President who was involved in an accident. This is a case of being 'our brother's keeper'. Similarly we commend the Daystar Anglican Youth Church for their numerous welfare packages to needy members of the Church and community.

Our youth are the future of the Diocese, the family and the nation at large. As clergy and church leaders we must encourage them in all their approved programmes and activities if we hope to continue to have them with us. It is regrettable that some churches in the Diocese, especially in Evo South East Archdeaconry chose rather to hold some other programmes during the Diocesan/National Youth Week Programme. The despise for our youths and wilful neglect of events in the Bishop's engagement MUST STOP. Those who committed this act and others who plan to do so in the future are advised in their interest not to repeat it. No arm or programme of the Diocese should suffer as a result of the failure of a Pastor or Church Council to plan their programmes ahead of time.

Anglican Youth Corpsers Fellowship

Under this ministry we have continued to seek ways through programmes to assist corps members serving within the Diocese rediscover their purpose on earth. We hosted them to a welcome and farewell fellowship on Sunday, 11th May, 2014 and presented them with souvenirs.

The Anglican Children's Ministry (ACM)

The performance of this arm of the Church since the birth of this Diocese is worthy of commendation. We particularly commend the Chaplain, Canon Olufemi Igbamerun, the Diocesan officers of the ministry and all children's teachers for their hard work. Our Diocesan ACM participated in virtually all the Church of Nigeria and Niger Delta Province Anglican Children's Ministry trainings, seminars and conferences organized within the year. At the National Teachers' Conference held at the Federal Government Girls' College, Umuahia in Aba Province from the 5th to 8th September, 2013, our Province of Niger Delta took the 4th position in the Bible Quiz Competition. Our child from the Diocese of Eyo, Miss Queen Esther Chimeremeze who was one of the four Provincial representatives in the Quiz contest, emerged the overall best participant in the entire church of Nigeria and was presented with a trophy.

At the Provincial Teachers Conference held at the Diocese of Calabar from Thursday, 29th August to Sunday, 1st September, 2013 our Eyo children took the 2nd position in the children's Bible Quiz competition.

The 2013 Diocesan Children's Bible Quiz was held on July 28th at St. Nicholas', Woji District. The results are as follows:

1st position – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry with 20 points

2nd position – Woji Archdeaconry with 15 points

3rd position – Eyo South East Archdeaconry with 14 points.

The 2014 Diocesan Children's Teachers' Conference with the theme "Faithfulness in Service" (Ezra 7:10) was held at St. Philip's, Oroigwe District from 17th to 20th July.

The 2015 Conference will be hosted by St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery.

Clergy & Church Workers' Children

A one-day special family retreat was held at the Songhai Rivers Farm, Bunu-Tai on the 1st of May, 2014 for the clergy, their wives and children. The event featured talks, group discussions, Prayers and family quiz contest. The Rev. Canon E. A. Fasusi of Akure Diocese ministered on the occasion. This particular event was initiated by the Clergy/Church Workers Children's Ministry of the Diocese headed by Mrs. Oluwaseun Ijaware as coordinator and the Rev. Anderson Owbor as Chaplain.

As part of activities to mark the **5th Anniversary of the Diocese** the Bishop took a team of selected children (2 from each church) and some teachers, the Chaplain and members of the Anniversary Planning Committee on a guided tour of the various sections of the Rivers State Development Initiative – Songhai Farm at Bunu-Tai. The children learnt quite a lot from the outing. Anniversary exercise books were given to every child. At the Church levels the clergy and Church Council members hosted their children to a special anniversary party.

Council of Knights

We give thanks to God and very specially commend the Diocesan Council of Knights under Sir Chief Hon. Ike Chinwo (Former member of the Federal House of

Representatives, Abuja) for his determined, able and focused leadership of the Council since his emergence 2 years ago as president. The Council has done quite a lot for the Diocese despite the poor response to Council's activities, meetings and financial obligations by most members.

At the last Synod the Council empowered a total of 12 widows with a grant of N50,000 each to support their small scale businesses.

They are:

- Dorothy Amadi
- Comfort James
- Roseline Orlu
- Odinaka Monday
- Theresa Chionwa
- Felicia Jaja
- Ngozi Igbojionu
- Catherine Worgu
- Priscilla Alanwoke
- Mercy Dike
- Love Uhuka
- Happiness Iheanachor

The Council also granted bursary awards to 15 undergraduate students to the tune of N 100,000 each.

They are:

- Wobo Jennifer Olayile
- Ezekiel Chidera Campbell
- Azonwu Henry
- Nwaigwe Elfreda Eziaku
- Iheanacho Kelechi John
- Emelogu Gift
- Okparaji Chioma Adaugo
- Nwabekee Ikechi Prince
- Amadi Precious Chioma
- Ibiasi Anaji Elijah
- Udochukwu Akachukwu
- Wilson Grace Barisuka
- Nwaedum Prince Onyekachi
- Osuagwu Joy
- Oparaji Chukwuma Godfrey

Cheques for the amount were presented to the awardees on Sunday, 23rd March, 2014 at the close of this year's Diocesan Post Vestry Meeting leadership training held at St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District.

The bursary award was funded from proceeds from the 2013 Charity Fund Raising Luncheon organized by the Council. The Knights hope to sustain the award as an annual event.

The Council assisted Emmanuel Church, Okporo, Iriebe, their assigned mission field, to actualize the take-off of the construction of the station's new auditorium, pledging to sustain the support. The knights organized a well-attended two-day crusade at the same Emmanuel Church within the period under review.

The ladies of the Knights are making progress with the on-going construction of a Sick Bay at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani, now at roofing level.

We are looking at improving on what they are doing on that project with a view to converting it to fully fledged Diocesan Clinic.

Lastly, the Council of Knights hosted the second edition of its Annual Charity Luncheon on Saturday, 21st June, 2014 at the Peter Jasper Akinola Retreat Centre, Rumuobiokani to raise money to sustain its noble acts of charity to indigent students, widows and for youth empowerment.

Our members took part in the National Conference of Knights of the Anglican Communion held at Cathedral of the Transfiguration of our Lord (CATOL), Owerri from 20th – 23rd March, 2014.

Maiden Knighthood Investiture

For the first time since the inception of this Diocese we decided as part of our 5th Anniversary celebration to invest into the **Knighthood of Saint Christopher 33** (with the permission of the Primate) members of our Diocese who have over the years distinguished themselves in various ways in the service of the church and confer on them with the rights, duties and privileges thereof. This was after they had gone through a careful process of screening by the **Honours and Privileges Committee** we set up for that purpose and a period of preparatory retreat.

Knighthood should not only be regarded as reward for a job done but also as a fresh call to a greater responsibility in the church. Consequently, the Knight is to pursue all that makes for good in various ways, through personal sacrifices, sincerity and excellence displayed in the service of God and humanity.

We exhort the knights as soldiers of Christ to remain steadfast and earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints bearing in mind that their labour of love will not be in vain in the Lord.

The new knights are:

- Adele, Promise Ivekwe
- Alalibo Beniah
- Amadi, Euginia
- Amadi, Nlerum (Esq)
- Amadi, Sonny Emma
- Chinwo Woke Ernest

- Chuku Gilbert E.
- Chukwumati Paul M.
- Dike Godfrey O. (Esq)
- Ebenezer Gospower I.
- Ejabukwa, Dorathy
- Ejekwu, Bekwele Sunday
- Ejiofor, Ifeanyichukwu C.
- Enwukwe, Mike Ejims (Esq)
- Ezeokoli, Frank
- Idehen, Ikponmwosa M.
- Iyo Derek, Ndidi
- Nyeche Okechukwu
- Nzerem, Tobias Ike
- Obidi, Bekwele C.
- Ogbonda, B. Brain
- Okafor Eustace Uchenna
- Okugini, Anthony I.
- Omodero, Nathaniel O.
- Onukem, Christopher A.
- Osuji, T. Chidiebere
- Pepple Matthew James
- Weli Simeon
- Wodi Bekwele Godwin
- Wodi Promise Eze
- Wopara Vincent O.
- Worlu Sunny Chijioke
- Yakpogoro Eeba Rex

We congratulate and wish all the new entrants into the Knighthood Order in our Diocese and their Ladies many more years of fruitful service in the house of God.

Diocesan Lay Readers' Association

Despite the poor commitment of most lay readers in the activities of the Diocesan Association, the body through a few others was still able to carry out a number of activities within the year. The Association's Annual Conference took place from Friday, 25th to Sunday 27th October, 2013 at the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo.

The Diocese supported the Lay Readers Association financially in acquiring a parcel of land for the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwursi. And in partnership with the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, the Association has built a 150 seating capacity new church auditorium for the said Holy City Church which both the Association and the Chapel share as their joint Mission field. We commend them.

Diocesan Mission & Evangelism Board

This Board coordinates all the mission and evangelism activities including church planting of the Diocese and monitors similar activities at the various church levels.

The Board organized a Mission and Evangelism Training Seminar at St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani from February 28 to March 1, 2014 for those who have indicated their interest in short term mission work. The Board should make available to us the names of all such who have indicated interest in our planned mission (within the Province to start with). We are seriously committed to it but wish to however restate that it is not going to be a short cut or back door into the ordained ministry of the church.

The quarterly Diocesan outdoor personal/neighbourhood/community outreaches, tagged "**On The Highways & Hedges**" took place in churches where the priestly and lay leadership considered it a primary task of the church. The level of success remains low due largely to poor commitment across the Diocese. We must all wake up here. Clergy in charge of churches and chaplains and leaders of Diocesan & Church groups must endeavour not to fix any form of meetings or activity during the week of "**On The Highways and Hedges**". Evangelism has always been and will remain the supreme task of the church. Every other thing no matter how important is to be considered secondary. We should not expect to grow spiritually and numerically as a church if we continue to despise this heartbeat of God.

We use this medium to remind all clergy that it is required of them to faithfully submit to the Bishop a report of this quarterly outreaches each time it is held in their churches.

The Bishop, clergy and wives embarked on a four-day mission trip and retreat to the **Diocese On The Lake, our Link Diocese**, in Imo State from Thursday 31st October to Sunday, 3rd November, 2013. Clergy and wives were assigned to some churches in that Diocese by the Bishop for Revival Services. At the end our Diocese supported them with a cash donation of N500, 000. We thank the Bishop of On The Lake, Rt. Rev. Chijioke Oti for the warm reception and hospitality accorded us and the invaluable parting gifts lavished on us by him and the churches visited.

A follow-up exercise has since been embarked upon by St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani to one of the stations we visited.

In continuation of this relationship, a joint Dioceses of Evo and On The Lake Bishops, Clergy/Wives Retreat will hold here in our Diocese from Tuesday, 9th to Friday, 12th September, 2014.

The following **new Churches** were **planted** in our Diocese within the last one year:

- Anglican Worship Centre, Eliminigwe Housing Estate, Phase 3, Elenwo was planted on Sunday, 13th October, 2013 by the less than 5 years old Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, elenwo.

- Anglican Worship Centre, Eliminigwe Housing State, phase 4 was planted by the New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Elelenwo on Sunday 17th November, 2013.
- Anglican Worship Centre at the foot of the Eliozu Bridge on Sunday, 8th December, 2013 by St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery.
- Anglican Worship Centre, Eliogbolo New layout planted shortly before last year's synod by the Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry.
- Anglican Worship Centre, Victory Estate, Elelenwo on Sunday 13th July, 2014 by St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery.

Social Welfare Directorate

At the last Synod we announced the establishment of a Diocesan Directorate for Social welfare to focus specifically on prison and Hospital visitations, welfare to the widows/widowers, orphans and vulnerable persons, HIV/AIDS and other health awareness campaigns and response to emergencies within and outside the Diocese where practicable.

The Directorate under Mrs. Sylverline Majebe has very largely lived up to their mandate since last year. On behalf of the Bishop and the Diocesan Board, the Directorate distributed welfare/Christmas gifts to widows and retired clergy to the tune of N 795, 000.00; visited some bereaved families in the Diocese as well as the family of the late Bishop of Uyo, Rt. Rev. Isaac Orama with a delegation of the Diocesan Board; visited some persons whose families suffered adversity. Lastly, the Directorate has proposed a future welfare policy for families of deceased clergymen following the sad loss of two of our priests.

At the request of the authorities the Diocese built a water borehole at the Female Ward of the Port Harcourt Prisons. The project which was sponsored on behalf of the Diocese by Sir & Lady Henry Imoni was commissioned by us on Tuesday, 8th October, 2013. We thank Sir Henry and wife for this sacrificial gesture and pray the Lord to bless them more abundantly.

Ministry to Evo-based Public/Private Secondary Schools

We set up this Chaplaincy with the aim of taking the good news of Jesus Christ to teachers and the students of all Non Diocesan Secondary Schools within Evo Kingdom through proclamation, capacity building, partnership, purposeful bible engagement, relevant Christian literature, special Holiday Camp meetings, academic quiz and debates. The ultimate goal is to help them experience the new birth and lay a solid foundation for discipline and growth in Christian maturity and service to God and humanity.

