

THE MOTION FOR THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FOURTH SYNOD OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ABA NGWA NORTH THIS FRIDAY 12TH OCTOBER, 2018

My Lord Bishop, and Mama Aba Ngwa North, Princess Mrs. Odionyenfe Kanu, may I express my profound gratitude to you and thank you and the members of the synod planning committee for giving me this rare and unmerited privilege to propose the motion for this third session of the fourth synod of the Anglican Diocese of Aba Ngwa North. May I state here, that I do not see myself as being near qualified, not to talk of being qualified to be given this responsibility. Be it as it may, I would only try to attempt to make a scratch in proposing the synod motion, considering the significance of the topic and the vital role expected of the church as the last and only hope of the people and nation both spiritually and physically. In the light of this, therefore, I humbly request that I be tolerated in all my shortcomings.

For the past nine years, in the episcopate of the Rt. Rev. Nathan C.O Kanu Phd, this Diocese has taken a stand which is illustrated in the themes exploited over these years. These are:-

- 1. Building On The Sure Foundation**
- 2. You Will Be Rewarded**
- 3. Be Your Brother's Keeper**
- 4. For We Are Brothers**
- 5. Hypocrisy A Thorn On The Flesh**
- 6. If I Were The Only Salt: How Would The World Taste?**
- 7. When The Light Fails To Shine**
- 8. How Are The Mighty Fallen, Must We Continue Like This?**
- 9. The Vending Machine God: Who Changed The Gospel?**

Going through these themes that were exhaustively and convincingly treated with highly level scholarly touch, we are left in no doubt as to whether or not the diocese has taken a stand. A clear stand has been taken, but the desired result has not been achieved hence this year's theme with its demand.

The synod theme **"DON'T JUST TAKE A STAND; MAKE A MOVE"** is not just a theme. It is a clarion call, a command that requires action because of the urgency it deserves. This theme has been yearning for action for a long time

especially in this 21st century, when things have not only fallen apart, but the gap continues to widen on daily basis. Our value system has been grossly eroded. The society, of which the church is a part has sacrificed the values including God's statues on various altars of all kinds of immorality, injustice, idolatry, high level materialism, unwanton destruction of human lives, and financial recklessness in high places. People have become so cruel, heartless, barbaric, inhuman and sadistic that the love of self is waxing stronger by the day. All facets of our lives have been greatly affected and infected by this hostile and wicked environment. Meritocracy has been kicked out of office, while mediocrity is occupying the high places. Each passing day presents its own tales of woes, ranging from family disintegration to general societal anarchy; yet there are men and women sitting, watching and seeing things degenerate to a crisis stage and doing nothing. What a national tragedy!

It is said that "evil triumphs when good men do nothing". This axiom has not only been demonstrated in many quarters but has become a way of life for many. This has lent credence to the Igbo equivalent "Aruru ala mgbaa afo, ya agho omenala". It is not that people do not acknowledge that evil is evil, but they lack the moral courage to correct it as they are either perpetrators or beneficiaries of the same evil. We are all casualties.

In the book 'The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born' by the Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah, he x-rayed the level of corruption and ungodliness in the country and portrayed it in such a manner that the stench of rottenness of the country could be smelt, felt and even touched from a distance. This is not different from what is happening today in our country in particular and the world at large, that is populated by Christians and non-Christians.

In such a situation pregnant with pain and suffering, Armah created a character simply called "The Man." The character was not so to say corrupt but he could stand and watch people getting deeply involved in corruption on daily basis, yet he did nothing to stop the corruption. When the cleansing wind blew, he was not left behind. 'The man' was destroyed alongside the corrupt people.

The image of 'The Man' is what is seen in our churches today. The number of churches in our villages and major cities and the rapidity at which they spring up simply suggests that it is not only the many called and the few chosen, but the

uncalled have called and chosen themselves for a different purpose. For instance China produces two million engineering students every year. Africa on the other hand produces 10 million pastors every year and yet witches are still disturbing. This accounts for the reason things are getting worse everyday when many people think that the presence of so many churches and pastors would help curb the rate of crime and corruption, and restore high spiritual life and make the people happy. Some of the leaders of some 'Churches' have cashed in on the gullibility of the unsuspecting members and have duped them, ruined so many families who look up to them for spiritual guidance. They promise them protection but move about in convoys of fully armed policeman, for their own safety. What an irony!

