

# CHURCH OF NIGERIA

## (Anglican Communion)

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

### **PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) HELD FROM MONDAY, 8TH TO FRIDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2021, AT THE ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL CHURCH, ONITSHA, IN THE DIOCESE ON THE NIGER, ANAMBRA STATE**

Dear People of God,

We bring you greetings in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Amen.

The Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) held from Monday, 8th to Friday, 12th February, 2021 at the All Saints Cathedral Church, Onitsha, Diocese on the Niger, Anambra State. The theme was, "COSTLY COMMITMENT: THE IMPERATIVE IN FOLLOWING CHRIST" (LUKE 9:23).

The idea that God uses ordinary, broken human beings as vessels of his grace, and delights in us is not only awe-inspiring, it is something we must be thankful to Him for. However, Christ demands genuine commitment from these vessels and those who are his followers. This is not possible without the willingness to pay some price. The theme and the text of the Standing Committee addressed this issue.

The Text drawn from Luke 9, a very rich chapter in the New Testament. There we see Jesus Christ sending the twelve Disciples on Mission. He CALLED them and GAVE them power and authority over demons and to cure/heal diseases. Then He SENT them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He also instructed them on what was expected of them. Jesus Christ said to them "take nothing for the journey". Stay in the home that receives you. Expect rejection from the people but know that there are consequences for rejecting the Gospel and those who serve God. Jesus Christ demanded, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" – Luke 9:23. There are three major demands that arise from this. Firstly, the desire to follow shall be a response of a whole life from the heart; secondly is the demand "Take up his cross daily" and third demand for Total costly commitment is His call, "Follow me." To this end we cannot relent in our efforts to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth in His name. May the Lord himself help us to be faithful at this.

Page 1 of 4

### **ST MATTHIAS HOUSE:**

Plot 942, Ibrahim Waziri Crescent CAD Zone B01, Gudu District, P.O. Box 212, ADCP Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.,  
Tel: 08037007270 | Email: [episcopalhouseabuja@gmail.com](mailto:episcopalhouseabuja@gmail.com) | Website: [www.anglican-nig.org](http://www.anglican-nig.org)

The Church of Nigeria Missionary Society (CNMS) is being repositioned to assist the Church in achieving this. It will be built into both a Mission Agency and Institution. Her core mandate will be “to evangelize, disciple and plant churches among the identified unreached peoples. Recruit, train, and send Missionaries in the country and areas of need across the continent and the world”. The thrust of this Mission will largely centre around African countries but also to other parts of the world. Our desire is that the Church of Nigeria shall intentionally stir up the Universal Church unto World Mission and take the lead in preparing the Church for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The youth are not left out. A taskforce on the Children and Youth Mission of the Church of Nigeria was inaugurated during the Divine Commonwealth Conference in November, 2020. The aim is to galvanise a Children and Youth Mission that will mobilize our young people to be committed to the Word, Prayer, Worship, Witness and Outreach. We desire that God will raise from amongst them, a Joshua Generation that God will use to reach the rest of that generation for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Maiden Youth Mission Conference will hold from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Theme is *LIVING WITH A PURPOSE (ROM. 8:27-30)*. Prominent servants of God will be ministering to the Youth. We request for your prayers and support to make this conference a success. There will be Pre-Conference Regional Mobilization Meetings. It is estimated that four Thousand Youths will attend and we are budgeting N10,000.00 per person in running the Conference. We enjoin all to pray along, while Dioceses and individuals are encouraged to sponsor delegates.

St. Matthias Collection continues to be a great source of funding for helping to grow some of our Dioceses and the different bodies that are beneficiaries in driving the work of mission in their different contexts. We appreciate the Dioceses for their contribution and urge every member of the Church to participate in the same. We plead with Dioceses to faithfully remit their collections. The next collection would be on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021. The Bishops during the Retreat at Agbarha Otor resolved that in the meantime, the St. Matthias Fund will be used to meet the needs of the weaker Dioceses, Organizations and Institutions of the Church of Nigeria. Education and Human Development also remain integral parts of the Mission of the Church. Dioceses and Provinces are encouraged to continue and expand their work and investment in education at all levels from Nursery to Tertiary education. The Ph.D Scholarship programme, which is funded by the St Matthias Collection, will continue as a way of training the Clergy and empowering future leaders of the Church and Society.

A new constitution was approved at the last General Synod in September, 2020. It is now in use and we encourage Diocese and Provinces to enlighten the parishioners on the 2020 Constitution of the Church of Nigeria in conjunction with their legal officers for easy understanding of its contents and workings.