The Ministry has in the last one year carried out Advocacy outings to Churches, the clergy, youths and to leaders of our various churches during the March leadership workshop. The result is that we now have some Schools' Evangelists in the Diocese who have started going to schools to hold morning devotions. We encourage more sincere volunteers to please come forward and join in this special ministry to schools and colleges.

The Diocese partnered with the Scripture Union, Port Harcourt Region to organize a gospel picnic (outreach) to students on Saturday 15th March, 2014. The sum of N300,000. was spent on the procurement and distribution of 2,000 copies of Bible reading aids (Daily Power) to students of schools visited. The students received the gifts with great joy and gratitude to the Diocese. The Chaplains should endeavour to organize Schools' Quiz competitions and Debates as we had earlier directed and ensure that the ministry makes greater impact in the schools being targeted. We invite as many as the Lord is touching in their hearts to come and partner with us in sponsoring these outreaches to schools.

Adult Sunday School Ministry

In order to encourage the discipleship and teaching ministry of the church we have continued to distribute the Adult Sunday School manual free to all in the Diocese. Everyone is encouraged to take part in the weekly Sunday School of the Church as your Sunday service is not complete without it. Pastors should abide by our earlier instructions on how and what time of the service the Sunday school should come up. We need to be encouraged in our investment in this ministry.

Ministry to Royal Fathers, Chiefs, Elders and Retired Clergy

This chaplaincy is charged with the responsibility of reaching out to all our royal fathers and other senior citizens of our various communities and those who have retired from the active ministry of the church.

We commend all the efforts so far made by the chaplaincy to provide godly spiritual guidance and support to our traditional institution. We believe that an effectual door of ministry exists for us as a Diocese in this area more so as the institution in most communities appears to be enmeshed in crises and personality power tussles. Consequently, the chaplaincy should prayerfully do more to address these challenges which are doing no good to our communities.

We plead with our Ezes, Chiefs and elders to allow the peace of God to reign in their communities, surrendering themselves to the Prince of Peace Himself will certainly be the first step towards leaving a legacy of peace in their domains. We encourage them to take advantage of the spiritual coverage this ministry provides and make themselves available whenever beneficial programmes are organized for them.

Anglican Communion Brigades (ACB)

We commend the Chaplain, Rev. Moses Anyaefena and all members of the Anglican Communion Brigades in this Diocese for their invaluable services to the Diocese. We urge the leadership of this group, supported by all of us to stay focused on the long standing mission statement of the Boys Brigade, which is the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tend towards a true Christian life.

We have since directed that the clergy should endeavour to put in place this vital arm of our church's ministry in their parishes and stations. There are many young boys and girls idling away in most of our churches. Their attention should be directed to the several young people's groups that abound in the church and such platforms should be used to teach them the values of service and godliness so as to save them from being negatively influenced by the evils of our society.

We are not impressed when pastors go to other churches to hire Brigade Boys to officiate at episcopal services holding in their churches. Clergymen who do not strive to establish the groups/arms that hold the church or even encourage already existing ones should consider their ministry incomplete. We heartily welcome all newly enrolled boys/girls and inducted chaplains of ACB at the enrolment services held at New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish on 18th August, 2013; St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery on 15th Decemer, 2013; Daystar Anglican Youth Church, Rumuokwurusi on 16th March, 2014 and St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery on 27th April, 2014.

Industrial/Workplace and Business Chaplaincy

This Ministry was established to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to people who work in industries, work/business places and the open markets.

The Ministry has continued to make appreciable inroads into more companies/establishments within the Diocese. The Chaplaincy has also started taking their evangelism to those who commute the Aba Road section of our city in buses. We commend the Chaplain, Rev. Nwaghai and his team for their zeal. We call on as many company and business executives as are in the Diocese who may need the prayers and ministry of this chaplaincy to feel free to invite them through the office of the Bishop or the Chaplain.

Music Ministry

The Music ministry of our Diocese is striving very hard to impact more positively on the worship life of our churches and at Diocesan services. We thank members of the Diocesan Choir and Band for their commitment. Some of the events organized in the course of the year include 'Evo Sing Aloud', the service of 9 lessons and Christmas Carols on Sunday, 29th December, 2013 at the Bishop's Court and the Diocesan Easter Cantata held on Easter Monday, 21st April, 2014 at Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish.

We thank individuals and churches that donated towards the acquisitions of at least 2 sets of Diocesan Choir robes which will from henceforth be used at Major Diocesan services. We appeal to the choristers to please handle the new robes with utmost care.

Our directive to the Chaplain and other leaders of the Music ministry to put in place a standing Diocesan choir with accredited members and also the staging of a separate singing competition for our children's church choirs still stand. They should ensure that these are achieved in the shortest possible time.

As part of our desire to establish a formidable music ministry we hope to raise a Diocesan orchestra equipped with relevant musical instruments. We solicit the

generous financial support of all well-meaning lovers of sacred music to enable us achieve this.

Our annual Diocesan Choir Singing competition was held on Saturday, 12th July, 2014 at the Cathedral as part of activities for our 5th Diocesan anniversary celebration. Six choirs that excelled at the 3 group levels of the competition took part in the grand finale. At the end of the keen contest St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery Choir emerged Champions with 308 points (77%), New Covenant Anglican Church, Eliminigwe Parish came second with 268 points (67%), while the 2nd runner up position went to All Saints' Cathedral with 261 points (65.2%). The other participating choirs of Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish, Daystar Anglian Youth Church, Rumuokwursi and New Wine Anglican Church, Okporo took the 4th, 5th and 6th positions respectively.

The trophy for the best choir conductor went to the Choirmaster of New Covenant Church, Eliminigwe Parish, Mr. Theophilus Nkenta Eke.

Apart from being presented with trophies, the best three choirs were also given cash prizes of N50,000.00, N30,000. 00 and N20,000. 00 respectively. We congratulate the winners and thank Professor Joe Amadi-Echendu for his introduction of the competition and initial sponsorship. We also appreciate Sir Chief Alex Orakwue for his cash donation of N100, 000.00 (for two years running) for the winning choir and the first and second runners-up. This amount he has also pledged to double (N200,000) for the next three years beginning with the 2015 competition.

It is becoming financially burdensome to host this event every year and there is a great need for us to continue with it and improve on what is on ground. We again appeal for sponsorship of the annual Diocesan Choir Singing Competition from lovers of church music in order to continually promote this vital element in our worship.

The indifference of some choirmasters and pastors to their church choir's participation in this competition is hereby condemned. It is to be noted by all concerned that **participation in the Diocesan Singing Competition is compulsory** and churches should include it in their annual budget and programme planning.

Diocesan Sports Ministry

In conjunction with the Women's Ministry the Diocesan Sports Council organized a two-day sports competition for the women of the Diocese from Monday, 17th to Tuesday, 18th March, 2014 as part of the Mothering Sunday Week of activities. The results are as follows:

1. First position – Woji Archdeaconry Women with 2 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze medals.
2. Second position – Okporo Deanery with 2 gold medals

3. Third position – Evo South East Archdeaconry with 1 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal.

Towards the 2014 Fathers' Week Celebration, the Sport Ministry also organized a football competition in conjunction with the Executive of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association. We have earlier in this address announced the results of this football competition in our reports about the Men's Christian Association.

We commend the efforts of the Chaplains and members of the Sports Council and also for their support to our Diocesan Schools in the organization of their annual Inter-House Sports meetings. We look forward to the formation of a formidable Diocesan Children's football team as well as a youth team.

We congratulate our clergy and church teachers on their 1-nil victory over their counterparts from the Diocese of Ogoni on Friday, 4th July, 2014 in a friendly football match arranged to mark our 5th Diocesan Anniversary. Although that gave us a good start for the anniversary celebration; however the body weight/size of our ministers which were on display gave us a serious cause for concern. Let us all therefore begin to do something fast to check this ugly health trend.

Diocesan Guild of Stewards

We commend all members of this Diocesan Service Ministry. They have continued to feature prominently in all our Diocesan Programmes and services, and improving with each new outing. This we attribute to their readiness to serve the Church of God and also to the several retreats, seminars and interactive sessions members regularly exposed themselves to for better service delivery. We thank them and pray they continue to excel even as we encourage them at all levels.

Diocesan Schools

We give thanks to the Almighty God for His faithfulness in guiding us and providing for us in the running of our Diocesan Educational Institutions. What we have set out to do by our involvement in Educational Mission is to invest in the lives of children and save them from the corruption of our present age with the hope that they will in the very near future constitute the new generation of Christian husbands/wives, fathers/mothers, professionals in commerce, industry, politics, agriculture, science and technology, education, civil service, judiciary, church ministry, etc. who will transform nations.

The mission of our schools is to prepare students academically and inspire them to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ. They are led to the saving knowledge of Christ and taught to observe all things... (Matthew 28:19).

We appreciate the earnest efforts of the managers/administrators and teachers of our schools towards making them centres of academic, spiritual/moral excellence.

Staff Training/Re-Training

The Education Board organized series of trainings/seminars and workshop for teachers in the three schools and they (the teachers) also benefitted from similar packages put together by other NGOs like Pearson Nigeria & Longman, Discovery Channel International Global Education Partnership.

We, the Bishop, led a 10-man Diocesan Schools delegation made up of the Director of Schools, Ven. Dr. F.N. Akah, JP and the management staff of the three schools to the 2014 West African Round Table organized by the Association of Christian Schools International (ASCI) from 22nd – 26th April, 2014 at the Redemption Resort, RCCG in Sagamu, Ogun State.

The theme of the Round Table was: **“Raising godly generations to transform nations”** – Isaiah 58:12. The Conference drew speakers from Anglophone West Africa, Uganda, South Africa, Europe and the United States of America. Our delegates rose from the Conference better equipped and confident of this unique vision of mission to the young ones through education.

We use this medium to acknowledge and deeply **appreciate** the immense contributions, donations and support our schools have received from parents, governmental and non-governmental agencies, churches/groups and the Old Students’ Associations. We pray that God will reward their services and investments abundantly in Jesus name, amen.

We would like to particularly mention the building and donation in perpetuity of a 3-Bedroom Principal’s House by St. Andrew’s Rumuobiokani Deanery to the Diocese/Bishop Crowther Memorial secondary School, Rumuobiokani.

The donation of a set of musical instruments and speakers to the school by the Parents Teachers Association (PTA); the on-going construction of a school chapel auditorium by the Old Boys Association, and of course, the Sick Bay by the Ladies of the Knights of our Diocese; the staging of a Seminar/Workshop on Road Safety by Total Nigeria Plc.

The Old Girls’ Association of ACMGS, Elelenwo led by Ambassador Nne Kurubo planned and executed the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the School in February this year. The occasion was also used to raise funds for the completion of the college assembly hall by the Association. We thank His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and his wife, Dame Judith for gracing the occasion. We appeal to the Governor to please fulfil his promises of fixing the school road which is now in a more deplorable state, and the pledge of N20m to the Old Girls for the assembly hall project.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) made an outstanding donation of several science laboratory equipment to the Girls’ School.

The Mobil Telephone Network (MTN) visited the ACMGS, Elelenwo on 12th June, 2014 during their 21 days of Y’ello Care Volunteer Scheme – Request for partnership and gave a talk to staff and students on “Education in the digital world. They also made a donation of several educative items and other gifts.

The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), Rivers State also visited the school on the 8th of July and donated varied textbooks on the sciences, English and Literature, Exercise books and school bags.

The PTA of Word of Faith Group of Schools, Woji Town assisted the school in the acquisition of a 100-KVA sound-proof generator.

External Extra-Curricular Activities

The Students of BCMSS, Rumuobiokani and ACMGS, Elelenwo participated in the 2nd edition of the Einstein Science Challenge for all Secondary Schools in Rivers State, which was organized by the Rotary Club, GRA, Port Harcourt in partnership with the Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA) and Manipulo.

The focus of the competition is to raise great scientists who will be in the class of or even greater than the late theoretical physicist, Albert Einstein. All 8 participating students of ACMGS, Elelenwo were among the first 100 who qualified out of 500. Two of them Miss Victory Epelle and Miss Jimoh Amienenoghema did a project on Traffic light and electric bell respectively. We commend the school and the young scientists.

Five brilliant students of the Senior Secondary School One of the Word of Faith, Woji were sponsored by the PTA to sit for an examination that will take them to the United Nations-organized Youth Conference in New York in September this year. A student of Bishop Crowther, Rumuobiokani, Master Jonah Okpaefi who took part in the same UN Youth Conference in New York last year has since returned.

The Woji Town Word of Faith School took the 1st position in the State-wide spelling Bee Competition organized by the Rotary Club on 23rd March, 2014. Miss Ogechi Osuagwu who represented the School was the overall best contestant and she won lots of prizes including cartons of books for the school library.

In the same direction, the Maiden Edition of the Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Elelenwo Magazine/Year Book called **"The Pearl"** was unveiled/launched on Thursday, 24th July, 2014 during the school's End of Session Prize Giving/Graduation Ceremony. We commend the Principal, Staff and Students.

