



THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

THE THEME OF THE SYNOD

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

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

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



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

FELICITATION

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

COMMENDATION

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

CORRUPTION

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

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



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STATE OF NIGERIA ECONOMY

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

AGITATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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

NATURAL DISASTERS

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



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INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS

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

UNPAID PENSION AND GRATUITY ACROSS THE NATION

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

TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO THE NORTH EAST

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

THE CALL FOR RESTRUCTURING

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



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GAFCON 2018

The General Synod gives thanks to Almighty God for the faithful biblical ministry and unity of GAFCON and waits with prayerful anticipation for the Third Global meeting in June 2018. This gathering in Jerusalem will be a witness to the faith that was once for all entrusted to the Saints.

STANDING FIRM IN THE FAITH

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

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

“Thou Shall Not Steal” (Exodus 20:15).

The Most Revd Nicholas D. Okoh
Primate of All Nigeria

Henry Odien Ajimogobia (SAN)
Chancellor, Church of Nigeria

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

The Ven. Isuwa Daniyah Saidu
Prolocutor