What do we say of other agencies of social change like the school? The rate at which 'schools' spring up on daily basis should have ensured high level discipline, sound and efficient academic and moral standard in the society. No! that is not their mission. It is another business venture, the major aim of which is to make money at the detriment of the society. A School could be established anywhere. A one-room apartment could serve as a school housing from crèche to Senior Secondary without space for physical development. Yet, they are all approved. The higher in situations are something else. Many of the students are turned out either half-baked or not baked at all. The result is exactly what we get. Theories and theories are propounded, yet nothing gets done properly. Meetings, seminars and conferences are held in many quarters. Committees and commissions charged with various responsibilities are set up yet to no avail. The same result is achieved-talking and talking and holding more talks.

The political arena has been filled to the brim with men and women of many words. Empty promises are repeated every four years and nothing gets done. Injustice everywhere. Elections are rigged openly. Money meant for the masses is stolen by a few. Many of them are worse than human ritualists. All, the people do is to complain and suffer all manner of pain, hopelessness and deprivation.

This situation reminds me of the colonial era when Europe scrambled and partitioned Africa. The area colonized and governed by France introduced their Assimilation Policy which was to erode African values and subject the people to perpetual poverty and servitude. This raised agitations amongst the Blacks and

gave rise to the Negritude Movement spearheaded by the Late Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal. The movement contributed greatly in making it possible for those countries to gain their independence. But after independence, the Blacks were busy cataloguing the woes inflicted on them by the whites after many years. That is our lot today. We have taken a stand and we are only busy complaining.

In Nigeria, so many years after independence, we are not making the desired progress; instead, we are blaming the whites and their cohorts. This led to the introduction of another movement by the renowned Nigerian playwright, poet and novelist, Prof Wole Soyinka. This movement was called 'Tigritude' It tried to say that "a tiger does not shout or proclaim its "Tigritude".

It does not stand in the forest and say 'I am a tiger, don't come near' It acts, pounces and demonstrates that a tiger is around. Action is what is needed now if we as Christians must enjoy a peaceful, united and godly society.

Rev. 3:16 says:

"so then because thou art

Lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,

I will spue thee out of my mouth;

This was God's pronouncement to the Laodiceans. At this point it may be necessary to have a brief history of Laodicea. It was a town in the Roman Province of Asia situated in the valley of the Maeander, on a small river called Lycus. It was built by one of the Seleucid Monarchs and named in honour of the Monarch's wife. Under the Roman government, it became a place of importance as it flourished in trade and business activities. It was also one of the early centres of Christianity. The Church was established in the Apostolic Age and is probably known for being one of the seven churches in Asia addressed by name in the book of Revelation (**Rev 3:14-22**)

In John's vision recorded in the book of Revelation. Christ instructs John to write a message to the seven Churches in Asia Minor. The message to Laodicea is one of judgement with a call to repentance. As recorded in (**Rev. 3:15 &16**)

*"I know they works, that thou art neither cold or hot:
I would thou wert cold or hot so then because thou art
Lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out
Of my mouth.*

The Loadiceans were being criticized because of their neutrality or lack of zeal. Hence the use of the word 'lukewarm; As a result of their attitude, the Mohammedan invaders destroyed it and is now a scene of utter destruction as was prophesied in Rev. 3:14-22 Laodicea is now in the present Turkey.

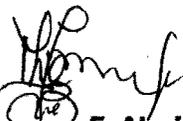
This makes it clear that lukewarmness does not make for progress instead attracts rejection. As Christians, the body of Christ, we are not expected to stand, complain and murmur at the face of the prevailing situations of stinking corruption, high grade immorality, idolatry and all forms of spiritual harlotry and ungodliness. Churches should rise to their responsibility as the only hope of salvaging our souls, the country and the world at large. Actions are needed if we don't want to go into extinct. Just like Wole Soyinka opined in his book 'The Man' Died.

*"The man dies in all
Who keep silent at
The face of tyranny'*

We can no longer keep aloof and watch. In our various places and positions, we should rise to the occasion, harnessing all available human and material resources to bring about the desired changes in our families, churches, communities, states and country.

When we exploit our God-given gifts and put them into use, we would surely make our 'light shine before men' to the glory of God. Christian politicians should be encouraged so as to help in bringing the desired changes. It is a known fact that one cannot change a system from outside. All Christian groups should rise and launch a total war against of forms moral decadence and other societal vices:

A nation or state where a particular group is the colonialist while the others are the colonized, where the system of government is based on deception and corruption, where innocent children are burnt and massacred in cold blood, where the masses wallow in a state of abject poverty and many die of starvation and the church stays, watches and complains, things would never get better. There is therefore a call for us to rise and 'conquer' this environment and restore peace, hope, godliness and make the people rejoice. In the light of the above therefore, being in total agreement with the synod theme, I move the motion that the church – the only hope of the people - should not only take a stand, but make a move to release and extricate us (the Society) from the present spiritual, economic and political quagmire before we are totally destroyed like the Laodiceans.



Ihezue F. Nwigwe