

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE  
THIRD SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF NSUKKA AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL  
CHURCH, NSUKKA ON MONDAY 29TH OCTOBER, 2001 BY HIS LORDSHIP THE  
RT. REV. DR. JONAH CHUKWUEMEKA ILONUBA M.A. (OXON) Dip. Th. (LON.)**

**SYNOD PRAYER**

*O God our Heavenly Father, You have called us in Your son Jesus to go and make disciples of all the nations of the world.*

*Give us the enabling grace and power of your Holy Spirit that we being first made the disciples of your son Jesus Christ, will be enabled and equipped to disciple others, so that both we and they will through our word and deed, be visible and true representatives of Your invisible spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

**GREETINGS:**

*My Lord Bishosp  
The Hon. Chancellor  
The Learned Registrar  
His Worship and Other Legal Luminaries  
Venerable Archdeacons  
The Clergy  
The President Mothers' Union and Women's Guild  
Knights of St. Paul and Ladies  
Synod Delegates  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Brothers and sisters in Christ as we once more gather in this annual convocation it is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the Second Session of the Third Synod of the Diocese. The Almighty and loving God has continued to shower His blessings on us and his faithfulness never fails. Last year our synod was held at St. Thomas' Aku and we thank God for the blessing of that Synod.

Since then we have witnessed some positive changes in some of our Archdeaconries, Parishes or churches where there is a new enthusiasm and commitment to evangelize. Some of us have lost those dear to our hearts and our prayer is that God will grant them the fortitude to bear the loss. Others have been blessed with new babies, promotion in their work places and many others have been privileged to buy new cars or build houses within this period.

In the eight years that we have been in this Diocese the cars that were brought this year to the Bishop's house for blessing by far outnumbered those that were blessed in the past seven years. Is that not democracy dividend?

Last year when we stepped into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Synod of the Diocese I alerted you that we are no longer a baby Diocese and that by the end of the Third Synod we shall be thinking of celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our existence as a Diocese.

I asked in my last year's address. "Will you have something to celebrate and thank God for in your church, your Parish, your Archdeaconry and the entire Diocese in terms of development and achievement within this first ten years?"

I know that some of our churches have some building projects either church, parsonage or school, our prayer is that God will give you the needed zeal and men and women who are committed to progress to see that those projects are accomplished before the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I thank God for the speed at which the work on Bishop's Court moved after the last Synod and I have no doubt that by Easter 2002 we must have finished everything about the court and start the Cathedral Project. I sincerely thank Sir Engr. Dr. Ugochukwu Nwoji who has consistently and almost single-handedly supervised the work up to its present stage. I also thank those who occasionally come to the site to see what is happening.

### **THE HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH:**

The beginning of missionary activities in this part of the country goes back to 1916 when the first Pastor and Superintendent of the then Enugu district the Rev. Isaac Uzowulu Ejindu extended his missionary activity to Eha-Amufu and established a church there.

From this congregation at Eha-Amufu a member named John Enyi, a sawyer from Mgbuji came to work at Alor-Uno. He combined his work as a sawyer with that of an evangelist and with the help of God he made converts and a church was established. In 1921 members started holding prayer meetings and evangelical campaigns. When the group at Alor-Uno grew, they decided to move down to Nsukka a distance of about 6 kilometers from Alor-Uno.

In 1927 the group moved down to Nsukka where they saw some people who were already Christians working in various government establishments. The government officials mostly strangers welcomed the idea of the Anglican Church having a base in Nsukka. Under the able leadership of Mr. Thomas Iloabachie, an interpreter, the church was established at Nsukka.

In 1928, the first Church Teacher Mr. J. P. Okeke was sent to work at Nsukka. Since then the church has grown.

St. Paul's Church has produced many illustrious sons and daughters that include the late Ven. S. A. Eze who worked in different parts of the then Enugu diocese and God blessed him greatly in his children who are today occupying different positions. The late Matthew Ngwu who also was blessed with children one of them, the Principal of St. Cyprian's Special Science School Sir Chike Ngwu and the brother Sir Fidelis Ngwu who is the Diocesan Registrar.

By 1994 when the diocese of Nsukka was inaugurated we had two Archdeaconries and 18 Parishes. Today we have 26 Parishes and 4 Archdeaconries. The 5<sup>th</sup> Archdeaconry of Amufie will be inaugurated on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2001. Please pray for the inauguration committee as they plan for that day and also for the Archdeacon to be collated for the new Archdeaconry.

### **THE GUEST PREACHER:**

We usually welcome formally our Guest Preacher at the time the Presidential Address is being delivered. It is therefore my pleasure and privilege to introduce the Rt. Rev. Dr. Ugochukwu Uwaoma Ezuoke and Stella Ezuoke to you.

Ugochukwu was my junior at Trinity College Umuahia when the school re-opened after the Nigerian Civil War. While we entered the College in 1971, he was among the groups that came in 1973.

We were again together in England from 1976-1979, while I was at Oxford he was then at St. John's College Nattigham till 1980. Ugochukwu again joined the staff of Trinity College Umuahia and was there with me till 1989 when I left for Abakaliki.

On his return from England in 1980 he was appointed the Principal of Ascension Seminary Aba 1980- 82. Ugochukwu and his amiable wife Stella stood by us throughout the years we were at Trinity and even when his Bishop wanted to withdraw him, he pleaded that he would stay a little longer for our sake.

We thank God for using him to speak to us yesterday at the Synod Service. I believe that his inspiring and thought – provoking Sermon will leave a lasting impression in our lives and that the message so powerfully delivered will be used by all of us individually and collectively to press forward in our work of evangelism in this Diocese and beyond.

Our prayer is that God will continue to use them as they minister to His flock in the Diocese of Umuahia.