Diocesan Policies on Weekly Remittances of Offerings and Handling of Church Monies

In the Diocese of Edo Churches are not assessed or asked to pay annual quota to the Centre. Each church/station is only required to pay on a weekly basis either 10% or 15% of ALL their income from Monday to Sunday including cheques when they clear, Churches that remit 15% of their income are:

- The Cathedral Church and all churches under it,
- The Deanery churches and all others under them,
- The Archdeaconry Headquarter Churches.

Churches that are required to remit 10% of their total income are the Parishes and stations within the Archdeaconries.

These parishes and stations are also required to remit only 5% of their revenue to the Archdeaconry office for running of the Archdeaconry.

The Archdeaconries are on their part required to remit to the Diocese only 10% of revenues generated from other sources – launchings for whatsoever, Annual harvests, etc., but not from the income accruing from the 5% remittances from their parishes and stations.

Major activity groups such as the Men's Christian Association, Women's Ministries (MU/WG), the Council of Knights, Lay Readers Association are also required to remit 10% of All their generated income.

Additionally, all churches (no matter the category) are required to remit 50% of all cash (from offerings, tithes, offertory, launchings, pledges redeemed, seed-faith, projects/mission support, thanksgivings, etc, etc.) on the annual Diocesan Anniversary Sunday services in their churches.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Cathedral and Deanery Churches are NOT ALLOWED to collect quotas from church stations under them. They are rather expected to take full responsibility for the nurturing and growth of those stations until they attain autonomy.

This is how we have so far generated our income since 2010, coupled with a few individual donations, payments towards the Diocesan Endowment Fund, tithes from clergy and church workers, Bi-monthly Covenant Offerings and occasional levies for trainings and some other matters.

All these income generation/survival strategies were carefully tabled for discussion and agreed upon at all levels of our Diocesan administration – with the clergy and church teachers, Diocesan Board, treasurers, clerks and other finance officers of the churches and groups. They were not imposed on any church or group. Faithful remittance of income to the Diocese by churches/groups is therefore a law that has come to stay. Consequently, all concerned are admonished to desist from acting unchristianly as that would amount to sinning against God and working for the downfall of the Diocese.

As your Bishop, we have resolved in reverence to God and in the spirit of accountability not to mismanage the monies of the Diocese; and we expect the clergy and other church workers and leaders to tow the same part of honour and integrity and avoid such acts that they will not be bold to defend before God on the Day of reckoning. Monies that come to the Diocese are used for administration, mission/evangelism, projects, support to churches and groups at their time of need, external missions, welfare and youth development.

Those in the habit of not remitting correctly their assigned percentage to the Diocese should REPENT from this wicked act, return to the Diocese all they have kept back and begin to do right. This same charge goes to All church workers – ministers and lay who go to the altar to collect for their personal use cash offerings worshippers drop there after their supplications to God. This calculated stealing MUST STOP. There has been no known law right from our years in Niger Delta Diocese to the

present time that allows a priest or church worker to take money brought by a worshipper to the parsonage as Home Offering or to the office or altar. We shall DISMISS anyone who goes on to commit this offence after this synod. We have severally advised clergy and church workers against this crime before now.

Award to Churches for Higher Performance

We have continued to encourage churches with their priests and groups that excel above others in their categories with little cash reward and plaques in appreciation of their faithful stewardship. The following churches/group won our award for the year 2013:

1. Category A. (For the Cathedral & Deaneries)
The winner – St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery
Total amount remitted=N21, 283, 938.03
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N150, 000**
2. Category B. (For Archdeaconry Headquarter Churches)
The winner – St. Philip's, Oroigwe District
Total amount remitted=N3, 036, 910.00
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N100, 000**
3. Category C. (For Parishes)
The winner – Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo
Total amount remitted=N3, 361, 228.25
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N80,000**
4. Category D. (For Stations)
The winner – New Wine Church, East West Road, Okporo
Total amount remitted =N4, 968, 660.00
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N50, 000**
5. Category E. (For Worship Centres – New Church Plants)
The winner – Ebenezer Ang. Church, Woji – Slaughter Road
Total amount remitted =N54, 330.00
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N40, 000**
6. Category F. (For Activity Groups)
The winner – Women's Ministry (MU/WG)
Total amount remitted=N1, 178, 465m
***Reward from the Diocese – A Plaque**
7. Category G. (For Archdeaconries)
The winner – Oroigwe/Eliogbolo Archdeaconry
Total amount remitted=N150, 773.25
***Cash reward from the Diocese – N30, 000**

We congratulate and thank them for their support and encouragement.

5th Anniversary Celebration of the Diocese

We celebrated our 5th year of existence as a Diocesan Community with a series of carefully planned activities, all of which came to a climax on Sunday 13th July, 2014 with a **Eucharistic/Thanksgiving Service** at the All Saints' Cathedral Rumuokwursi. The day's sermon was preached by the Rt. Rev. Uriah N. Kolo, Bishop of the Diocese of Doko. We thank His lordship for taking the pains to come even when he had to prepare for his synod which was a few days from our own programme. Earlier in the week the Anniversary Planning Committee with some clergy paid **charity visits** on Monday, 7th July to the Home for the Elderly, Harbour Road and the Compassionate Home, Nkpogu with some gift items and on Tuesday 8th July, we hosted the **Annual Cathedral Lecture** with the Guest Lecturer Ven. Prof. Israel Okoye, the Church of Nigeria Clergy Prolocutor speaking on the theme **"Redirecting the Political Process and Governance in Nigeria: The Christian perspective"**. The occasion was chaired by His Excellency, the former Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Sir Chief Dr. G.T.G. Toby. We thank the two distinguished guests for honouring our invitation. **3-day anniversary crusades** were held at the ten administrative block levels and also at the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo from Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th July with great successes. A **Thank You Dinner** was hosted by the Bishop on Saturday 12th July at the Cathedral for members of the Diocesan Board, the clergy, Church teachers and their wives and all other leaders of the Diocese at all levels. We thank the former Chief Judge of Rivers State, Sir Hon. Justice Iche Ndu (CON) and his wife, Dame Ngozi for coming to chair the occasion. We appreciate all members of the Diocesan Board as well as the members of the Anniversary Planning Committee headed by Sir Chief Hon. Ike Chinwo and the clergy for their roles in the planning and execution of the anniversary activities.

For the Anniversary Celebration, we tried to identify and acknowledge some key personalities in the struggle for the creation, actualization and growth of the Diocese of Edo in the last 5 years and presented them with plaques of honour and appreciation for their immense contributions. Some churches, clergy and workers were also presented with awards of distinction and excellence for their outstanding performances in the development of the Diocese since inception. The awards and recipients were in the following categories:

1. Award of Merit

- (1) Hon. Justice Dr. Iche Ndu, CON
- (2) Sir Chief S. A. Wutche
- (3) Sir Silas Nnodi
- (4) Sir Collins N. Amadi
- (5) Chief G. I. Ebenezer
- (6) Mr. John O. Okene
- (7) Mr. Lawrence E. Chinda
- (8) HRH, Eze, Sir T. O. A. Ejekwu
- (9) HRH, Eze, G. B. Wodi
- (10) HRH, Eze, Sir W. W. Onunwor
- (11) HRH, Eze, Sir Sydney Worlu
- (12) HRH, Eze, Sir P. A. Okene
- (13) HRH, Eze, Sir G. N. Nwanwa
- (14) Sir Chief & Lady J. O. Wachukwu

2. Award of Honour

- (1) Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari –
Rivers State Commissioner for Information & Communication
- (2) Prof. Joe-Amadi Echendu
- (3) HRH, Eze J. A. Utchay
- (4) HRH, Eze Sir & Lady B. A. Worgu
- (5) HRH, Eze Sir & Lady Simeon C. Wokoma, JP
- (6) Eze Sir & Lady Morgan Amadi
- (7) Chief Joel Amadi
- (8) Sir Chief Ben Emeka
- (9) Sir Chief Godfrey N. Ohuabunwa
- (10) Sir Victor Dania
- (11) Sir Ike Chinwo
- (12) Sir Emmanuel O. Edeghere
- (13) Hon. Martins Amaewhule
- (14) Sir Engr. & Lady Ama Hart
- (15) Sir Francis I. Mbeledogu
- (16) Sir & Lady Alawari Ndu
- (17) Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Majebi
- (18) Elder Emmanuel O. Chinwoh
- (19) Dr. Mrs. Chinelo Ugwu
- (20) Sir, Chief Dr. & Lady Emeka Ihunwo
- (21) Sir Chief Ray Chinda
- (22) Dame Evangelist Meg Orianwo
- (23) Barr. Chimezie Otuonye
- (24) Sir & Lady Chukwuma Onwuchekwa
- (25) Sir Promise W. O. Owzor
- (26) Mr. Austin Chinda
- (27) Sir Chief Alex Orakwue
- (28) Mr. Tamuno Ibinabo
- (29) Sir Adolphus Opara
- (30) Surv. Gaius Assor
- (31) Mr. Innocent Kasarachi

3. Posthumous Award of Honour

- (1) HRM, Eze, Sir, Dr. Frank A. Eke, Late Eze Ohna Evo II
- (2) HRH, Eze Francis Amadi, Late Paramount Ruler of Iriebe
- (3) Chief Barr. Nwaobidike Nwaonodi, SAN
- (4) Mrs. Nchelem Onunwor
- (5) Mr. Odinigwe Mokelu

4. Special Friend of Evo Diocese Award

Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi –
(Executive Governor of Rivers State)

5. Friends of the Diocese Award

- (1) Rt. Hon. Sir Austin Opara –
Former Deputy Speaker, Fed. House of Reps, Abuja
- (2) Hon. Dakuku Peterside – Member, Fed. House of Reps, Abuja
- (3) Sir Richard Chike-Ehie

6. Award of Excellence

- (1) Ven. Dr. Fyneface Akah, JP – For Educational Mission
- (2) Ven. Alex Usifoh
- (3) Rev. Canon Charles Mordi
- (4) Rev. Kingsley Ohajianya
- (5) Rev. Canon Olufemi Igbamerun – For Children Ministry
- (6) Rev. Cephas Okarefe – For Discipleship Ministry
- (7) Rev. Hosanna Naenwi – For Printing Press
- (8) Rev. Canon Chris Chukwumati –
For New Cathedral Building Project & Services to the Diocese
- (9) Rev. Chimaobi Chieme – As Bishop's Chaplain
- (10) Rev. Canon Ikechukwu G. Anene – Special Duties in the office of the Bishop
- (11) Rev. Godfrey Onyemelukwe – For Exemplary Christian Conduct in Ministry

7. Plaques of Commendation

- (1) Ven. Godwin Chinda – For Ministry to the Royal Fathers and Senior citizens
 - (2) Ven. Ow'honda Okechukwu – For exemplary Christian conduct and Men's Ministry Development
 - (3) Rev. Ugochukwu Nwaghai – For Industrial/workplace Ministry
 - (4) Rev. Chukwuma Anukem
 - (5) Rev. Samuel Fedigha
- } For Sports Ministry Development

8. Thank You Plaques

- (1) Ven. Sunday Opara
- (2) Ven. Chidi Worgu
- (3) Mr. Benjamin Peterson
- (4) Lady Charity Chuku
- (5) Mrs. Rose Chieme
- (6) Mrs. Chikaru Oloruntobi

9. Awards of Distinction to Churches

- (1) All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi – For support towards the financial growth of the Diocese and Church planting.
- (2) St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery – For support towards the financial growth of the Diocese, Church Planting and development of Diocesan School infrastructure.
- (3) St. Mark's, Elemenwo Deanery – For Educational Mission of the Diocese.
- (4) New Wine Church, Okporo – For financial support to the Diocese.

We congratulate all the recipients of the awards and plead with all who might have felt left out to bear with us as we look forward to the years ahead.

Looking back to the years before our creation – the struggles, challenges, and to the last five years since our take off we have every reason to be deeply grateful to God.

The number, 5, is the number of grace. It is God's grace that has seen us through so far and we pray and urge every one of us to continue to rely on that grace particularly as we look forward to the more promising years ahead of us of which God will require that we all work harder to achieve greater results.

Once again, let us use this medium to appreciate the efforts of our founding fathers for all their sacrifices that brought about the birth of this Diocese and also all who tirelessly worked and supported the Diocese in diverse ways since 2009. This appreciation is extended to all we know and those quite unknown to us. Whatever positive role each person played is fully known to God and He alone has the best and ultimate reward for everyone for his/her diligence and well doings. I therefore admonish all and sundry to look up to Him and not unto us. What we owe people is our unceasing prayers and sincere words of gratitude and encouragement and not any form of material rewards since we do not have it.

Looking Forward to the Future

As we said earlier, it is the grace of God that brought about this Diocese, and has sustained it so far and will surely uphold it in the years ahead. However, we exhort everyone not to take this grace for granted. Over these years some persons have come out to clearly stand on the Lord's side for the progress of this Diocese, others have offered nothing else, other than strife, schism, self-centred tendencies, lack of team spirit, malicious attack on sincere labourers in the vineyard, disrespect, greed, deliberate misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and flouting of Episcopal/Diocesan directives and policies for personal advantage or in a bid to derail the Diocese. We find these persons both in the altar and on the pews. We advise such persons in the name of God to REPENT in their own souls' interest and begin to bear fruits meet for repentance. By so doing, we trust that they will become vessels of honour fit for the Master's use.

