



CHURCH OF NIGERIA

(Anglican Communion)

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RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA TO THE DECISION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TO AUTHORIZE THE BLESSING OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

On the 9th of February 2023, the Synod of the Church of England voted in favour of the proposals of the House of Bishops to approve the Church's blessing of Same-Sex marriages while at the same time claiming that it has not changed its traditional doctrine recognizing that marriage is between a man and a woman. This disingenuous manipulation of language to conceal their true intentions and unwillingness to stand by principled positions and Biblical truth has characterized the behaviour and statements of the Church of England for a while. The leaders failed to call to order and discipline 'The Episcopal Church of America', Canada, etc., when they violated Resolution 1.10 of Lambeth 1998 by consecrating Gay Bishops and recognizing the blessing of same-sex marriage partnerships. They have hitherto sat on the fence as the crisis tore the Communion apart. They have failed to function as 'Defenders of the Faith' and 'Instrument of Unity' in the global Anglican Communion.

The recent decision by the Church of England did not come as a surprise to discerning minds because it is the logical result of the path they have been consistently and painstakingly taking for the past decade. This decision to redefine marriage different from the teachings of Scripture and the proposal to change the male gender used for God to a neutral or inclusive language is a clear departure from the truth. Human words are not sufficient to express the depth of the unfathomable truth and power of God or His person. All these bring to the fore the folly of the human mind in questioning the authority of God, who created mankind male and female. Church of England, by this decision, can best be described as

'quarrelling with God'. In Isaiah 45:9, God declared, "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker.... Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' To decide to bless gay marriage without changing the doctrine of Marriage between a man and a woman is to 'speak from two sides of the mouth.' The death knell must be the recent appointment and Abp. Justin Welby's endorsement of a senior priest, who is in a gay partnership, as Dean of Canterbury Cathedral! The spiritual headquarters of the Anglican Communion has been deliberately compromised by this appointment, and the future of the entire Anglican Communion is in jeopardy.

The souls of the faithful departed members of the Church who built and promoted the Christian faith throughout the world, sponsored missionaries, built churches and cathedrals, enthroned Christian civilization, and encouraged Christian families, education, and civil society would be grieved at the recent actions of the current leadership of the Church of England, especially the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bad decisions of the Church's secular synods. Sadly, the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury have joined the widening rebellion against God and the Church of Jesus Christ; a move that must be challenged, resisted and reversed by the rest of the faithful Church.

The Church of England is one out of the 42 Provinces in the Communion, spread across 165 countries of the world. It cannot hold the rest of the Communion, especially the majority population located in the Global South, to ransom. The Protestant Movement arose out of the Reformation, which was a response to heresies and ecclesiastical abuses by the recognized Church then; the Roman Catholic Church. History is about repeating itself. The Anglican Church is at the threshold of yet another reformation, which must sweep out the ungodly leadership currently endorsing sin, misleading the lives of faithful Anglicans worldwide and endangering their prospects for eternity.

We are grieved that the deviant, revisionist actions of some Western Anglican Churches, including the Church of England are negatively affecting the image, moral credibility and evangelical activities of faithful Anglican Christians because of the likelihood of many other denominations perceiving or labelling the Anglican Church as a 'homosexual church', more so, with the capitulation of our 'Mother Church.' Geoffrey Chaucer's statement in the Canterbury tales comes to mind here: "*if gold rusts, what can iron do?*" If the Archbishop of Canterbury and his Bishops deny the faith and mislead the church, then what would ordinary congregants do? Hence, the fate of Christianity and the Church have experienced a terrible decline, loss and irrelevance in the secular and post-Christian western world. We must take steps to redefine our relationship with those who persist in wilful disobedience to God's Word and strive to bring the gospel and Church of our Lord Jesus Christ into disrepute.

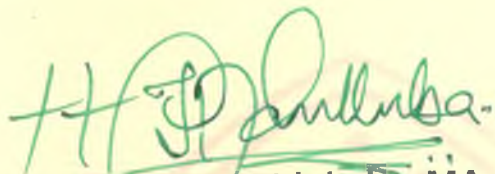
We of the GAFCON family encourage other orthodox bodies in the Communion to remain firm and resolute in upholding and defending "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). In the choice between truth and falsehood, light and darkness, secular and biblical cultures, we call on all people of God not to be deceived, but like Joshua, deliberately choose to serve the Lord the way He has revealed Himself in the Bible, our historic formularies and time-honoured tradition. We agree with the statement of Abp. Foley Beach, Primate of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and Chairman of GAFCON which says: "*Most of our provinces have their origins in the Church of England because of the incredible and sacrificial missionary spirit of faithful British followers of Jesus. What are the faithful in England and around the world to do now that the mother Church has departed from Biblical faith and morality? We cannot follow the Church of England down this path which leads to spiritual and moral bankruptcy.*"

If the Bishops genuinely love the people in their care, they will think twice about their ongoing redefinition of what constitutes sin. To continue down that path is to deny those caught in those circumstances the opportunity to repent. Christianity speaks of how we should live here in light of eternity, which we want to spend with God. Pursuing this path has made Church of England 'Blind Guides' for those who desperately need to repent from their chosen path of disobedience to the clear commands of Scripture. The Bishops are on a slippery slope to spiritual anarchy where everyone will begin to do what is right in their own eyes. Christianity has a rule book which is the Bible, the revealed Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is not about our opinions, passion, or emotional disposition. Their job as shepherds of the flock of Christ in their care is to tend and feed them with the undiluted Word of God unto life and maturity and not to lead them astray. It is also to uphold Christian doctrine handed down over the centuries. It is time for them to repent and return to our spiritual foundations. If they fail to do so, we urge believers in the Church of England to distance themselves from where the Church of England and their likes are going, stand up for what they truly believe and have the courage to defend the Biblical truth for the sake of their children and the generations coming after them. We must immediately extricate ourselves by disassociating from those Church leaders who have infiltrated the Anglican Communion with ungodly teachings.

The Church of Nigeria remains committed to the faith once delivered to the saints, and re-affirm our decision to redefine what it means to be a member of the Anglican Communion as contained in our 2020 Constitution and Canons, Chapter 1:3: "The Church of Nigeria shall be in full communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church as the Lord has commanded in His holy word and as the same are received as taught in

the Book of Common Prayer and the ordinal of 1662 and in the Thirty-Nine Article of Religion."

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Saviour, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.



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