## **EVENTS SINCE THE LAST SYNOD**

### **1. Visit of Rev. Canon Peter David Cooper:**

In November last year the Bishop of Ife the Rt. Rev. G. B. Oloniyo asked that our diocese be one of those to be visited by Canon David Peter Cooper who is in link with his diocese and was made Canon of his Diocese during the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the inauguration of their Diocese. Canon Cooper came and was able to visit St. Paul's Cathedral, St. John's Onuiyi, St. Peter's Ovoko and St. Andrew's Ibagwa-Aka.

A Social Evening was organized for his reception.

I use this opportunity to thank all who joined us during that occasion to make his visit an eventful one. I also thank the Staff and Students of St. Cyprian's Special Science School for organizing and producing a very instructive and entertaining drama at such a short notice.

### **2. Inauguration of Neke Parish:**

On Sunday 19th November 2000 Neke Parish was inaugurated in a very colorful service and different items donated for the worship of God were dedicated. They include Holy communion Vessels; Flagon, Cups etc. Altar table and chairs. We thank God for the donors and pray that more people will be moved to donate to God's glory and for his service. Neke Parish has been working hard in the area of evangelism and has joined forces with other Christian denomination in the area to fight against ignorance and retrogressive culture and practices.

### **3. Prison Visitation**

On Monday 11th December, 2000 the Diocese organized a historic prison visitation in which food items, clothing and toiletries were sent to them. There was an open air service which many people attended. You are aware that the Officer in charge of the Nsukka Prison is a clergyman of the Anglican Church and has been representing us as the Anglican Chaplain.

His tenure in Nsukka Prison has witnessed a positive change in the life of the prison inmates. There is an improved living condition and the Prisoners are very well cared for as against what we saw during our last visit when many of them looked sickly and some could hardly stand up. Arrangements were also made to see that people were not detained for a long time without trial.

We thank God that his hard work did not go un-recognized. In the month of August 2001 he was promoted Assistant Comptroller of Prisons.

### **4. Visit of the Archbishop Canterbury His Grace the Most Revd. Rt. Hon. Dr. George Leonard Carey and His Wife Eileen Carey:**

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primate of all England, the Most Rev. Dr. Rt. Hon. George Carey and his wife Eileen visited Nigerian early this year between 1st and 14th February, 2001.

On 4th February at the Cathedral Church of the Advent Gwarinpa Abuja he con-celebrated a Eucharistic Service with the Archbishop and Primate of Nigeria His Grace the

Most Rev. Dr. Peter J. Akinola and the Provincial Archbishops assisted by many other Diocesan Bishops from the three Provinces.

On Monday 25th February he was scheduled to arrive at Enugu Air-port by 11.00 a.m. to visit Province 11. We were all there that day to receive him including the Archbishop of Province 11 His Grace the Most Rev. M. S. C. Anikwenwa and the Executive governor of Enugu State his Excellency Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani, the former Vice President of Nigeria Dr. Alex Ekwueme, the former governor of Anambra State Chief C. C. Onoh. Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu and a host of other prominent men and women including Federal and State High Court Judges.

It was however unfortunate that because of the poor weather condition that day, the flight from Abuja could not take off. By afternoon when it became clear that the Archbishop of Canterbury could not travel by air they decided that he and his entourage would travel by road.

It was a very terrible disappointment and those who have been waiting for his arrival were told to meet at the Cathedral Church of the Good Shepherd where a short service of thanksgiving was held and then the people dispersed.

The Governor of Enugu State had already organized a luncheon party in anticipation of the Archbishop's arrival. After the service the Bishops and other invited guests retired to the Government house where the luncheon was served in the Enugu State Banquet Hall.

After the late lunch the Bishops drove down to Awka to wait for our August visitor who finally arrived Anambra State about 9.15p.m. that day. They were briefly received at the Archbishop's Palace Awka before he retired to the Government House Awka.

On 6th February the Archbishop and his entourage which also included our Primate, the Archbishop of Province II and other Bishops left for All Saints' Cathedral Onitsha where an open air service was organized.

In his brief Sermon he expressed their delight in the enthusiasm shown by Christians in this part of the country. He warned on the danger of AIDS and condemned the idea of thinking that condom is a way out. He rather stressed the fact that the church already has a remedy for that which is chastity. He condemned the trend in preaching of the gospel of prosperity which does not give a balanced theology of the bible.

It is heart-warming that the Archbishop of Canterbury did not leave Province II without stepping his feet on Enugu. On the 7<sup>th</sup> morning before going down to Owerri he paid a courtesy call on the Governor of Enugu State Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani where he was warmly received by the Governor and his Cabinet.

From there the team then moved to Owerri where there was a Holy Communion service at the Grasshopper Stadium Owerri, then to Aba and Port-Harcourt. He then moved to Province I stopping briefly at the Ibru Centre.

From Province II he finally moved back to Abuja where he had a dinner with all the Bishops and Federal Government representatives at Sharaton Hotel on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

On Saturday 13th February he had a short retreat with the Bishops and shared with them his experience as Bishop and Archbishop. He condemned the pomposity which he has observed in some of our church leaders in Nigeria.

They finally left for England that evening. We thank God for his visit and for the experiences shared with him.

The Bishops after that continued with their retreat and Computer training.

##### **5. Collation of the Archdeacon of the Cathedral: Ven. Andrew N. C. Ogbochie:**

On Sunday 25th February 2001 St. Paul's Cathedral was accorded its proper status with the collation of Ven. Andrew N. C. Ogbochie as the first Archdeacon of the Cathedral.