Our New Targets

While we continue to thank God for the achievements of our first five years, we shall however not want to make the mistake of thinking that we have arrived. We are still very far from reaching our desired height of spiritual and physical growth. We should see ourselves as a moving Diocese. There should be no room for inactivity. Borrowing from the theme of the last Abuja Divine Commonwealth Conference We wish to charge everyone in this Diocese – Clergy and laity, Churches, institutions and groups to **“Go Forward”**. In the next Five years, if Jesus tarries, we should be clearly seen to have advanced to new and higher heights of all-round progress.

It is expected that each unit of the Diocese should set a definite targets of development for themselves for the next five years and work towards achieving such objectives. On our part as Bishop we are using this medium to assign the following specific targets:

1. **Church Planting:** We hereby charge the following churches and group to **plant at least one new church** in any part of the Diocese and fully develop them **within the next two years**. The names of these new church plants have already been determined by us and they shall be formally christened during the celebration of the **7th Annivesary** of the Diocese in 2016. The Churches assigned these targets are:

- i. All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwurusi
- ii. St. Andrew's Church, Rumuobiokani Deanery
- iii. St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery
- iv. Woji Archdeaconry
- v. St. Nicholas' Church, Woji District
- vi. Christ Church, Federal Housing Estate, Woji Parish
- vii. St. Simon's Church, Okporo Deanery
- viii. New Wine Church, Okporo
- ix. St. Philip's Church, Oroigwe District
- x. St. Matthias' Church, Atali Parish
- xi. Church of The Holy Spirit, Eliozu Parish
- xii. Bethel Church, Rumuibekwe Parish.
- xiii. Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Board
- xiv. Diocesan Women's Ministries
- xv. Anglican Youth Fellowship

Similarly, and towards the **10th anniversary** celebration of the Diocese in 2019 (**i.e. in five years' time**) the following churches should plant and nurture unto maturity **at least one new church** in their areas of location. They are:

- i. St. Michael's Church, Rumuomasi Deanery
- ii. St. Andrew's, Rumuobiokani Deanery
- iii. St. Mark's, Elelenwo Deanery
- iv. St. Jude's Church, Oginigba Deanery
- v. St. James', Iriebe Parish
- vi. Holy Ghost Church, Iriebe Parish
- vii. Holy Trinity, Elingbu Parish,
- viii. Church of Pentecost, Rumuogba Parish
- ix. Chapel of Grace & Knowledge, ACMGS, Elelenwo (Firstfruits Parish)
- x. Church of Messiah, New Haven Parish, Iriebe
- xi. Church of The Epiphany, Azumini, Rumuokwurusi Parish
- xii. Church of the Advent, Rumuewhara and any other able and willing church and groups.
- xiii. Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Board

The christening of this set of church plants will commence by 2018 and completed by 2019.

All clergy, Church Councils, Diocesan Mission, Evangelism and Church Planting Board and the Cathedral/Archdeaconry/Parish Evangelism Committees should consider this as a primary task and **MUST** do everything possible to accomplish it.

We shall entertain no excuses. The success or failure of priests serving in these churches will be determined based largely on this assignment.

Other targets we are setting for ourselves as a Diocese for the next five years include the building of a befitting Diocesan office complex, a Diocesan Hospital, at least one more secondary school, a Youth Development Centre, a Theological Training Institute, an events/Business Centre, a Mass Transit Company, and updating of the

infrastructure in our present Diocesan schools, Printing Press and the Garment Industry.

We are confident that with focus, determination and proper planning, available financial resources and above all God's favour these can be achieved. We are inviting you to please give us your moral and bountiful financial supports to enable us achieve our objectives. Individuals can equally take up any of these projects on behalf of the Diocese.

Commendations

We commend:

- The various Cathedral, Deanery and Parish branches of the Diocesan Men's Christian Association, the Women's Ministry, Council of Knights and other groups for all they did to improve on the spiritual and physical conditions of their local churches since the last one year. The same appreciation and commendation are extended to all individuals and families who have assisted our churches in one way or the other. May the Lord bless you all more abundantly in Jesus' name – amen.
- Members of the Diocesan Board, the Cathedral community and individuals across the Diocese who have continued to give sacrificially towards the completion of our on-going Diocesan Cathedral building project. At the moment the following milestone have been achieved in the new Cathedral building:
 - i. Roofing of the building,
 - ii. Electrification of the Altar,
 - iii. POP ceiling of the Altar,
 - iv. Installation of marbles,
 - v. Installation of seats for the Bishop, Archdeacon, Wardens, Readers; Altar table, Pulpit and Lectern-all in marbles; and Altar rail.

The Diocesan community worshipped in the roofed new cathedral building during the 5th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service on July 13th.

- The Canon Residentiary and the Cathedral Standing Committee for the purchase of 2 plots of land with fence for the new church plant at Rumunduru, Our Saviour, Christ Anglican Church, at the cost of Eight Million naira (N8,000,000).
- The Vicar, Parish Church Council of the Chapel of Grace & Knowledge for wholeheartedly accepting our directive at last year's synod to take over the Holy City Anglican Church, Pipeline, Rumuokwurusi and undertaking to pay the salaries and allowances of the church teacher and his wife and assisting heavily in the building of their new permanent site.

Special Donations to the Diocese & Our Appreciations

- St. Andrew's Church Rumuobiokani Deanery for the building/Donation to the Diocese a modern 3-bedroom flat as Principal's House at the Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani,
- Eze Sir S. O. Worlu for the donation of the sum of N400, 000 for mission activities,
- Sir Chief Godfrey and Lady Angela Ohuabunwa for the donation of N2.5 million to the Diocese as one academic year grant to 25 Senior Secondary Students of Evo Diocese. The beneficiaries will receive their cheques in the course of this synod,
- Sir & Lady Alawari Ndu for the donation of an organ for the Bishop's Court Chapel,
- All who sacrificially donated in January this year towards the Diocese of Evo New Cathedral building at Rumuokwursi,
- Those who have so far donated towards the Diocesan ICT Youth Development Centre Project,
- Hon. Mrs. Ibim Semenitari, for the promise of sponsoring the training of two pastors in Evo Diocese each year for 5 years.

Congratulations

On behalf of the Diocese, we congratulate the following:

- ❖ We congratulate the Rev. Chukwudi Theophilus on his **ordination** as a Deacon; and also The Rev'ds Collins Daniel, Chukwuemeka Udeh and Timothy Otuka on their ordination on 22nd December, 2013 at St. Mark's Church, Elelenwo Deanery as full priests of the Anglican Communion.
- ❖ Mr. Chika Amadi – Diocesan AYF President and his wife Chinomso on their wedding in December last year.
- ❖ Former Miss Chinwe Josiah (a Diocesan Clerk) on her marriage to Mr. Emmanuel Achilefu.
- ❖ Eze Sir W. W. Onunwor, Nyerisi Mbam, Oropotoma on his elevation to the status of a 2nd Class Traditional Ruler by the Rivers State Government.
- ❖ Eze G. B. Odum JP, Eze Igwugwu I of Oginigba on his recognition as a 3rd Class Traditional Chief by the Rivers State Government.
- ❖ Ven. Okechukwu Ow'honda and Sir Chief Dr. Emeka Ihunwo on their recent celebration of their 50th birthdays.
- ❖ Ven. Fyneface Akah, JP on the successful completion of his Doctorate Theological Programme leading to the award of The Advanced Degree of Doctor of Ministry in Anglican Tradition by the Nashotah House Theological Seminary, United States of America.
- ❖ Barr. Bright Nda-Owhor on his election as the Assistant Secretary of the Nigerian Bar Association, Port Harcourt branch.
- ❖ Venerables Nyeche Okpobiri and Gershon Wodi on the solemnization of the matrimony between their two children.

1. OUR JOYS

We thank the Lord and rejoice with the following persons whom God blessed with new babies during the year:

- ❖ Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Peterson
- ❖ Rev. & Mrs Chukwuemeka Udeh
- ❖ Rev. & Mrs. Theophilus Chukwudi
- ❖ Rev. Canon & Mrs. C. D. Nwachukwu
- ❖ Rev. & Mrs. Ozioma Iheanetu
- ❖ Rev. & Mrs. John Nkuene
- ❖ Rev. Canon & Mrs. Ikechukwu Anene after 28 years of marriage
- ❖ Sir Godfrey & Lady Angela Ohuabunwa (twins)
- ❖ Hon. Mike & Mrs. Josephine Ejims Enwukwe
- ❖ Rev. & Mrs. Favour Iroegbulem
- ❖ Barr. & Mrs. Chimezie Otuonye

2. OUR SORROWS

We lost to death the following persons

- Rt. Rev. Isaac Orama, a onetime Rector of St. Andrew's Rumuobiokani Deanery, Principal, Bishop Crowther Memorial Secondary School, Rumuobiokani and Bishop of Uyo Diocese on 10th February, 2014.
- Ven. Innocent Weleonu Wopara, retired Archdeacon on 7th February, 2014
- Rev. Samuel Gabriel, Vicar of the Church of The Epiphany on the 30th of December, 2013
- HRM Eze Dr. Frank Adiele Eke, Eze Oha Evo II, Eze Gbakagbaka of Ikwerre Land on the 22nd of December, 2013
- Mrs. Ngozi Nyeche Okpobiri, wife of retired Venerable Okpobiri on Saturday, 29th March, 2014.
- Mr. Honest Osuagwu, Evo Diocesan MCA Treasurer
- Mr. Chima Ned Wachukwu, Welfare officer, Evo Diocesan Lay Readers' Association.

Commiseration

We commiserate with the following on the death of their loved ones:

- Rev. Canon Charles Mordi on the death of his father
- Mrs. Uju Opara on the death of her father
- Mrs. Eunice Chinyere-Ebenezer Owhor on death of her mother
- Mrs. Lucky John Nkuene on the death of her mother
- Rev. Canon C. D. Nwachukwu on the death of his brother
- Rev. Canon Chuka Opara on the death of his brother
- Rev. Cephas Okarefe on the death of his father

May The Lord minister peace, comfort and the consolation of the Holy Spirit to the hearts of these and many other bereaved members and families of our Diocese, in Jesus name – Amen.

Province of Niger Delta

Our Province played host from the 9th to 14th September last year to the meeting of the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee at St. Peter's Church Deanery Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Sadly, the Archbishop, Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP was not part of that meeting even after planning towards its success due to his abduction by some unknown persons. Thanks be to God that he regained his freedom after 9 days.

The Archbishop, Most Rev. I. C. O. Kattey, JP whose first five years tenure as Archbishop ended on May 27th, 2014 was re-elected by the House of Bishops on Tuesday, 8th April, 2014 at the Episcopal Synod held at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor and was subsequently re-presented on Sunday, 25th May, 2014 at St. Peter's Cathedral, Minna, Niger State.

The meetings of the Provincial Council were held as follows:

1. 3rd to 4th September, 2013 at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State with the theme: **"The Lord, He is God!"** (1 Kings 18:38,39);
2. 7th – 9th February, 2014 at the Cathedral of Saint Paul, Ahoada, Diocese of Ahoada with the theme: **"He doeth all things well."** (Mark 7:37).

The Conference of the Provincial Men's Christian Association took place at the Diocese of Niger Delta West from the 13th to 16th February, 2014 with the theme: **"Fight the good fight of faith"**, (2 Tim. 4:17). Our Diocese participated fully in all these meetings and conference.

Joint Council of Provinces East of The Niger

The following meetings of the Joint Council East were held:

- 1) Meeting of Archbishops and Bishops on Wednesday, 28th August, 2013 on the way forward for our jointly-owned Paul University, Awka.
- 2) Joint Council meeting at Bethel Church, Amadi-Ama, Diocese of Okrika from Wednesday 26th – Thursday, 27th February, 2014. The theme was **"Saved by grace"**, (Eph. 2:8).

Trinity Students Hostel Project

This project which was approved by the Joint Council about four years ago was intended to be funded through the N1, 000 monthly contributions of clergymen in all the Diocese East of the Niger. The project is still on-going. The ground floor has been decked and preparations are on for the commencement of the next floor. We want to commend all clergymen in this Diocese who have faithfully contributed towards the project making us one of the highest contributing Dioceses so far. Every clergyman should endeavour to make his payment for 2014.

CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

The Church of Nigeria under the Primacy of His Grace, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh has continued to make giant strides spiritually and otherwise. We give thanks to God and commend His Grace for his able and focused leadership. May the mighty hand of God continue to guide him in Jesus name – amen.

