



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

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

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE BISHOPS AND WIVES' RETREAT OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD AT ARCHBISHOP ADEBOLA AND MRS. OLURANTI ADEMOWO RESOURCE CENTRE, BARIGA, LAGOS, BETWEEN JANUARY 9TH AND 13TH 2023.

Introduction

The Maiden Joint Retreat of the Bishops and Wives of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) which held between Monday, 9th & Friday, 13th January, 2023 under the leadership of the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of the Church of Nigeria - Anglican Communion, the Most Reverend Henry C. Ndukuba, DD, and his wife, Mrs Angela E. Ndukuba (Mama Nigeria), which was attended by 300 participants (Bishops and their wives). The joint retreat, which was the first of its kind, also had in attendance two Bishops and their wives from Cameroon and Ghana. The retreat offered the Bishops and their wives an opportunity to thank God for leading them through the challenges of the previous year whilst entrusting the new year into his hands, trusting him to empower them for service and to protect and shield them throughout the new year. The retreat, which began with the celebration of the Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper), provided opportunities for prayer and worship, Bible Study, as well as lectures and interactive sessions.

Theme

Diligence in Serving the only True God (John 17:3-4) - 'And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.'

The focus of the theme, taken from Christ's High Priestly prayer, the longest in the Bible, was on discerning the true task of Jesus on earth and the calling of Bishops and disciples of the Lord, to show discipline in fulfilling the ministry into which they have been called, namely to show the way to eternal life, and to be diligent in doing it. It calls on Christian ministers not to compromise their calling amidst the multifarious practices within the modern day religious context. Rather they are to depend on the Lord's word to sanctify them and his Spirit to empower them for diligent service. In all, they are to make Jesus, who alone reveals the only true God, their only authentic example for ministry.

2023 General Elections

The Bishops and their wives prayed fervently for Nigeria, recognizing especially the very imminent General Elections starting in February, 2023. They call on Nigerians to be diligent, first in collecting their PVCs in the ongoing exercise, to enable them participate in the forthcoming election, and to be conscientious in voting for the right people who can diligently serve the country and lead it out of its numerous social and political problems.

They call on Nigerians to reject vote-buying politicians and exercise their franchise with a clear conscience and conviction. Everyone will be responsible for his or her actions and this is particularly important now that the country needs dedicated and sincere leaders to serve.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

The House urges INEC to ensure that the elections are free, fair and credible and that the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) functions seamlessly. The House also frowns on the incessant attacks on INEC offices, personnel and facilities and urges the people involved to desist from this act. It further calls on the Nigerian Security Services to provide adequate security for INEC before, during and after the election.

National Well-being of People

The House laments the level of poverty and demoralization in the land today noting that life has become incredibly hard for Nigerians, and to make ends meet is increasingly eluding many with unbearable inflation level, and weak power of the Nigerian currency. It calls on Government to put in place necessary measure to ameliorate the sufferings of the masses.

Workers' Welfare

The need to take workers' welfare more serious has become more evident in recent times in view of the present hardship being faced all over the country. Workers' salaries are poor and inadequate to meet their needs. The lingering ASUU crisis on the payment of salary arrears has shown the insensitivity of government in dealing with the needs of its citizens, especially the university lecturers.

The House calls on government to urgently address this issue and put an end to the suffering of the workers, which has led to dissatisfaction among the millions of workers and youths in the country, to the extent that many Nigerians have chosen to leave the country for greener pastures. In the same vein, many doctors and nurses continue to leave our hospitals while government appears helpless in stemming the tide to the disadvantage or detriment of the masses. It is worrisome that various professionals are leaving their jobs for greener pastures.

The House appeals to government to urgently address this matter by providing good welfare package and resolve any lingering disagreements to aid stability in the education and other sectors of the economy, and to avoid brain drain in the land.

Quality of Education at all levels

The poor quality of education being encountered at different levels and places within our educational system is worrisome as a result of inadequate attention from the government and the dearth of educational facilities and qualified personnel many of whom have fled the country for greener pastures. The House calls on government to provide adequate facilities, qualified personnel and proper remuneration of teachers and support staff, to enhance the education sector.

Youth and the 'JAPA' Syndrome

The rate at which our youths are leaving the country owing to frustration and lack of fulfillment is alarming. The JA-PA syndrome is unfortunately becoming most popular. Most disturbing is the inability of government to respond to this. The House calls on Government to urgently put in place mechanisms for redressing this trend before it is too late and before the country becomes impoverished, without capable human beings that can contribute to the human capital development of the land.

Insecurity

Church laments the terribly alarming and worrisome state of insecurity in practically all parts of the country to the point that many people have been tormented and some abducted from homes, on the roads, at schools and colleges, churches, at airports and train stations and even in military establishments. The House calls on government to take immediate and decisive action on effective means of tackling insecurity in the land.

Sustainable Policies

It has been observed that many national policies being developed in our country are non-sustainable because they are largely skewed to the advantage of the governing 'cabal' while the majority of the people only suffer in consequence. The House calls on government and originators of national policies to craft them with the overall interest of the masses at heart, so that the policies will be delivered without creating unnecessary hardship for the people.

Degenerating Family Values

As religious leaders, the House notes with utmost concern the break down of family values, resulting in domestic violence, cultism, banditry, suicide, increasing level of ritual killing, etc, many of which are motivated by the craze for wealth and power among the citizens, especially young people.

This is against the traditional Christian values that honour the dignity and sanctity of the human life. It is lamentable that some religious organisations, and family units, are contributing in no small measure to this menace because of their undue emphasis on prosperity and materialism. The failure to attain their unduly high expectations and desire to get rich quick has led many to wicked alternatives, such as going back to idolatrous practices and other forms of social ills and religious vices .

The House urges society to go back to teaching core moral values and religious teachings that emphasize reality, skills, hardwork and reward.

It further calls on all church and ecumenical bodies to reject strange and superficial teachings that lack genuine biblical foundation many of which have today crept into the various churches that appear to champion undue emphasis on wealth-acquisition, among others.

Anglican Communion

The House affirms once again its commitment to the genuine reading, interpretation and application of the true Word of God to the lives of believers across the globe. It calls on the global Anglican Communion to embrace obedience to the Word of God and eschew all forms of compromise and liberal tendencies that are capable of undermining the Living Word of God and its transforming impact on the lives of believers and the society as a whole.

Leadership as Bane of Society

The House recognizes the poverty of ideals and failure of leadership as the major factor responsible for most of Nigeria's socio-economic and political woes. It calls on leaders at all levels to show firm commitment to people-oriented policies and effective response to the needs of the people.

The House further calls on Christians to be true to their calling by living according to the spiritual and moral demands of their identity, as holy and beloved children of God, living in a perverse and wicked world. They should consciously live out their faith as light in the darkness of the world and salt on the earth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst appealing to believers not to relent in their prayers for Nigeria, the Bishops and wives call on all and sundry to engage in practical acts that will bring about the restoration, progress, peace and prosperity that Nigeria desperately desires.

Furthermore, the House encourages Nigerians not to give up in the midst of the current challenges, knowing that Nigeria belongs to God and He will not abandon it. Rather He will make way for us; we only need to trust and wait for Him without wavering. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..."(Psalm 46:1-2).



The Most Rev'd Henry C. Ndukuba, MA, BD, MA (Ed.) DD
Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of All Nigeria