We thank God for the progress so far recorded in the Deanery and pray that the Cathedral Church will sit up to its responsibility in leadership role within the Diocese. We still observe that many members are still, lukewarm in their worship and commitment to God. Revelation 3:15-16 speaking about the Church in Laodicea said, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth." I believe that the Cathedral Church will take up this challenge and live up to expectation.

**6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Batch of Knights of St. Paul:**

On Sunday 4th March 2001 we initiated and invested our second batch of Knights of St. Paul. They were 42 in number.

We thank God for the person who organized their retreat and preached the sermon at the service the Very Rev. Dr. D. C. Okeke.

We thank God for these new Knights who have come to join forces with the first group in the good work they are doing in the Diocese.

We are aware that we invited more than this number but some of them fell by the wayside. I know very well that some who declined are evading responsibility in the Diocese. What God has given us in terms of material wealth is meant to be used for his works and to his glory. When we withhold what God has given us and refuse to use it to his glory he creates avenues through which they will be wasted, which will be of no benefit to us. When we use them for his work we receive his blessings. If we think that others will build our Diocese for us we are deceiving ourselves.

**7. Foundation Stone Laying:**

On Tuesday 17th April 2001 during the Easter Week, the foundation stone of St. Mary's Opi was laid in an effort to raise fund to complete the church building. We are all aware that the 2002 Synod will be at Opi. We thank God for that day and for the response from those in attendance. It is our hope that those who pledged either financially or materially must have redeemed their pledges by now. I have no doubt that the church will soon be roofed.

**8. Nsukka Archdeaconry – silver Jubilee Celebration:**

On Sunday 22nd April, 2001 at St. John's Church Onuiyi the Silver Jubilee of the inauguration of Nsukka Archdeaconry was celebrated in a very colourful service. Nsukka Archdeaconry was inaugurated in 1975 with the headquarters at St. Paul's Nsukka and Ven. Simon O. Ugwuanyi as the first Archdeacon. With Nsukka becoming a Diocese St. Paul's assumed a Cathedral status and the Archdeaconry headquarters was relocated to St. John's Church Onuiyi.

**9. Visit of the Bishop of Guildford and Wife Rt. Rev. John and Lydia Gladwin:**

The Bishop of Guildford the Rt. Rev. John Gladwin and wife Lydia Gladwin visited our Diocese on 10th May 2001. Guildford Diocese is in link with our diocese. Our prayer is that the link will be sustained as we exchange letters, ideas and pray for our concerns in our different Dioceses. We hope to visit them sometime.

**10. Conferment of Mother of Faith:**

The Conferment of "Mother of Faith" (Nne Okwukwe) is now gaining ground in many churches within the Diocese. This is a recognition of Women who have shown an outstanding faith in their commitment to God and whom others will look up to as a role model. Churches have used this opportunity to raise funds for development in their different places. On June 30th 2001 at St. Paul's Cathedral the following women were conferred "Mothers of Faith";

Mrs. Comfort Okoli, Mrs. Cecilica Eze, Mrs. Jemimah Edoga, Mrs. Catherine Obiekwe and Mrs. Jemimah Ezema.

We thank God for their children who came to give them the needed support.

#### **11. Ordination of Deacons and Priests:**

History was made on Sunday 8th July 2001 when seven new Deacons were made and 7 Deacons were ordained Priests.

##### **DEACONS**

- ◆ Okwuchukwu Ayogu
- ◆ Joseph Chukwuma
- ◆ Christian Nnadi
- ◆ Alphonsus Odo
- ◆ Christopher Okwor
- ◆ Clifford Ugwuanyi
- ◆ Chinedu Ekpunobi

##### **PRIESTS**

- ◆ Rev. Aloysius Agbo
- ◆ Rev. Joseph Agbo
- ◆ Rev. Stanley Eze
- ◆ Rev. Samuel Ezema
- ◆ Rev. Fidelis Obetta
- ◆ Rev. Paul Odoh
- ◆ Rev. Kenneth Ugodu

#### **12. 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mothers' Union World-Wide Council**

The Mothers' Union World Wide Council celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the existence of Mothers' Union which was founded by Mary Elizabeth Summer in 1876.

This took place at Westminster Abbey in England. Many diocesan Presidents from Nigerian especially from Province II attended the meeting in June this year. Our Diocesan President Mrs. Roseline U. Ikonuba (Nnediugwu) was able to attend through the support of the Diocesan Women and some good – spirited individuals.

We thank all of you who made her trip possible. May God bless all of you in Jesus name. *Amen.*

#### **13. Christian Fathers' Fellowship:**

The need for an organization that will embrace all fathers of the church has become a necessity in view of the fact that lack of such an organization has been responsible for many fathers not knowing their responsibility in the church. In the past we had the M.C.A. Men's Christian Association but that is no longer functional. The women have the Women's Guild and Mothers' Union as the umbrella that embraces all women.

In order to bring all Christian Fathers under one organization, we are introducing the Christian Fathers' Fellowship in the Diocese. Already I have introduced the idea at the Diocesan Board and directed the Archdeacons to meet and discuss about the uniform. A certificate will be designed which will contain the objects of Christian Fathers and their Prayer.

The inaugural admission will be on diocesan level, while subsequent ones will be on the day of confirmation in churches alongside other admissions.

#### **14. Church of Nigeria News:**

At an Episcopal Meeting held in Abuja on Monday 18th February 2001 the following vacant sees were filled. The Venerable Abednego A. Edionwe was elected the Bishop of Benin to replace the Rt. Rev. Peter Onekpe who was translated to Esan Diocese.

The Very Rev. Michael O. Ipinmoye was elected the Bishop of Akure following the retirement of the Rt. Rev. Emmanuel B. Gbonigi.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Rowland N. C. Nwosu Bishop of Asaba who retired was replaced by the Ven. (Lt. Col.) Nicholas O. Okoh.