Meetings and Programmes

1. The Standing Committee Meetings of the Church of Nigeria were held at the St. Peter's Anglican Church, Yenagoa from 9th to 13th September, 2013 with the theme: ***“Put on the Whole Armour of God”*** (Eph. 6:11) and at St. James' The Great Cathedral, Ibadan, Oyo State from 17th – 22nd February, 2014. The theme was ***“Thou shalt not bear false witness”***. (Exodus 20:16; Zechariah 8:1,17).
2. Bishops' Beginning of the Year Retreat was held from 6th to 11th January, 2014 at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State. The theme was ***“The Bishop: An Overseer, an Evangelist, an Administrator, and a Pastor”*** (1Tim. 3:-7; Titus 1:5-9; Matt. 28:18-20, John 21:15-17; Acts 20:17).

Election and Consecration of New Bishops

The following were elected and consecrated Bishops in the Church of God:

1. Rt. Rev. Titus Olayinka, Consecrated at St. Peter's, Yenagoa on Tuesday, 10th September, 2013 for the Diocese of Ogbomosho, and
2. Rt. Rev. Michael Oluwarohunbi, consecrated on 18th February 2014 at St. James' the Great Cathedral, Ibadan for Yewa Diocese.

We congratulate and wish them divine guidance and direction in their episcopal ministry.

Retirement of Bishops

The following Bishops retired from the active ministry of the Church on their attainment of the age of 70 years:

1. Rt. Rev. Prof. M. A. Osuanade – Ogbomosho Diocese, and
2. Rt. Rev. Dr. Simeon O. M. Adebola – Yewa Diocese.

We wish them a blissful life of retirement.

New Archbishops

The following were elected and re-elected Archbishops in the Church of Nigeria:

1. Most Rev. Emmanuel O. Chukwuma, elected and presented on Sunday, 25th May, 2014 for Enugu Province.
2. Most Rev. I.C.O. Kattey (JP) – re-elected and re-presented for Niger Delta Province;
3. Most Rev. M. O. Akinyemi, re-elected and re-presented for Kwara Province;
4. Most Rev. E. Egbunu, re-elected and re-presented for Lokoja.

May the Lord continually bless and guide them in their Arch-episcopal ministry.

New Dean

The Archbishop of Bendel Province, The Most Rev. Friday Imaekhai is now the new Dean of the Church of Nigeria. We congratulate and wish him well in his new office.

Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) 3

The third Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) with the theme **“GO FORWARD”** was held at the National Christian Centre, Abuja from Monday, 18th to Friday, 22nd November, 2013. The Conference, an initiative of His Grace, the Primate of All Nigeria, Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh, remains an open gathering of all Anglicans and other Christian faithful from within and outside Nigeria for worship, prayers and study of the Word and for personal and church spiritual revival. It was attended by Bishops, clergy, lay leaders and thousands of other parishioners of our church from Nigeria and abroad. The next edition will hold from Monday, 3rd – Friday, 7th November, 2014 at the same venue and we encourage everyone to plan to be there. We must continue to go forward in our faith in Christ.

National Prayer Leadership Training

The National Leadership training for members of the prayer ministries of Diocese in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ngwo, Diocese of Enugu North, from the 25th – 28th March, 2014. The theme was; **“Intercession in the healing of the nation”**. The Diocesan Prayer coordinator, Mr. Jonathan Ijok represented the Diocese.

Church of Nigeria Publications Writers Workshop

This took place at Diocese of Awka, Anambra State from Wednesday 26th to Saturday 1st of March, 2014. It was a special training for contributors of articles in all Church of Nigeria publications such as the yearly Bible Study Outline, the Daily Fountain and the Anglican Ministry Children's Manual.

The following represented our Diocese at the workshop:

- Rev. Cephas Okarefe
- Rev. Sampson Abada
- Rev. Ozioma Iheanetu
- Mr. Azubuike Obi
- Mr. Tony Udoezika
- Mr. Tochukwu Asiegbu

For the second year running our team of writers in the Diocese led by the Bishop has been given opportunity to contribute articles for the 2015 Church of Nigeria Daily Fountain Devotional Guide.

St. Matthias' Day offerings & payment

This yearly offerings usually raised in all Anglican Churches in Nigeria on St. Matthias' Day, 24th February, being the anniversary of the creation and inauguration of the Church of Nigeria took place this year on Sunday, 23rd February. However and

in order to properly mobilize ourselves here in Evo we had our own on Sunday, 9th March, 2014, the Primate having permitted us.

Following our performance of last year, we targeted to raise at least Ten Million Naira from the churches in Evo. To the glory of God and much thanks to all in the Diocese, we raised a total sum of N10, 098, 335.00 which has since been paid to the national treasury. This performance was definitely a remarkable improvement on that of 2013 and **it places us on the sixth position** after Dioceses of Lagos West, Lagos, On The Niger, Abuja, and Niger Delta North.

The Primate of our church has written to us expressing his pleasure and sincere gratitude and that of the entire Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) at our performance describing it as “show of support and encouragement”. Please see appendix one.

We too, are most sincerely grateful to all our clergy and parishioners for this great performance, especially those who remitted All and held back nothing to themselves.

The funds from St. Matthias’ Day offerings are used to support the local and foreign missions of the Church of Nigeria (i.e. weaker Dioceses), theological colleges, Anglican-owned universities, children’s ministry, youth fellowship, women and the PhD scholarship programme of the national church.

Global Anglican Future Conference, Nairobi, Kenya 2013

The second edition of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) met with great joy in Nairobi, Kenya from 21st to 26th October, 2013. Participants included 331 Bishops, 482 other clergy and 545 lay delegates from 38 countries representing tens of millions of faithful Anglicans worldwide.

In attendance from our Diocese were the Bishop, his wife, the Registrar, Barr. Nlerum Amadi and Mr. John Okene. We assisted the Church of Nigeria in sponsoring two bishops to the conference. Out thanks go once again to Mr. Sam Azoka who paid the cost of the flight tickets for the Bishop and wife.

The Conference came to a close with a commitment to be a network for the strengthening of the Global fellowship of confessing Anglicans and also an expression of faithful Anglicanism. See appendixes for Nairobi Communiqué and Commitment.

Meeting of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held at Busan in South Korea from Monday, 28th October to Friday 8th November, 2013. The theme was **“God of life, lead us to justice and peace”**. The Rev, Canon Chris Chukwumati, our Special Assistant on Administration, Protocols and Ecumenical Matters was among those selected by the leader of the Nigerian delegation and our Primate, the Most Rev. Nicholas D. Okoh to represent the Church of Nigeria. Other delegates included their Lordships, Bishops David Bello of Oturkpo Diocese and Duke Timothy

Akamisoko of Kubwa Diocese as well as a clergy and 3 lay representatives from Diocese of Abuja and Lagos West.

The programme of activities featured Ecumenical conversations, a special All Saints' Day Eucharistic Service and Welcome dinner organized on 1st November by the Anglican Church in South Korea for all Anglican delegates to the WCC Conference, and a 2-day Holy Pilgrimage to Seoul, capital of South Korea.

We thank the All Saints' Cathedral, Rumuokwursi for the full sponsorship of The Rev. Canon Chukwumati to the Conference on behalf of the Diocese.

STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

The National Conference

Not once in our history as a nation has the issue of negotiating, or is it, re-negotiating the terms of our existence as a nation been canvassed. At the turn of every political dispensation or national crises, the issue mounts the front burner. The voices clamouring for a conference to discuss the continued existence of the country continued to swell by the day. Then came the National Conference. We do not believe that the conference was called to discuss the disintegration of the country. However, we must say that we are alarmed at the body language, carriage, utterances and mannerisms of delegates. The schisms, threats, baseless disagreements and unguarded utterances of certain delegates seem to point in the direction of the fact we are heading for disintegration. If not so, how does one explain a situation where certain delegates from certain sections of the country would boldly declare that if they did not have their way, then the conference and the country would go up in flames? On what basis do some delegates insist on belonging to certain committees of the conference? Why would respected Nigerians who have been given the honour of charting a new direction for our dear country through the conference form groups along ethnic and geopolitical lines with the singular aim of frustrating certain recommendations aimed at giving a sense of fairness to certain maligned sections of or groups in the country through the game of number or votes? On what basis will some delegates claim that in matters of resource control for the south-south people, resources on-shore belong to the locals where they are extracted while those off-shore belong to everybody? Are we not frustrating the very essence of the conference and giving fillip to those who are calling for the total dismemberment of the country? As the conference winds down, we call on all delegates to quickly use their votes to correct the same anomalies in the structure and configuration of our dear country that have kept us stagnated decades after our birth as a nation. They must remember that as peoples making up the nation, our rights stop where those of others start. There are no 2nd class citizens in our country.

2015 General elections

Another round of elections are here again. The political landscape is agog as usual. However, happenings in the polity give us cause for concern. The desperation by politicians either to capture power or to cling on to it has become all too alarming. The unbridled quest for power has led our political leaders to heat up the polity unnecessarily through their utterances and actions. Those already in political office and seeking re-election have abandoned matters of governance for which we gave them our priceless votes to spend more time on politicking, meetings, rented rallies and gatherings. They have been seriously distracted, while our land bleeds. Our politicians and leaders through their utterances and carriage have reduced national politics to levels bordering on some measure of pettiness and childishness. Societal elements that should have nothing to do with politics and elections have been fully brought into the process all because of the unbridled and naked quest for power. Cases of political killings, kidnappings, arson, destruction of public property and waste of financial resources to garner political support, litter the landscape. And we are not even in 2015 yet! The signs are quite familiar and ominous, to say the least. And with the way our leaders are going, one wonders whether we have a sense of history at all. These are the same signs that have in the past truncated our various political journeys as a country. Have we forgotten the 1983 national elections where “landslide” victories at the polls for political parties turned to a hurricane that swept everybody out of office and set us back several decades? Have we forgotten the projections of US Intelligence Think Tanks that our dear country will cease to exist come 2015? Can we as a nation survive another political upheaval? The answer is quite unthinkable! We call on all political actors, whether opposition or mainstream, to remember that the masses have suffered so much deprivation, lack and pain in a nation of plenty as a result of this same brand of politics in the time past. They must remember that if the country ceases to exist, there will be no one to govern. Yes, we can have healthy disagreements on matters of principle but should never allow our personal ambitions and ego to light the fire to consume our country. In the developed nations of the world, and even in some countries in African, elections have come and gone but have never been allowed to cause an irreparable national implosion. The country is simply greater than any man. We call for peaceful politics and elections where the future well-being and togetherness of our people supersede any ambition whatsoever. After 2015, there will still be many more elections. Our leaders must remember this. We can’t afford another round of national crises. We might not survive it because the very fabrics holding us together as a nation have been badly battered and stretched and are waiting to snap at any time.

Boko Haram and insecurity:

A recent report emanating from the United States of America in July this year has it that the Boko Haram insurgency has consumed approximately the lives of 12,000 innocent and defenceless Nigerians. We must quickly point out that this figure is quite conservative judging from the gory details of the blood-chilling escapades of

these agents of darkness. On a daily basis, churches are torched, together with the worshippers, whole villages and communities are wiped out, markets are turned to mortuaries, schools have becoming killing fields, motor parks have become final bus-stops to hell, while our national borders have become the valleys of shadows of death! Today makes it 111 days since innocent school girls have been separated from their parents and taken to God-knows-where? One dreads to imagine the fate of these girls in the hands of these monsters.

Our concern in all of the above is the political and religious colouration that the insurgency has come to assume. For a start, we must agree that Boko Haram might not be synonymous with Islam, but at the same time, we are deeply worried that Northern political and religious leaders have refused to openly condemn this monster and call their adherents to order. Instead, the Presidency has been openly accused of hiding under the guise of fighting the insurgency to wipe out Islam. This is a classical display of resplendent hypocrisy! Is this not a case of the hunter claiming to be the hunted? Let us ask: are these insurgents ghosts? Don't they have families? Where exactly do they park the several hundreds of cars, vans, trucks, and armoured personnel carriers which they use to unleash mayhem on law-abiding citizens, and yet no one sees them or can identify them? Who exactly do these insurgents hand over the several video recordings of their activities which litter Youtube to? Where do they get food and armoury from? Yet they are ghosts? Is there any connection between the religious inclination of the man occupying the seat of power at the Villa currently and this insurgency, reminiscent of the Sharia upheavals that rocked the nation when the seat occupant then shared a similar religious profession with the current occupant and quickly went away when a different occupant with a different religious colour climbed the seat? We are just being curious.

The utterances and actions of our Northern religious and political leaders continue to fuel this senseless blood-letting. We call on them to kindly shed this toga of hypocrisy and call their adherents to order quickly before it is too late. The scripts of continuous killings and arson in the North chillingly remind one of similar story lines culminating in the gruelling civil war that had our country tottering on the brinks of disintegration. The key to ending this malaise that is fast making us a pariah nation in the comity of nations lies in the hands of our brother Northern leaders. They must act to convince us of the distinction between this insurgency and Islam because the lines are fading fast. They must genuinely work to effect the unconditional release of the hundreds of innocent Chibok girls whose only crime is that they went to seek knowledge to better the lot of their generation. Enough is enough.