On the national scene, we want to continue to call on the Church not to shrink from the demand of Jesus Christ in the face of the unabated attack and destruction of human life and property that we are currently experiencing in our nation. The abduction, wanton killings, and other evil acts are glaring. There seems to be no respect for human dignity anymore as human lives are terminated indiscriminately almost daily in Nigeria by fellow human beings. We must seek the face of God concerning this despicable act of man's inhumanity to man in our nation and we must continue to trust God to raise a leadership after His own heart for our nation.

We counsel that we must all perform our civic duties by ensuring that as the General Elections come up in 2023, we see it as divine opportune time for the citizens to exercise their right to choose their leaders. Politics is God given process in the ordering of His world and society. Politics is not dirty as has been perceived by some people in the past, even though some people have hijacked the political processes for their personal agenda. We encourage all citizens to be involved in the political process of our States and Nation. Christians should register in any Party of their choice and be involved in the activities of the Party from the Ward level to the National.

There is beauty in unity. Jesus passionately prayed that His followers would be one (John 17:21). Therefore, there is a need to move as a National Church in our use of the tools that have been provided for leading worship amongst us. Dioceses are encouraged to use of the Church of Nigeria Book of Common Prayers; the Hymnal; the Bible Study Outline and other publications of this Church. We encourage our Regional Translators to commence full translations of these publications into Nigerian languages for the use of our people. Therefore, we must endeavour to see that our growth and expansion is not as a result of conflict. During the General Synod in September, 2020, the existing Moratorium on the creation of Dioceses, whether Full-fledged or Missionary Diocese, was extended by three years. This will be reviewed at the next General Synod. A Committee has been put in place to set the modalities and requirements for the creation of Dioceses. This Committee will submit their report in the next September Standing Committee meeting so that the guidelines will be clearly spelt out.

On the global stage, the Coronavirus continues to ravage the world, especially with the reported cases of its mutation, and different parts of the world announcing a second wave as cases surge. The Church of God must rise up to these challenges spiritually in fasting and prayer, not leaving out socio-educational actions. More so, the poor health care delivery in our country offers us a great opportunity for Compassionate Ministry. The Church needs to play more key roles in the Health Care delivery of this Nation. To this end, we urge our Dioceses and Provinces to establish Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Technology. The training of health professionals must be a Mission to rescue our Health Care and nurture the Youth in professions that will put them in service to humanity in or outside of Nigeria.

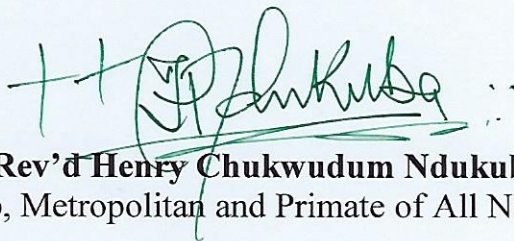
We commiserate with all who lost their dear ones. In the period under review we lost some fathers in God namely, the late Rt. Rev. Jacob Ajetumobi (retired Bishop of Ibadan South Diocese), Rt. Rev. Foluso Taiwo (Diocese of Oke Osun), Rt. Rev. Godson Echefu (retired bishop of Ideato) and Lady Grace Iwuagwu (Wife of retired Bishop of Aba). We commiserate with the family of the late Dr. G.T.N. Ajakpo (the Galadima of Lokoja) the former Chairman of the CON Relief Committee and member of the ACNN Governing Board, and some other Church officials in our Dioceses. May God comfort their families. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in perfect peace.

We thank the Rt. Rev. Dr. Owen and Dr. Mrs. Elsie Nwokolo and the Diocese on the Niger for hosting the Standing Committee. God will reward our members and bless the Diocese. We also appreciate the Most Rev Dr. Alex and Mrs Martha Ibezim for their support during the Standing Committee. On behalf of the Church of Nigeria, we express our profound gratitude to the Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas and Mama Nkasiobi Okoh for the bold and godly leadership they sacrificially gave to the Church of God. Their legacies will be sustained and in their retirement they will enjoy robust health. We thank all our retired fathers in faith who were present and assure them of our prayers and support. We also appreciate all our Committees and Taskforces for your labour of love for the Church of God.

As we conclude, we need to remind ourselves again that genuine COMMITMENT to the Lord and the pursuit of kingdom growth must of necessity cost the true disciple something. As true disciples, we must recognise that though we live in the world, we have been called not to conform to the standard of the world (Rom 12:2) but as people with the citizenship of Heaven (Philippians 3:20) we are called to set our minds on things above, and be transformed by the renewal of our minds (Col. 3:1-2; Rom. 12.1). God's goal is for us as disciples to be made into the image of Christ our Master, this is only possible if we are willing to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily to follow Him.

May the grace of God be with you all; Amen.

Your Most Reverend Father in God,



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