These new Bishops were consecrated on Sunday 6th May 2001 at the Cathedral of St. Peter Aremo, Ibadan and have since been enthroned in their different Dioceses. It is our prayer that God will continue to equip them with the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit for a successful ministry.

**THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA EPISCOPAL SYNOD, PROVINCIAL STANDING  
COMMITTEE AND WOMEN'S EXECUTIVE WAS HELD AT ST. CYPRIANS  
CATHEDRAL PORT-HARCOURT NIGER DELTA DIOCESE FROM TUESDAY  
13TH MARCH – FRIDAY 16TH MARCH, 2001**

The theme was “*Be Ye Transformed*”.

The Committee unanimously adopted the following communiqué.

**“Be Ye Transformed”**

The Church of Nigeria hereby calls all Anglicans in particular and Christians as a whole to allow the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to transform their lives in their homes, in the Church, in their business and places of work, and in their everyday lives.

**INTERMINABLE FUEL CRISIS**

The Standing Committee noted the undoubted failure of the various measures introduced by the Federal Government to make petroleum products regularly available and affordable throughout Nigeria. Reacting to the proposal by the Federal Government to deregulate the petroleum industry as the best possible avenue for overcoming the problem, the Church of Nigeria hereby proposes the following lines of action prior to any change of policy:

The Federal Government should use the radio, television, and other appropriate channels to inform Nigerians on the full implications of deregulation of the petroleum industry.

The federal Government should give reasons to justify its confidence in deregulation as the most appropriate solution to the problem of irregular fuel supply.

The Federal Government should introduce efficient monitoring machinery to prevent the importation of poor quality petroleum products into the country.

**THE MENACE OF AIDS**

Noting available statistics which reveal a high incidence of AIDS/HIV – positive in Nigeria, the Church of Nigeria hereby:

- a) Condemns the use of condoms for the prevention of AIDS in view of the encouragement of promiscuous sex, emphasizing that the use of condoms should be restricted to family planning by married couples.
- b) Counsels total abstinence from sex outside marriage.
- c) Calls on the Federal Government to adopt a positive attitude towards the impartial investigation of any local initiative aimed at finding a cure for AIDS.
- d) Encourages sustained education of the youth on the hazards of AIDS.

## **CLAMOUR FOR SECOND TERM OF OFFICE;**

While acknowledging that democracy allows for freedom on expression, the Church of Nigeria views with dismay the recent clamour by some Nigerians for some present political leaders to be given as automatic second term in office. Accordingly, the Church of Nigeria hereby:

- a) Calls on all political office holders to concentrate their efforts on making food available and affordable to all Nigerians, promoting justice and security, and creating jobs for the growing army of unemployed youths.
- b) Urges political leaders to shun cheap publicity.
- c) Draw attention of political leaders to sizable sections of the country that have not yet felt the impact of the present administration on their lives.
- d) Pledges to continue to pray and offer advice without allegiance to any particular political party.

## **CONSPICUOUS AFFLUENCE AMONG THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP:**

The Church of Nigeria expresses grave concern that while the overwhelming majority of Nigerians are subjected to indescribable deprivations, political office holders at Federal, State and Local Government levels over – provide for themselves, amass wealth, live in conspicuous affluence out of public funds and use their positions of power to intimidate the citizenry. The apparent inability of the Federal Government to check this dangerous development casts doubt on the seriousness of its anti-corruption and transparency policies.

The Church of Nigeria accordingly demands an immediate change of heart on the part of the nation's political leaders, and enjoins the Code of Conduct Bureau to live up to public expectation.

In this regards, the Church of Nigeria condemns in unequivocal terms the recent proposal by the Senate to facilitate purchase of eight brand new jet planes for the President, the Vice-President, the Senate President, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Chief Justice of the Federation as insensitive, ill motivated, and unpatriotic.

## **NON-PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND PENSIONS:**

The Standing Committee appeals to all tiers of government to ensure prompt payment of salaries to civil servants, not only to minimize the consequential hardship for their families, but also to create an environment conducive to checking corruption in public office. The Standing Committee further appeals to all tiers of government to evolve an efficient machinery to facilitate the payment of gratuity and pensions to retired public servant as and when due. The Committee reminds serving public servants who subdue pensioners to undue hardship and humiliation that they too will become pensioners one day.

## **RECOURSE TO COURT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Whereas the federal Government recently deemed it necessary to seek court pronouncements on the constitutional issues of resource control over which it is in disagreements with State Governments, the Church of Nigeria hereby calls on the federal Government to be consistent by also seeking court pronouncements on another sensitive constitutional issue over which it has been in disagreement with some State Governments, namely the Sharia issue.

### **FRIVOLOUS USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS:**

The Standing Committee noted media reports on donations of as much as N5 million by some holders of highly political office at a recent book launch in Lagos by a former Nigerian Head of State.

The committee condemns frivolous use of public funds, especially at the time most Nigerians are deprived of the basic necessities of life, and hereby calls on all holders of political office to demonstrate greater sensitivity and restraints in the use of public resource entrusted to their care.

### **RETURN OF SCHOOLS**

Concerned about the continued delay in the return of schools previously owned by missions and other private proprietors to their original owners, the church of Nigeria hereby calls on all affected State Governments to expedite action in this regard.

### **APPRECIATION:**

The Standing Committee is immensely grateful to His Excellency the Executive Governor of Rivers State, Dr. Peter Odili for addressing the Meeting on 15th March 2001, in the company of His Excellency the Deputy Governor, Sir Gabriel Toby, and other members of his Executive Council. The Church of Nigeria is particularly grateful to the governor for his irreversible decision to return schools to their previous proprietors.