Rivers State

Despite the political divide on which one pitches his tent, a true, patriotic and dispassionate Rivers man or woman must see some form of positivity in the achievements of the outgoing administration in the state. For one, Port Harcourt has achieved the status of UNESCO World Book Capital. By all means, this is no mean feat and cannot be killed on the altar of political interests. With this our city and state

have come to occupy a pride of place among the few cities in the world which have enjoyed this privilege. And this cannot be wiped away in the history of mankind. For this, we commend Rt. Hon. Chibuike Amaechi and his team of committed Rivers sons and daughters. History will never forget them.

Again we commend His Excellency for his remarkable efforts at rehabilitating, widening or constructing roads in Rivers State to ease traffic flow. We are sure the incoming administration in the state will only continue from where he has stopped. However, we must draw the attention of His Excellency to the link roads in the state many of which are in very bad shape. Rivers people have continued to suffer untold hardship on these link roads daily and we call on His Excellency to use the remaining part of his tenure to look at these roads again and put them in good order in order to minimize the harrows of our people on these roads. Having done so much so far, His Excellency must finish strong because people tend to remember so much the last moments than the first. He must finish strong.

Conclusion

As we conclude this address, may I take us to the scriptures in Philippians 3: 13-14 where Paul says “....Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”.

We thank God for all He has enabled us to achieve within these past five years. It is in the nature of man to want to sit back and relax, feeling that one has arrived. Let us not fall into this temptation as a Diocesan community. We are far from getting to where others have reached. Much more we are far from taking hold of the goal to win the prize which God has set for us as a Diocese. The tasks before is in the coming years are quite enormous and they require our greater zeal, commitment and selfless sacrifices to accomplish. We are confident that the grace of God that brought us to where we are presently will continue to see us through. Let us continue to be focused, faithful to our calling as Christians and an arm of the Bod If Christ. Let us glory less in our past achievements but rather strain toward what lies ahead. And with God as our Ebenezer, the victories, successes and testimonies of the coming years will be greater than those of the past.

Thank you once again for letting God use you in many positive ways to build His Church in Evo. May the Lord hear and defend you in the day of trouble; send you help from His sanctuary and strengthen you in His service. May He remembers all your offerings, accept your sacrifices and grant you all the good desires of your heart.

*May the God of all grace, who hath called us unto
His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make us perfect,
stablish, strengthen, settle us; to whom be glory
and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (1 Pet.5:10,11).*

Thank you for listening!



Innocent, Evo
August 2, 2014.

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APPENDIXES



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

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

July 11, 2014

Your Lordship
Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu
Bishopscourt
All Saints Cathedral
Rumuokwursi, Obio
Rivers State

Your Lordship,

LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Proceeds from St. Matthias contribution have been collated and disbursed accordingly. During this exercise, it was observed with great delight that your Diocese was one of those that performed very well.

The joy is not only in the remittance of a huge sum of money, but also in the display of high sense of responsibility, trust and faithfulness. This is indeed an evidence of effective leadership and healthy relationship between your good self and the people of God under your charge.

His Grace, the Primate of our Church, Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh is highly pleased with this show of support and encouragement. He has therefore asked me to convey to you and through you to the Christian faithful in your diocese his sincere gratitude and that of the entire Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

It is his prayer that the work of God will continually prosper in your hand even as we look forward to the new record you will set in subsequent editions.

This comes with the assurances of our love, prayers and best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be "David O.C. Onuoha", written over a faint, circular watermark.

Rt. Rev. David O.C. Onuoha
EPISCOPAL SECRETARY

Appendix 2



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

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

PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD AT ST. PETER'S DEANERY, YENAGOA, BAYELSA STATE IN THE DIOCESE OF NIGER DELTA WEST FROM 9TH – 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

Beloved People of God,

We bring to you warm greetings in the Peerless name of our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Standing Committee of our Church met under the protection of the Almighty God at St. Peter's Deanery Church, Yenagoa in the Niger Delta West Diocese from 9th to 13th September, 2013. Through sermons, bible studies and other presentations based on the theme of the meeting **"Put on the whole Armour of God"** Eph. 6:11, we were reminded that the devil still pursues his wicked agenda against mankind i.e to "steal, kill and destroy"¹. The mayhem that he has unleashed on our world today includes strange practices like homosexuality and lesbianism, post modern culture that tries to exclude God from all human affairs; heresies and false prophecies, revival of satanic cultures, negative politicking; serious and dangerous security threats such as Boko haram, kidnapping, child trafficking as well as the increasing number of 'baby factories' (i.e. homes where babies are produced for commercial purposes), in our society today.

We should bear in mind, that all that have been mentioned above and a lot more are physical manifestations of a fierce spiritual warfare. We should therefore heed this divine admonition to put on the whole armour of God. Fortifying ourselves with the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation and praying in the Holy Spirit will enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil². As government is fighting against the physical manifestations of this warfare, we enjoin all Christians to take up the challenge of being spiritually alert so that the victory that is ours in Christ will be appropriated to the glory of God and the good of mankind.

Beloved, we need to remind you once more that nudity and negative fashion is one way the devil is attacking our people today. It is a clear manifestation of the demon of seduction also known as the spirit of Jezebel. Please do not yield to it.

The upsurge in religious activities in our society today, especially those that exalt pseudo charisma that is devoid of character is of great concern. There are so many 'mighty men of God' who claim to have the "anointing to raise money". Such operate with a strange spirit that reveals to them the telephone and bank account numbers of their unsuspecting victims only to take undue advantage of them. Some also as "prayer contractors" charge huge sums of money to fast

¹ John 10:10

² Eph. 6:11

Appendix 3



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

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

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM 9th -13th SEPTEMBER, 2013 AT THE ST. PETER'S DEANERY, YENAGOA, BAYELSA STATE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) 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 Girl's Organizations, met at St. Peter's Deanery, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, from 9th - 13th September, 2013. One hundred and sixty bishops, one hundred and fifty eight clergymen and seventy members of the house of laity were present. Goodwill messages were received from the Primate Emeritus, the Most Rev'd Peter J. Akinola and the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), the Most Rev'd Robert Duncan. The Rt. Rev'd Emmanuel O. Oko-Jaja; Bishop of the Diocese of Niger Delta West welcomed the delegates and the Rt. Rev'd Tunde Adeleye of the Diocese of Calabar, represented the Dean of the Province, the Most Rev'd Ignatius Kattey the host Archbishop. His Excellency, Chief Siriake Dickson, Governor of Bayelsa State gave a goodwill message. The Standing Committee was honoured by the attendance of The President, Commander-in-Chief, Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, who addressed the delegates and officially commissioned the Anglican Cable Network Nigeria (ACNN).

At the conclusion, the Standing Committee issued this Communique:

2. THE THEME OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The theme of the Standing Committee was 'Put On The Whole Armour of God' [Ephesians 6:11]. While human beings are engaged in this struggle, the Apostle Paul reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities of this dark world.

The importance of this theme is observed in the contemporary battle between good and evil. Within the global Church there are concerns about the theological revisionist agenda expressed through deviant human sexuality, the re-emergence of false prophets and teachers, as well as militant and intolerant extreme religious behaviours. In the face of these challenges, the Standing Committee calls upon all Christians to put on the whole armour of God and stand courageously against the plans of the devil.

3. Commendation of the Government

The Standing Committee commends the Federal Government of Nigeria for the noticeable and sincere efforts in the improvement of roads, the commitment to improving power supply, rice production, the great strides in the MDGs, reconstructions in the airports, the absence of queues at our fuel stations, the improvement in the security situation in the country, etc.

4. Abduction of Archbishop Ignatius Kattey – Dean of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

The recent abduction of prominent citizens, especially the Most Rev'd Ignatius Kattey, the Dean of the Church of Nigeria and Archbishop of the Niger Delta by unknown kidnappers is sad, painful and embarrassing. The Standing Committee demands that the National and State governments should provide all necessary assistance to secure the unconditional release of all detained citizens, especially Archbishop Kattey and appeals to the abductors to remember the word of the Lord, "touch not my anointed and do my prophets no harm." [1 Chronicles 16:22]

5. Security Issues

While we acknowledge the current efforts of the Federal Government in containing the activities of Boko Haram and establishing the National Reconciliation and Peace Committee, we observe with dismay that this sect has continued to cause widespread carnage and suffering. We implore those who relate with this sect to impress it upon them that other Nigerians deserve freedom of worship and association, and as such should be allowed to live normal life in any part of this country. Moreover, The Standing Committee observes that the Stowaway Saga at the Benin Airport reveals a serious security lapse which should be viewed seriously by Government. Furthermore, we strongly believe that all citizens of Nigeria should cultivate a

participatory approach towards security by forming neighbourhood watches to help curb the rise of violent crime.

6. 2015 General Elections

Politicians have begun another round of preparations for political elections in 2015, and there are new associations and conglomerates being formed towards this end. We appeal to all politicians to exercise great care and caution in their utterances and actions to ensure that Nigeria as a nation does not suffer any harm. We appeal to the youth of this country, not to allow themselves to be used as instruments for political violence and other vices.

INEC should remain an honest and unbiased umpire, which provides assistance to secure an unimpeded level playing field for all political parties which will result in a fair and honest electoral process.

7. Unemployment

The Standing Committee expresses serious concern about the rate of unemployment in our nation which is increasing at a geometric rate considering the number of students turned out yearly from our universities and other higher institutions. The Standing Committee calls on both Federal and State Governments to review the operations of NDE, SMEDAN, NAPEP, ITF¹ and other relevant agencies involved with job creation and youth employment, to be more responsive to this emergency situation. The Standing Committee appeals to Nigerians with financial means to invest in our nation as a way to stem the tide of unemployment.

8. Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Strike

The Standing Committee expresses displeasure over the current ASUU strike that has continued to linger for too long without any compromise between Government and ASUU. The Standing Committee calls on the Federal Government to act with urgency to find a solution to the current strike by fulfilling their commitment made through negotiation with the lecturers. As a long-term solution, the Standing Committee proposes that the Federal Government should go a step further in the pursuit of autonomy of

universities, by ensuring that the activities of ASUU are limited to individual universities.

‘Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.’ [Ephesians 5:10-11]



The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh,
Primate of All Nigeria

Nairobi Communique and Commitment

GAFCON 2013: THE NAIROBI COMMUNIQUE

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:19-20)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we, the participants in the second Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) – 1358 delegates, including 331 bishops, 482 other clergy and 545 laity from 38 countries representing tens of millions of faithful Anglicans worldwide – send you greetings from East Africa, a place of revival in the last century and of growth in the Anglican Church today.

Introduction

We met with great joy in Nairobi from 21st to 26th October 2013. We gathered each day for prayer and praise, studied Paul's letter to the Ephesians and shared in the Holy Communion at the beginning and end of our conference.

It was very poignant that our meeting took place only a month after the violent terrorist attack in Nairobi at the Westgate Shopping Mall in which so many innocent men, women and children lost their lives. Our hearts go out to those families who have lost loved ones and to all of those who still suffer. We continue to remember them in prayer. In meeting here we have been able to express publicly the hope that Jesus Christ brings to a world in which brokenness and suffering find frequent expression.

In our gathering, we reaffirmed our view that we are a global fellowship of confessing Anglicans, engaged in a movement of the Holy Spirit which is both personal and ecclesial. We appreciated that the Archbishop of Canterbury sent personal greetings via video and gave us the assurance of his prayers, and we likewise pray for him. We believe we have acted as an important and effective instrument of Communion during a period in which other instruments of Communion have failed both to uphold gospel priorities in the Church, and to heal the divisions among us.

The Formation of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans

In 2008, the first GAFCON was convened in order to counter a false gospel which was spreading throughout the Communion. This false gospel questioned the uniqueness of Christ and his substitutionary death, despite the Bible's clear revelation that he is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). It undermined the authority of God's Word written. It sought to mask sinful behaviour with the language of human rights. It promoted homosexual practice as consistent with holiness, despite the fact that the Bible clearly identifies it as sinful. A crisis point was reached in 2003 when a man in an active same-sex relationship was consecrated bishop in the USA. In the years that followed, there were repeated attempts to resolve the crisis within the Communion, none of which succeeded. To the contrary, the situation worsened with further defiance. As a response to

the crisis, we adopted The Jerusalem Statement and Declaration which commits us to biblical faithfulness, and has since provided the framework for renewed Anglican orthodoxy to which we, in all our different traditions – Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics and Charismatics – are committed. We also formed the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GFCa).

Since then, we have become a movement for unity among faithful Anglicans. Where, in taking a stand for biblical faithfulness, Anglicans have been marginalised or excluded from provincial or diocesan structures, the Primates' Council has recognised and authenticated them as faithful Anglicans. The GFCa has been instrumental in the emergence of the new Province of the Anglican Church in North America, giving formal recognition to its orders and welcoming it as a full partner province, with its Archbishop having a seat on the Primates' Council. The GFCa has also prevented the original Diocese of Recife from being isolated from the Anglican Communion. At the same time, local fellowships have been set up across many provinces. These have been a vital support to ministers and congregations alike, as the pressures on faithful gospel witness have increased.