The Standing Committee also expresses profound gratitude to the Lord Bishop of the Niger Delta Diocese, the Rt. Revd. G. Pepple, the Chairman and members of the Planning Committee which organized the Standing Committee Meeting, the Church of Nigeria Secretariat, and all others who toiled selflessly to ensure the success of the meeting.

### **ADDENDUM**

The Episcopal Synod and the Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was held at Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, Ikeja, Lagos – West 18<sup>th</sup> – 21st September, 2001.

The theme of Standing Committee Meeting was **“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER’S BURDEN” Gal. 6:2.**

At the end of the meeting the following Communiqué was issued.

### **“Bear Ye One Another’s Burden”**

In conformity with Biblical injunctions, the Church of Nigeria calls on Christians to bear one another’s burdens in active and positive ways. In this regard, the Church of Nigeria urges all its Dioceses to establish the machinery for social welfare services where they do not already exist.

With regard to the recent religious eruption in Jos, the Church of Nigeria has proclaimed a prayer Session for the future of Nigeria throughout its 78 Dioceses every Wednesday commencing from Wednesday 26th September 2001, culminating in a finale on October 18, 2001. The Church of Nigeria also enjoins all Christians to rise to the material support of victim of the Jos violence.

### **Acts of Terror in Nigeria**

The Church of Nigeria observes with horror and anguish the incessant and violent religious eruptions in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern States of the country, resulting in heavy loses in human lives and property. Coincidentally, two crucial meetings of the Church of Nigeria have been disrupted by such eruptions: in February 2000 when the Bishop of the

Church on their way to Kaduna to elect anew Primate for the Church were compelled to seek an alternative venue, and the current meeting of the Standing Committee slated to be held in Jos, Plateau State.

Of particular concern is the seeming inability or unwillingness of successive governments to take stringent deterrent measures against the perpetrators of the heinous crimes. The recurring pattern of these violent eruptions, involving Northern Muslims deliberately maiming and Killing their Christian neighbours and destroying their property, including Churches, and the manner in which Nigeria was admitted some years ago into the organization of Islamic Conference, and the declaration of states as “Sharia State”, suggest a calculated plan to establish an Islamic Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Church of Nigeria cannot close its eyes and fold its hands and let Christians be slaughtered by Muslims. It therefore affirms the right of its members to protect themselves if the government continues to fail to protect them.

Consequently, the Church of Nigeria hereby calls on the Federal and State Governments to arrest this explosive development by taking redemptive action whenever there are indications of impending religious or ethnic violence, to conduct thorough investigations of any religious and ethnic crisis, and take decisive deterrent action against perpetrators of all acts of terror.

Furthermore, convinced that the time has come for Nigeria to brace to the hard facts of their continued existence as a nation, the Church of Nigeria hereby adds its voice to the demand for a national conference on the future form of government for Nigeria.

Meanwhile, in view of the growing incidence of violence alleged to be investigated by highly placed political leaders, the Church of Nigeria reminds the President, State Governors, Local Government Chairman, and other political leaders of the responsibility imposed on them to protect rather than repair the welfare of the citizenry.

### **Terrorism in America**

Reacting to the heartless attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, and the Pentagon Building in Washington D. C., on 11th September 2001 by yet to be identified terrorists, the Standing Committee condemns the wanton destruction of human lives, and expresses deep condolence to the Government and people of USA as well as the families of the victims of the carnage, including families of Nigerians who also lost their lives.

The Standing Committee implores the Federal, State and Local Government to full consciousness of the existence in Nigeria of groups of Islamic Fundamentalists imbued with tendencies similar to those exhibited by the perpetrators of the USA mayhem.

### **Insecurity of Life and Property:**

The Standing Committee expresses alarm at the growing incidence of armed robbery, assassinations and thuggery in many parts of the country, and the inability of government to guarantee the safety of life and property. Noting that the situation is fuelled by the unhindered circulation of arms and ammunition, the Committee appeals to the Federal Government to strengthen security within the country and along its borders, and as a matter of urgency, to provide the Nigeria Police with the necessary training, equipment, and orientation to guarantee the Nigerian citizens security of life and property.

### **National Identity Cards**

Convinced about the crucial importance of the national identity card project for national development, and the enormous amount of public funds successive governments have poured into the project over the years without visible results, the Church of Nigeria

(Anglican Communion) hereby gives full support to the Federal Government for its resolve to see the national identity card project to fruition during its term of office.

### **Fuel Situation**

The Standing Committee notes with relief the significant improvement in the availability of petroleum products at official pump prices in most parts of the country since its last meeting in March 2001. The Committee commends the Federal Government for this welcome development, and enjoins civil society not to allow greedy petroleum products marketers to rock the boat.

The Committee observes that it has been possible to achieve the regular supply of petroleum products at official pump price without the much-trumpeted deregulation of the petroleum industry.

### **AIDS**

Having deliberated extensively on the report of a workshop on HIV/AIDS held in South Africa in August 2001 and in which the Church of Nigeria participated, the committee resolved to implement the action plan recommended by African Primates to grapple with the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Accordingly, the Church of Nigeria hereby accepts the challenge of HIV/AIDS and expresses its commitment to do everything possible to fight HIV/AIDS, adopting a multiple-pronged approach which would embrace, inter alia:

- (i) Prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- (ii) Caring pastorally for those who already have HIV/AIDS
- (iii) Seeking effective cures for HIV/AIDS

The Church of Nigeria hereby calls on governmental and non-governmental organizations, and men and women of goodwill to provide the resources needed to implement its HIV/AIDS Action Plan.

### **Sharia**

The Standing Committee noted with grave concern that, notwithstanding previous pronouncements of the Church of Nigeria on the Sharia issues, more State Governments in Northern Nigeria (currently numbering 12) have gone ahead to declare their states as “Sharia States”, and that the Federal Government has continued to condone these unconstitutional actions.

The Standing Committee hereby condemns:

- (i) The declaration of any State in Nigeria as a Sharia state.
- (ii) The inclination by the Obasanjo Administration to compromise with the Sharia issue against the Constitution of Nigeria which it was elected to uphold;
- (iii) The posture on the part of the Federal Government to keep mute over controversial and divisive issues.
- (iv) The inflammatory statement on the Sharia issue credited to former Military Head of State, General Muhammad Buhari (Rtd.).

### **Education**

The Standing Committee is gratified to note that some State Governments have returned Schools taken over from Missions and other Private proprietors to their original owners. The Church of Nigeria hereby commends all such State Governments, and appeals to other State Governments, which have not already done so to do likewise.

With regard to the Universal Basic Education Scheme the Standing Committee draws attention to the urgent need to involve non-governmental agencies in the Universal Basic Education Scheme, for the benefit of all Nigerians for which the policy is intended.

### **GSM**

The Standing Committee notes with concern that the emergence of the widely publicized GSM has been widely received with public disenchantment rather than relief, extensively because of the inadequate infrastructure available for its successful execution. The Standing Committee hereby appeals to the Federal Government to plough the sizeable resources generated from the bids for licenses towards the provision of the requisite infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Committee calls on the Federal Government to terminate the monopoly of NITEL, to provide a level ground for competition.

### **Appreciation**

The Standing Committee notes that Lagos-West Diocese had only one week notice to host the meeting following the eruption of violence in Jos Diocese, originally slated as host. The committee expresses profound gratitude to the Rt. Revd. Dr. Peter A. Adebisi, Bishop of Lagos-West Diocese, the Chairman and members of the Planning committees for the meeting, the entire Lagos-West Diocese, the Secretariat of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), and all others who contributed to the success of this meeting.

The Standing Committee welcomed the Revd. Dr. D. Zac Nirinyingi, CMS Regional Director for Africa, to the meeting.

**SIGNED:**

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**The Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola DD.**  
*Primate of All Nigeria*

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**Ven. Samuel B. Akinola**  
*General Secretary*

### **INAUGURATION OF IKA DIOCESE**

On 14th September 2001 the diocese of Ika which was carved out from Asaba Diocese was inaugurated with the headquarters at Agbor.

The Rt. Rev. Peter Onekpe was translated from Esan Diocese to be the first Bishop of the new Diocese. It is our prayer that there will be stability and progress in the new Diocese.

### **THE STATE OF THE NATION**

When on 29th May 1999 democratic rule was restored in Nigeria after so many military dictatorship in which the country was pillaged and bastardized Nigerians ushered in democracy with very high hopes of good governance, justice and fair-play. The promises made by the President in his first broadcast made Nigerians believe that after all a Daniel has come for judgment. The hope was to be short-lived as those in the corridors of power soon forgot the past and reverted to the old way of life. The three tiers of government were torn apart by strife and disagreement, and there was intrigue galore, one impeachment after another. This did not make for a smooth take-off.

The idea of going into politics to share the national cake was still very much in the minds of many who held the mantle of leadership. Selfishness and greed once more become the order of the day and the government found itself incapable of making people accountable for their misdeeds.

The Constitution of the land was disregarded as some States introduced some practices that ran counter to the constitution that brought them into office and nothing was done to stop the drift.

The introduction of Sharia law in the North is a case in point and this has led to one religious riot after another in which lives and property were lost.

In February, 2000 many lives were lost in Kaduna and property worth millions of Naira destroyed as a result of religious riot. Just recently, Jos which hitherto has been a peaceful place was engulfed in a sectarian crisis between Moslems and Christians. The president reacting to the incident described it as a national disgrace. He appealed to both religions and community leaders throughout the country to live up to their responsibility of making their communities haven of peace. He said that the resort to mob action, murder and arson in reaction to communal friction could not be the rational action of true believers in God. "True believers, be they Moslems or Christians, know that all humans are created by God and ought not to be harmed but loved. What sort of Christians or Moslems are those who when they clash, the first thing they do is to start burning down churches or mosques, places where God is worshiped?" "Things like this are a disgrace to us as human beings. It is madness and cannot be the action of rational people."

Apart from religious riots mostly in the North there are ethnic clashes and village feuds that have led to loss of lives and destruction of property in many states of the Federation, a development that does not show us as a civilized society.

The rivalry between political office holders has also led to senseless killings and assassinations as were witnessed in Ebonyi State recently.

However we thank God that there are some states where we have well-meaning people who are interested in improving the lots of the masses. Some state Governors have improved the road-net-work in their STATES AND PROVIDED PIPE-BORNE WATER AND ELECTRICITY TO SOME RURAL AREAS. We need more leaders like that who are concerned about the welfare of those who elected them into office.

For many years we have identified corruption as the problem facing us as a nation and which has been responsible for retarding the pace of development in the entire nation.

The President, Olusegun Obasanjo while in South Africa recently lamented in the same vein identifying corruption as the bane of Nigeria, saying that avarice, greed and selfishness are responsible. Reacting to this under the caption "**The Leadership need of Nigeria:** the Guardian, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2001 wrote. "This is really simplistic and it does not show a desire to deal with the problem. The problem is 'unpunished corruption'. When a corrupt person knows that he can get away with it, why should others not imitate him? As long as corruption is not punished in Nigeria, decency, lawfulness and straight-dealing will always elude the country".

The paper went on to say that: The Leadership that is needed has to be one that can fearlessly confront those who benefit from the confusion that exists in Nigeria.