The GFCa and the Future of the Anglican Communion

The fellowship we enjoy as Christians is distinguished from all other associations by the fact that it is at its heart a common 'fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3). For this reason it has a particular character. It involves repentance and 'walking in the light, as he is in the light' (1 John 1:7–9). The character and boundaries of our fellowship are not determined by institutions but by the Word of God. The church is a place where the truth matters, where it is guarded and promoted and where alternatives are exposed for what they are — an exchange of the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25). Our willingness to submit to the written Word of God and our unwillingness to be in Christian fellowship with those who will not, is clearly expressed in The Jerusalem Statement and Declaration. This means that the divisions in the Anglican Communion will not be healed without a change of heart from those promoting the false gospel, and to that end we pray.

There is much we can learn from the East African Revival about having a change of heart. Beginning in the last century, the Revival has touched millions of lives across many countries as the Holy Spirit has moved lay men and women, as well as clergy, to share the gospel with others. Two significant features of great relevance to our situation are —

- Real repentance for sin demonstrated both in confession of guilt and a desire to make amends
- A confidence that the gospel has the power both to save the lost in all the world and to transform the church, rather than seeing the church conformed to the world.

We urge those who have promoted the false gospel to repent of their unfaithfulness and have a renewed confidence in the gospel. We repent of indifference, prayerlessness and inactivity in the

face of false teaching. We remind them – as we remind ourselves – that the sins from which we must repent are not simply those which the world also believes are wrong; they are those that God himself abhors and which are made clear in his Word.

The 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality states that sexual activity is to be exclusive to marriage and that abstinence is right for those who are single. We still hold to that authoritative statement. Sexual temptation affects us all, and we pray therefore for faithfulness to God's Word in marriage and singleness.

We grieve that several national governments, aided by some church leaders, have claimed to redefine marriage and have turned same-sex marriage into a human rights issue. Human rights, we believe, are founded on a true understanding of human nature, which is that we are created in God's image, male and female such that a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife (Matthew 19:6; Ephesians 5:31). We want to make clear that any civil partnership of a sexual nature does not receive the blessing of God. We continue to pray for and offer pastoral support to Christians struggling with same-sex temptation who remain celibate in obedience to Christ and affirm them in their faithfulness.

The gospel alone has the power to transform lives. As the gospel is heard, the Holy Spirit challenges and convicts of sin, and points to the love of God expressed in his Son, Jesus Christ. The sheer grace of God in setting us free from sin through the cross of Christ leads us into the enjoyment of our forgiveness and the desire to lead a holy life. This enables the relationship with God that Jesus makes possible to flourish. Moreover, just as individual lives can be transformed, so can the life of churches. We therefore commit ourselves and call on our brothers and sisters throughout the Communion to join in rediscovering the power of the gospel and seeking boldness from the Holy Spirit to proclaim it with renewed vigour.

Strengthening the GFCA

We are committed to the future of the GFCA and to that end have decided to take steps to strengthen our fellowship.

First, we have resolved to be more than a network. We are an effective expression of faithful Anglicanism and therefore, recognising our responsibilities, we must organise ourselves in a way that demonstrates the seriousness of our objectives. These are threefold.

- Proclaiming and contending for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Examples of work we wish to resource are the preparation of convincing theological rebuttals of any false gospel; supporting a network of theological colleges whose students are better oriented to ministry, whose faculties are well-trained, and whose curricula are built on the faithful reading of Scripture.
- Building the fellowship. We need to find new ways of supporting each other in mission and discipleship.

- Authorising and affirming faithful Anglicans who have been excluded by their diocese or province. The main thrust of work here would be devoted to discerning the need for new provinces, dioceses and churches — and then authenticating their ministries and orders as Anglican.

Second, pursuing these objectives will require GFCA to operate on a more systematic basis and to that end we shall organise around a Primates' Council, a Board of Trustees, an Executive Committee and regional liaison officers, who will be involved in fostering communication among FCAs.

Third, we recognise that moving the GFCA on to a new footing will involve making substantial new resources available. We must, therefore, invite provinces, dioceses, mission agencies, local congregations and individuals formally to become contributing members of the GFCA. In particular, we ask provinces to reconsider their support for those Anglican structures that are used to undermine biblical faithfulness and contribute instead, or additionally, to the financing of the GFCA's on-going needs.

Our Priorities

Our Lord's command is 'to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:19–20). We believe therefore that our first priority must be to make disciples. This means that our movement must be committed to -

- Evangelising areas of our world where clear gospel witness has become obscured or lost and bringing the gospel to unreached peoples. Much of our energy must be devoted to bringing the gospel to children and young people and developing the leaders of the future. We also recognise the need to pray for, love and witness to Muslims with the gospel of Jesus. We call upon churches to train their members in such outreach.
- Supporting genuine gospel initiatives, recognising that there are times when the maintenance of structures can constrain the proclamation of the gospel. In line with The Jerusalem Statement's expectation that the Primates' Council would intervene to provide 'orthodox oversight to churches under false leadership', the Primates' Council will carefully consider working beyond existing structures as an obedient response to Jesus' commission to take the gospel to all nations.
- Guarding the gospel. We shall continue publicly to expose any false gospel that is not consistent with apostolic teaching and clearly to articulate the gospel in the church and in the world.

Our second priority must be to deepen discipleship. We must keep stressing that our identity is primarily found in Christ rather than in national, ethnic or tribal attachments. In addition, there are many pressures on Christians today which require a degree of maturity in order to withstand

them. These include aggressive secularism, where increasingly Christians are being told that their faith must only find expression in private, and not in public life, and where the contribution of Christianity to the public good is denied; militant Islamism which continues to threaten the existence and ministry of the church in some places; and seductive syncretism which introduces supposedly alternative approaches to God and thereby denies the uniqueness of Christ.

Countering these pressures and promoting the gospel in difficult circumstances requires Christians to accept that their witness involves suffering for Christ (2 Timothy 3:12); to stand with those who are suffering for Christ; to be alert to the ways in which the Scriptures are being falsely undermined by opponents; to engage graciously in the public square; and to refuse to be intimidated when subjected to persecution.

As a third priority, we must witness to the transforming effect of the gospel in working for the transformation of society, so that the values of the eternal Kingdom can be seen here and now. We therefore believe that it is right to engage in the public arena with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15–16), but without allowing our priorities to be shaped by the world's agenda; that our churches should work for the protection of the environment and the economic empowerment of those who are deprived of resources; and that we should not ignore the cries of the marginalized and oppressed who need immediate aid.

We affirm the ministries of women and their vital contribution to the life of the church: their call to the task of evangelism, discipling, and building strong marriages, families, churches and communities. GAFCON 2013 upholds the Bible's teaching that men and women are equally made in the image of God, called to be his people in the body of Christ, exercising different gifts. We recognize that we have differing views over the roles of men and women in church leadership.

It grieves us that in many communities women and children are marginalized through poverty, lack of education, HIV/AIDS, the mistreatment of widows and orphans, and polygamy. Furthermore, they suffer domestic violence, sexual abuse, trafficking and abortion. We repudiate all such violence against women and children and call on the church to demonstrate respect for women, care for marginalized women and children around the world, and uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

We are conscious of the growing number of attacks on Christians in Nigeria and Pakistan, Syria and Egypt, Sudan and many other countries. Where our brothers and sisters are experiencing persecution, we must all call on governments and leaders of other religions to respect human rights, protect Christians from violent attack and take effective action to provide for freedom of religious expression for all.

Conclusion

We are conscious of many pressures on faithful gospel witness within the church, but equally conscious of the great need the world has to hear the gospel. The need for the GFCA is greater

now than when we first met in Jerusalem in 2008. We believe the Holy Spirit is challenging us and the rest of the Anglican Communion to remain faithful to our biblical heritage; to support those who suffer as a result of obedience to Christ; to deepen the spiritual life of our churches; and to respond to anti-Christian pressures with a renewed determination to spread the gospel. The seriousness with which we take our mission and our fellowship will be reflected in the way individual churches make the GAFCON vision their own, and in how we resource the work the GFCA seeks to initiate. We invite all faithful Anglicans to join the GFCA.

Finally, we make the following commitment to strengthen our fellowship and promote the gospel.

The Nairobi Commitment

We are committed to Jesus Christ as the head of the Church, the authority of his Word and the power of his gospel. The Son perfectly reveals God to us, he is the sole ground of our salvation, and he is our hope for the future. We seek to honour him, walk in faith and obedience to his teaching, and glorify him through our proclamation of his name.

Therefore, in the power of the Holy Spirit —

1. We commit ourselves anew to The Jerusalem Statement and Declaration.
2. We commit ourselves to supporting mission, both locally and globally, including outreach to Muslims. We also commit to encouraging lay training in obedience to the Great Commission to make and mature disciples, with particular attention to recruiting and mobilizing young people for ministry and leadership.
3. We commit ourselves to give greater priority to theological education and to helping each other find the necessary resources. The purposes of theological education need clarifying so that students are better oriented to ministry, faculty are well-trained, and curricula are built on the faithful reading of Scripture.
4. We commit ourselves to defend essential truths of the biblical faith even when this defence threatens existing structures of human authority (Acts 5:29). For this reason, the bishops at GAFCON 2013 resolved ‘to affirm and endorse the position of the Primates’ Council in providing oversight in cases where provinces and dioceses compromise biblical faith, including the affirmation of a duly discerned call to ministry. This may involve ordination and consecration if the situation requires.’
5. We commit ourselves to the support and defence of those who in standing for apostolic truth are marginalized or excluded from formal communion with other Anglicans in their dioceses. We have therefore recognized the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) as an expression of authentic Anglicanism both for those within and outside the Church of England, and welcomed their intention to appoint a General Secretary of AMiE.
6. We commit ourselves to teach about God’s good purposes in marriage and in singleness. Marriage is a life-long exclusive union between a man and a woman. We exhort all people to work and pray for the building and strengthening of healthy marriages and

families. For this reason, we oppose the secular tide running in favour of cohabitation and same-sex marriage.

7. We commit ourselves to work for the transformation of society through the gospel. We repudiate all violence, especially against women and children; we shall work for the economic empowerment of those who are deprived; and we shall be a voice for persecuted Christians.
8. We commit ourselves to the continuation of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, putting membership, staffing and financing onto a new basis. We shall continue to work within the Anglican Communion for its renewal and reform.
9. We commit ourselves to meet again at the next GAFCON.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

26 October 2013



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

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

**A Release from the House of Bishops
Of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Meeting at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State
January 6th -10th, 2014**

1. The House of Bishops 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 for our annual Retreat at the Ibru Centre, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, from January 6th-10th, 2014. 157 serving bishops and 11 retired bishops were present. We were blessed by the opportunity to spend time together for prayer, worship and leaning at this beginning of a New Year filled with opportunities and challenges.
2. The theme of our Retreat was 'The Bishop: An Overseer, an Evangelist, an Administrator and a Pastor (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9, Matthew 28:18-20, John 21: 15-17, Acts 20:17). The Bible studies were led by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Michael Fape, the Bishop of the Diocese of Remo. During the Retreat the bishops discussed the question of Christian leadership as epitomized in the office and roles of a bishop. The Bible studies identified the failure by church leaders to provide good examples for leaders in government and society and advocated for a recovery of the Biblical pattern, where leaders served selflessly with conviction and humility as true shepherds who protect, care and serve the sheep.

In an age where corruption, violence, persecution, terrorism and political crisis are prevalent, bishops are enjoined to rekindle their God-ordained roles as evangelists, pastors, administrators and watchmen. Accepting the principle of the priesthood of all believers, the Church should recover its heritage of providing leadership for society, thus impacting on all areas of national life as salt to the earth and light to the world.

3. We were greatly honoured by the presence of the Most Rev. Peter Jensen, General Secretary of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans and former Archbishop of Sydney, Australia and also the Rt. Rev. Peter Tasker who was the Archbishop of Sydney's Bishop for International relations. The Rt. Revd. M. O. Owadayo (Rtd) and Rt. Revd. Vincent O. Muoghere (Rtd) also made immense contributions as Resource persons.

Archbishop Jensen was our Retreat speaker and led five [5] presentations about the calling, life, ministry and mission of the bishop. He strongly called upon the bishops to preach the whole gospel from the whole Bible.

- o In speaking about the bishop as shepherd, he reminded the bishops that Christ is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep and we are to model our ministry upon Him.