The leadership must democratize access to resources without favour to any. Technology is one of the ways in which such democratization can take place. Education is basic to the use of the new generation of industrial evolution. The leadership that a country like Nigeria needs must confront those who manipulate the system to darken the day of ordinary people and mess their nights with terror and hunger.

Only the leadership that can confront those who gamble with the lives of ordinary people and call them to order, no matter where they come from in the country can speak of achievements. Only the leadership that can refuse the stretched hands of thieves and robbers (whether armed or pen robbers) and hooligan and I do not find it in me to shake your hand can claim to achieve anything in Nigeria."

Leaders who are self-centered who are only interested in those of their political party and in their kith and kin and neglect the interest and wellbeing of others cannot make for a balanced development and progress in our society. Our prayer is that God will give us Christian leaders who are broadminded whose motto will be “love your neighbour as you”.

The recent utterances of some of our past leaders raises the question of whether they really have the interest of the nation at heart. For them to make statements that will tear the country apart or peach one religious group against another marks them out as enemies of the nation and not fathers of the nation.

The nation of Nigeria is passing through another trying period. It is unfortunate that those who are in authority cannot defend the constitution of the land and this is leading us into a lawless society. Let us at this time rise up once more to seek the face of God in prayer as the only hope we have as a nation is to resign our fate to God who alone can salvage us from destruction, for He says in II Chron. 7:14, “If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land”.

### **THE SYNOD THEME: “PRESSING FORWARD”. (Philippians 3:12-14)**

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But on 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 heaven-ward in Christ Jesus.

Paul describes the Christians life as a race which people run in order to win a prize, which in this case is eternal life or the kingdom of God or heaven. Jesus in his own teaching likened the kingdom of heaven to a hidden treasure which when found one is prepared to sacrifice all else in order to possess it.

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Philippians, Paul expresses his profound joy and happiness in coming to the full knowledge of Christ and some of his past life which he thought was full of achievements and worldly successes which can make one proud as worth nothing when compared with the new life in Christ. In Philippians 3:7-9 he said “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ ... I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things ... that I may gain Christ and be found in him.”

Paul had a goal, determination which he stated in verses 10 – 11 “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death,”

This was his ambition in life which he was convinced that he has not achieved hence he made the statement of our theme “I press on”, or “press forward”

The question we ought to ask ourselves is whether we have any ambition in life? Has life any meaning to you? Are you just drifting along, loving without an objective? Do you set out on a journey without any fixed destination? Then you are a vagrant or a wanderer. Some of us are like that of our Christian life, but as Christians we are not supposed to be like that.

Being ambitious is not sin as some people may think. For instance Shakespeare in Henry VIII charged Thomas Cromwell and said “Cromwell, charged thee, fling away ambition: By that sin fell the angels”. From our message in Philippians we see that Paul was fiercely ambitious. Ambition is the desire to succeed. Before Paul was converted to Christianity he was fiercely ambitious to persecute the church of Christ.

Galatians 1:13-14 “You have been told how I used to live when I was devoted to the Jewish religion, how I persecuted without mercy the church of God and did my best to destroy

it. I was ahead of most fellow Jews of my age in my practice of the Jewish religion, and was much more devoted to the traditions of our ancestors.”

After his conversion his zeal or ambition did not change, rather it was redirected. Its focus was altered and he became even more ambitious. He then describes himself in our theme as an athlete desperate to win a race (cf: 1 Corinthians 9:23-27).

“All this I do for the gospels sake in order to share in its blessings. Surely you know that many runners take part in a race, but only one of them wins the prize. Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline, in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but we do it for one that will last forever. That is why I run straight for the finishing line; that is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches. I harden my body with blow and bring it under complete control, to keep myself from being disqualified after having called others to the contest.”

What is the driving force of your life? What ambition dominates and directs you? There are ultimately only two controlling ambitions to which all other may be reduced.

- (i) Our own glory
- (ii) The glory of God

**(i) OUR OWN GLORY:**

When we focused on our own glory we tend to be proud of our achievements in life. We boast about our wealth or academic attainment. We are selfish and some do not even believe in God. Those who believe in God at all will think that they will gain God’s state before his conversion. 1 Corinthians 4:7 says “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”

**(ii) THE SECOND IS FOCUSING ON GOD’S OWN GLORY:**

When we think of God’s own glory we are thinking of Jesus centred ambition. Ambition centred in knowing Jesus and in spreading his good news. Philippians 3:10.

To know means far more than intellectual knowledge (unfortunately some of us do not even have that intellectual knowledge – we only have head knowledge. We have simply heard about a man called Jesus). To know includes personal knowledge and that is the most important. A personal encounter with the risen Lord, Paul’s ambition was not just to know about Christ but to know him as a person. That ought to be our ambition.

- (i) To know the power of his resurrection. Romans 8:11.
- (ii) Knowing Christ involves fellowship in sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death.  
Paul of course did not go about seeking for suffering but he sees it as inevitable in the Christian race. (cf our Christian brothers and sisters in the North).
- (iii) Knowing Christ means sharing his destiny. i.e. to attain the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:11.

Paul’s desire to share with Christ made him see himself as an athlete competing to win a prize, hence his statement in Philippians 3:13-14. One thing I do ...

There are three parts to this one thing.

- (i) I forget the ground I have covered in the race. 1 Corinthians 9:23-27.  
I cannot waste time over the past.
- (ii) I reach out to that which is before me in the race, I strain every nerve and muscle and use every ounce of my strength to win. My future depends on it. I am running the race of life and therefore cannot afford to toy with my Christian commitment.

***[I am running the race to meet my redeemer (Dc)]***

- (iii) I press towards the mark vs 14, that is, I pursue the white line in the stadium upon which all runners must keep their eyes fixed, lest I be disqualified for the prize.

In other words one must keep the rules of the game. To win in the Christian race, our Christian norms must be maintained.

1. **Pressing on in our holiness of life:** Heb. 12:14f. “Try to be at peace with everyone, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it.
2. **Pressing on in equitable giving or our stewardship:** Deut. 16:17 “Then celebrate the Feast of Week to the Lord your God by giving a free-will offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you.

Many of us in this part of the country have not actually given in proportion to the blessings they receive from God. And God called such people robbers or thieves who are robbing and stealing what belongs to him, Malachi 3:8-10.

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, how did we rob you? In tithe and offerings ... Bring the whole tithe into the store house that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessings that you will not have room enough for it.” See also Mark 14:8, 2Corinthians 9:6-8.

3. **Pressing on in true Worship:** John 4:24 “God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship him in spirit and in truth”

The controlling principle in our worship must be obedience to the spirit – no matter where he leads us. Worship which is initiated by the Spirit is always of the spirit by the spirit and in the spirit. Of the spirit refers to those who have been brought to the new birth; by the spirit describes what these reborn people are able to do – they serve God under the impulse of the Spirit. They pray as the spirit leads. Eph. 6:18. “Do all this in prayer, asking for God’s help. Pray on every occasion as the spirit leads.” It is only when we are led by the spirit that we can do God’s will and be his true ambassadors in this world.

4. **Pressing on Under hard or difficult conditions:** Many Christians easily succumb under pressure or temptations and they deny their faith. Some modern preachers do not help the issue by making people believe that once you believe in and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour then all problems are gone. James 1:2-4 says “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of any kind, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” We cannot share of Christ’s glory without sharing in his suffering. 1Peter 2:21 says, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” Heb. 5:8 says “He learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” When suffering or persecution comes on our way let us not begin to wonder what we have done to deserve suffering, although some sufferings may be as a punishment for sin. We ought to praise God even in our suffering and accept it as a cross we have to bear even as St. Paul. If we praise God in a trials and sufferings our burdens will turn into blessings. Matthew 5:10-12. “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you

because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

5. **Pressing on in Evangelism and Church Planting:** Last year our Synod theme was “Called to Live and Proclaim the Good News”. The Christians are called to go and make disciples of all the nations of the world. We deliberated extensively on the topic and then we were told to return to our churches, Parishes and Archdeaconries and implement the injunction. There are areas within the Diocese where the Anglican Church has not been firmly rooted. We think about some areas in Uduledem and Uda Parishes that are near the border. Places in Aku Parish around Adada and some other places. We thank the EFAC and some other churches like St. Paul’s Cathedral and St. Mark’s Obukpa for their efforts in planting some new churches.

Let us know that it is our responsibility whenever we shall be called upon to go and support these infant churches. Our support will include being physically present during evangelistic outreach or giving financial support to help those going out to do the work or both. Isaiah 52:7 says “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

#### **ADMISSIONS AND CONFIRMATION WITHIN THE PERIOD**

The table below speaks for itself. Since the last Synod we have admitted 111 candidates into the Girls’ Guild, 105 women to Women’s Guild, 60 women to Mothers Union, 2484 candidates have been confirmed 642 males and 1742 females.

Preparations for these admissions and their examinations should be taken more seriously. Only candidates who understand what they are doing, who show true commitment, pass the examination and fulfill all the necessary conditions will be presented for admissions and confirmation.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Once more I thank you for all support and encouragement since the creation of this our Diocese.

As we look forward to the celebration of our tenth Anniversary let us ask God for renewed zeal and commitment. Let us rather press forward to greater heights looking to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.

**ADMISSIONS AND CONFIRMATION WITHIN THE PERIOD**

Date	Church	Confirmation		Girls' Guild	W.G.	M.U.
		Male	Female			
8/10/2000	St. John's Parish, Edem	43	89	7	6	2
15//10/2000	St. John's Lejja, Ozalla Parish	31	76	6	2	1
22/10/2000	Emmanuel Church, Unadu	22	66	-	3	3
12/11/2000	Fed. Govt. Coll. Lejja	2	97	-	-	-
3/12/2000	St. Andrew's Ikem	16	30	3	1	-
10/12/2000	All Saints' Obollo-Afor	13	47	3	4	-
14/12/2000	St. James' Church, Isu Eha-Amufu Parish	70	129	19	12	5
15/12/2000	St. Mary's Church, Mbu	14	28	3	-	-
17/12/2000	St. Paul's Church, Uda	8	63	5	7	7
1/4/2001	St. Stephen's Umulokpa	13	32	6	1	-
29/4/2001	St. Andrew's Adani	5	20	-	-	1
3/6/2001	St. Paul's Cathedral	58	93	9	8	7
10/6/2001	St. Mary's Iheakpu-Awka	50	127	1	6	2
24/6/2001	Christ Church, U.N.N.	36	27	-	4	2
1/7/2001	St. Stephen's Eha-Alumona	52	99	7	4	7
22/7/2001	St. John's Edem	40	98	4	8	7
5/8/2001	St. Mark's Obukpa	20	52	6	4	3
9/8/2001	St. Luke's Amufie	16	80	8	18	2
12/8/2001	St. Bartholomew's Amachalla	5	69	5	10	3
19/8/2001	St. Philip's Ozalla	38	106	-	7	5
26/8/2001	Emmanuel Church, Unadu	26	84	46	20	2
2/9/2001	St. Mary's Opi	35	124	7	5	1
9/9/2001	St. Thomas' Aku	29	106	7	5	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1742</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>60</b>

**The Rt. Rev. Dr. J. C. Ilonuba**  
*Bishop*