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- In speaking about the bishop as an evangelist, he emphasized 2nd Corinthians 4:5 “what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus ‘sake.” [2 Corinthians 4:5]
 - In speaking about the bishop as a servant leader, he challenged the bishops to be humble. He noted that power corrupts, unless God shows mercy and exhorted the bishops to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, in their individuals lives [Galatians 5:16-25].
 - In speaking about the bishop’s administrative responsibilities, Archbishop Jensen emphasized that the best administrators marshal the right resources at the right time in the right place for the right purpose.
 - In speaking about the bishop’s use of time, family and money he reminded the bishops that it is the husbands’ responsibility as head of the household, to ensure there is peace in the home.
4. Meeting together as bishops of the Church of Nigeria in Delta State we were very conscious of living at a time of great tension in our nation. While the bishops give thanks to the Living God and commend the security agencies for ensuring the release of our incumbent Dean, the Most Rev. Ignatius C.O. Kattey and the former Primate, the Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola, we urge the Federal Government to continue to contend with insurgency and terrorism so as to forestall further deterioration in our security situation. We condemn all expressions of on-going acts of violence and terror. We grieve with all those who lost loved ones and pray for those who have been injured or terrorized by these calculated acts of violence.
 5. As the dates for 2015 General Elections rapidly come closer, we urge all politicians to exercise great care in their pronouncements and actions and not to overheat the system. The Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC] should improve their preparations and build confidence in the electorate, resulting in a stable electoral process and result. INEC should provide a level playing field for all.
 6. As we recall the landmark event of 1914, we urge Nigerians to engage in the acts of self-criticism, and make amend. In this way, we hope the next 100years will produce a better Nigeria.
 7. We urge all sections of the Nigerian Society, especially the Federal Government, to do all in their power to reduce unemployment and lower the high level of poverty that continue to exist in Nigeria. The leaders of all areas of our national life are urged to concentrate on nation building and govern with due diligence. This will result in a positive change of circumstance, especially for the youth.
 8. South Sudan, the world’s youngest nation, is burning. It is a very sad and embarrassing development that this African nation cannot agree to work together. With the current peace efforts started in Ethiopia, we urge South Sudan’s leaders to agree, sheathe their swords and surrender the personal, segmental and primordial tribal concerns for the overall good of their

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nation. The alternative will be an inevitable descent into irretrievable anarchy and fratricidal war. The warring South Sudanese leaders and supporters are hereby called to rethink, agree and give peace a chance, so as not to harm their young nation.

9. The on-going carnage in the Central African Republic has forced thousands of Christians to flee their homes. The current conflict is heading toward a humanitarian disaster as desperate people flood into refugee camps. We call upon the people of the Central African Republic to show restraint and respect the right of each individual. They must do all in their power to avoid a religious war. Neither the Muslims nor the Christians will win such a war.
10. As bishops of the Anglican Communion we commend and applaud the work of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans and especially the second Global Anglican Future Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. As bishops of the Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion] we commit ourselves to the continuation of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. We uphold the Jerusalem Declaration which affirms "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments 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'.
11. The Church of Nigeria, which is Bible-based, will continue to maintain fellowship with Churches, not necessarily on the basis of history, whose faith and practice are agreeable to and based on scriptural foundations.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. John 15:16



Most Revd. Nicholas D. Okoh
Primate of All Nigeria



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

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

Pastoral Letter

January 10, 2014

Dear People of God,

We bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We have just celebrated Christmas 2013 and we are in the weeks of Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein we are reminded of the pure love and sacrifice of God, our Father, that has made Him send His only begotten Son to be "made one like us" and to be born of a woman "to save His people from their sins." (Hebrews 2:14; Matthew 1:21)

Since our last letter of January 2013, many things have happened and as it is often said, "a lot of water has flowed under the bridge." We thank God that we can write you from the Retreat of the House of Bishops that held in Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, from 6th – 11th January, 2014. We had Bible Studies, Talks and special teachings on the Theme ***"The Bishop: An Overseer, an Evangelist, an Administrator, and a Pastor."*** (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Matthew 28:18-20, John 21:15-17, Acts 20:17)

As a House, we have had an ample opportunity for self-examination and reflection on our strengths and our failures or weaknesses as leaders of our great Church. As your leaders, we hereby advocate for a recovery of the Biblical pattern, where leaders served selflessly with conviction and humility as true shepherds who protect, care and serve the sheep. Please pray for us and indeed all who lead in our Church, that we may serve God's Church as true, faithful, loyal and fruitful servants.

We are in an evil age in which corruption, violence, persecution, terrorism, and political crises have taken the centre stage. You must not lose hope or surrender to the prevailing circumstances. Remember you have the Great and Good Shepherd

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who has not only been born but has gone to the Cross of Calvary and having gloriously died and rose, paid for your redemption from sin, death, hell and eternal destruction.

We were privileged to have in the Retreat the Most Reverend Peter Jenson, General Secretary of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans and former Archbishop of Sydney, Australia, accompanied by Right Reverend Peter Tasker, who serves as Archbishop of Sydney's Bishop for International Relations. The Rt. Rev'd Dr. M.O. Owadayo (Rtrd) and The Rt. Rev'd Vincent Muoghere (Rtrd) also lectured us from their reservoirs of knowledge and experience. The Archbishop taught us about the calling, life, ministry and mission of the bishop and challenged us to preach the whole gospel; that we model our life and ministry upon that of our Lord, Jesus Christ who laid down His life for the sheep. He also reminded us that we are servants of the sheep for Jesus' sake (2 Corinthians 4:5); that we "marshal the right resources at the right place at the right time and for the right purpose." As husbands, we were reminded that a bishop should be the head of his home – to love and provide for his family and ensure peace in it.

You have probably all heard of the kidnapping of two of our Church's leaders last year: First, our incumbent Dean, Most Reverend Ignatius C.O. Kattey, in February 2013, who was released after 9 days; and secondly, our former Primate, Most Reverend Peter J. Akinola, who was kidnapped on 24th December, 2013 and was promptly released before the end of that day. We give thanks to the living God and commend the security agencies for the release of these two leaders of our Church. We ask you to continue to pray for the security of our leaders.

God willing, we shall have a General Election in 2015 and preparation for it is bound to start this year. Do not allow yourselves to be lured and used by any politicians to perpetrate any evil. As the politicians are grouping and regrouping, we urge that you pray, think hard, and exercise discernment and caution in all your dealings with politicians. Those among you who are in politics should commit yourselves to playing clean and godly politics. Remember that you are accountable to God for everything you do in life. What shall it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?

We are addressing the vexing problem of unpaid stipends of some clergy and salaries of staff in some dioceses of our Church, as we reported to you in 2013. Thank you for your great and quality response to the collection for St. Matthias' Day 2013. Although we did not collect as much as we should have, we believe

that you will all strive to improve and indeed exceed the previous years in the 2014 collection. May God provide for you and inspire you to give more this year.

We thank God for the delegates of our Church – bishops, bishops' wives, clergy, professionals, and lay delegates - who attended the Second edition of Global Anglican Future Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, from 21st to 26th October, 2013. The 3rd Edition of Divine Commonwealth Conference was held at the National Ecumenical Centre, Abuja, from 11th to 18th November, 2013, with a much bigger attendance. We encourage you to begin to plan and mobilize your resources toward attending the 2014 edition – details of this shall be communicated to you in due course.

Please, pray for the centenary celebration of our country and the National Conference that will both hold shortly this year. They should become some of the means God will use to bring the ethnic groups of our country together; to truthfully and convincingly discuss how we may live together in peace, progress, and prosperity in the coming years.

Our dear people of God, seeing the days we live in are evil and desperately insecure, we remind you not to allow yourselves be moved but remain steadfast, faithful, trusting, and loyal to God, who alone is the Creator, Owner, Sustainer and Destiny of all creation. He says, *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."* John 15:16

May He be with you all!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a cross-like symbol followed by stylized letters, enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria.



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (Anglican Communion)

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

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM 17-22 FEBRUARY, 2014 AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JAMES THE GREAT, IBADAN, OYO STATE

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) 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' Organizations, met at the Cathedral Church of St. James the Great, Oke-Bola, Ibadan, Oyo State, from 17-22 February, 2014. One hundred and forty five bishops, one hundred and sixty clergymen and seventy nine members of the House of Laity were present. At the opening ceremony we welcomed His Excellency, Senator Abiola Ajimobi, Governor of Oyo State who gave a goodwill message, after which the Standing Committee commended his work in the State. We also welcomed the representative of the Olubadan of Ibadan Land.

At the conclusion, the Standing Committee issued this Communiqué:

THE THEME OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The theme of the Standing Committee was 'You Shall Not Bear False Witness' [Exodus 20:16, Deuteronomy 5:20].

In the light of the challenges we face as a result of false witnessing, the Standing Committee calls upon

- all Christians to take the lead in society by living lives that are characterized by honesty, truth and integrity and calls the Church to faithfulness in her message to uphold the holiness of the Living God.
- all Nigerians to shun perjury, false declarations of age, false declaration of assets, false family will and the like.

- Government at all levels, to urgently and firmly act through the judicial system, in meting out sanctions against established cases of perjury and other forms of false witnessing.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION

As Nigeria celebrates the centenary of the nation, the Church of Nigeria rejoices with all Nigerians and calls upon all citizens to recommit themselves to building a great nation in which the dreams of our founding fathers shall come true for us and our children's children – a nation in which the glory and will of God shall not be trodden under foot, in order to realize life in abundance (John 10:10).

SECURITY CHALLENGES

It is sad that our nation continues to suffer from the cruel and barbaric acts of terrorists who are determined to undermine the stability of the Nigerian Society. The Standing Committee while expressing its sympathies to all the victims of violence

- Renews its call on all people to honest conversations with others, respect for each other's religious differences and asks all Nigerians to commit themselves to finding true and genuine peace. Violent acts and extreme reactions should have no place in Nigerian society.
- Urges the Federal Government to do all that is necessary to ensure that the war on terror is not unnecessarily prolonged; urges the Commander-in-Chief to put an informed terminal date on the war and hold the military high command responsible.
- Urges the Federal Government to provide the necessary war equipment for the prosecution of the war.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

While commending the President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, for signing into law the Bill on same sex marriage, this Church calls on all our people to keep upholding values that are in keeping with our orthodox biblical faith.

The Church of Nigeria fully upholds Article 8 of the Jerusalem Declaration, which acknowledges the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper and only place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. Departure from this holy position within some Provinces of the Anglican Communion have no effect within the Church of Nigeria and we view these revisionist doctrines as inconsistent with the Scriptures and continue to believe that in and through the power of Christ, human beings can be rehabilitated and empowered to abandon unbiblical/unnatural lifestyles and practices that they have acquired.

Government, on its part, should all resist foreign pressures to make it rescind its stand on same-sex marriage and we equally condemn in its entirety the arrogant interference from certain foreign church leaders in our domestic affair. This is nothing short of a calculated attempt towards re-colonization.

Given the resolve of the Standing Committee that our Primate and Metropolitan continues to champion the defence of Biblical orthodoxy in Faith, Doctrine and Practice, this Church calls on all Christians across the nations, especially Nigerians, to brace up in this struggle to maintain authentic Christian faith.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The Standing Committee expresses its concerns about the challenges at all levels of the education sector. The Church of Nigeria commends the Federal Government and the Association of Academic Staff Union of Universities [ASUU] for resolving the most recent lengthy strike and strongly exhorts the parties to remain committed to the terms of their agreement. We also call the Federal Government not only to engage with relevant trade unions in polytechnics and colleges of education to resolve their lingering strikes, but also to be proactive and seek permanent ways of ending the culture of frequent strikes in the country.

Furthermore, this Church underscores the basic fact that education is a fundamental treasure and heritage to bequeath to forth-coming generations. With this in mind the Standing Committee urges the Government to ensure a steady improvement of infrastructures in all Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges and Schools. The Standing Committee sees any investment in education as a worthy investment.

2015 ELECTIONS

Ahead of the 2014 elections in some states and the 2015 general elections the Standing Committee calls on Nigerian leaders- political, religious and traditional- to bring our country back to moral consciousness in order to ensure free, fair and credible elections. The Standing Committee observes with regret that the decay in morality across Nigeria is a major factor that has contributed to the anomalies in our political system. We call on INEC to be firm in their conduct and judgment and appeal to the police and other security agencies to double their efforts to see that the nation does not witness any violence before, during or after elections. We urge the political class to exercise restraint in its electioneering, so that the Nigerian nation is not imperiled by their personal or group interests.

POWER SECTOR

The Church of Nigeria commends the Federal Government under the presidency of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for the huge efforts and investments in the power sector. However, this Church calls on all private companies on whom the Federal Government relies to be diligent and break the failure jinx; Nigerians are patiently waiting for the gains of the privatization.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In the light of significant evidence that the forthcoming National Conference has the support of many citizens across Nigeria, it behooves the Federal, State and Local Governments to ensure an unfettered forum for unhindered discourse of the Nigerian question, so that the outcome of the National Conference will ensure true federalism and the resolution to lingering areas of conflict and mutual distrust.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The Standing Committee notes with delight the efforts of the Federal Government in trying to improve the living standard of the masses through the creation of poverty alleviation programmes, notably SURE-P. However the very ugly challenge of poverty remains. The Church, therefore, calls on the Government at all levels to do more in this area of our life, to forestall the break-up of our society through revolutionary activities as was experienced in the Arab world recently.

SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT

The Standing Committee is saddened by the inability of leaders of the world's youngest nation— South Sudan—to work together, and calls on all warring parties to embrace peace for the development of the entire nation.

Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord. [Zechariah 8:16-17]



The Most Rev'd Nicholas D. Okoh,
Primate of All Nigeria