

**SECONDING THE MOTION OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE  
FOURTH SYNOD OF ABA NGWA, NORTH DIOCESE THIS 13<sup>TH</sup>  
DAY OF OCTOBER, 20.17, AT ST. THOMAS CHURCH'  
UMUAKPARA BY CHUKWUDI CHIBUZOR'ESQ.**

***PROTOCOL:***

May I with unmitigated humility and exhilaration thank my Lord the Bishop of Aba Ngwa North Diocese; the Rt. Rev. Nathan C. O. Kanu and Mama Aba Ngwa North Princess Mrs. Odionyenfe Kanu for considering me worthy under whatever circumstances to perform this auspicious assignment which I consider the reserve of the accomplished and illustrious. To God be the glory.

**THE SYNOD THEME: THE VENDING' MACHINE GOD? WHO' CHANGED THE GOSPEL? LUKE 9:23, ACTS 14:22**

**THE SYNOD MOTION:**

Adopted as presented in the main motion paper.

Our Synod theme this year is a double barreled question that is insightfully thought out, necessitating a synod motion that is well crafted and ably moved' with erudite sophistication and having carefully listened to the Synod Motion, I Chukwudi Chibuzor Esq. stand to second the said motion, but in so doing, I feel strongly, compelled to make a moderate, input into the discourse. I' agree with the reasoning and submissions in the main motion paper and adopt same into this paper"

It is mostly incontrovertible that the state at which the gospel of Christ in our times is being distorted and diluted in its packaging and delivery is worrisome. A situation where the Gospel is today presented almost as nothing but a mere meal ticket, a scratch card for prosperity, claim it and have it, a butter arid bread Christianity, miracle/prosperity merchandise, and all forms of absurdities. In so doing God tends to be' reduced to a mere vending machine that has no option but to satisfy our immediate selfish demands or become, irrelevant

It is in our days that we see a preacher mount up the podium and boast that If God does not do a particular thing he has prayed for; he will tear his bible and stop serving God. (What an error). For a clearer appreciation of the issue in discuss, a vending machine is an ' automated machine that provides items such as snacks, beverages, lottery tickets, alcohol etc. to consumers after money or credit card is inserted into the machine.

Observe from this brief explanation about a vending machine that

(1) It is manmade; God is not a machine; He is Almighty. (2) It is automated (has an inbuilt mechanism that constrains it to work that way. God is not static He is dynamic, and not controlled, by anything, He decides what to do and what not to do, when to do a thing or when not to do a thing (3) Vending machines spoil and are serviced/maintained. God 'is' ever working, ever able and not maintainable (4) Vending machines become out dated and are modernized; God is the same yesterday, today and forever, He does not change.

From the approach of many a modern day self styled pastors, evangelists, preachers, Bishops" General Overseers, Apostles, Prophets et al, it does appear that God has lost his right of choice and so must be compelled to bless or prosper the customer like a vending machine. Once a customer sows the seed; makes that fat offering or drops the gift at the prophet's feet. For instance, I once heard one so caned Preacher 'make the following comment while promoting an offering and I quote him *"Even if you don't have faith, whether you believe the word of God or not, in-fact you don't even need faith for the miracle to occur; once you sow this seed or make this 'fat' offering, that problem is over, you will never see poverty again in your life. God must do it and I repeat God must do it*

Brethren, did you observe the repetition of the word "God must do it?" Does that statement leave God with an option than to respond? What a monument of lies. Again, just last week, I saw this prayer on face book, the author said, *"The last time I prayed this prayer, lots of people received shocking miracles, I pray for your phones, you will receive alerts of monetary favour, and e-mails of favour. Just type amen, and 'share.*" Then I ask which God will answer that prayer? Your ATM machine God? That does nothing but distribute favour to those who type amen even without a relationship with Him. These are some of the clear, apparent and manifest negations of biblical principles of the gospel in our days.

When we perceive our prayers and gifts or monetary donation~ as inputs that are expected to produce a known output, we reduce God to a mere machine, and it then sounds like God is a vending machine -**which He is not**. We need to reiterate the fact that our transaction with God is more of a spiritual transaction, as opposed to a financial transaction. A financial transaction is a treasure on earth, while a spiritual transaction is a treasure stored in heaven. In our dealings with God, what we give either monetarily or by service is a spiritual investment that will serve God's purpose first and not ours. Our gifts and offerings are expressions of our worship acknowledging God's sovereignty over our lives not money lent to God to provoke God to bless, us 'sharp sharp'. When I pray to convince God to see things my 'way and to grant my request instantly, have I thought of his will? Should my prayer change God's will or should God change the way I pray or see things?

It is also of paramount importance to point out here, that the place of suffering in the gospel agenda cannot be compromised and or deleted as today's Pentecostalism largely leans to. Some teach that suffering is anathema and not meant for a Christian. Nothing can be further from the truth. Jesus our Lord, in Luke 9:23 taught that the first step to be a Christian is to deny self and take up the cross. Apostle Paul who also is my learned senior colleague in 2Tim. 3: 12 said that *"if we suffer, we reign with him*, and 2Tim. 2:12. He said that all who will, live Godly lives will suffer persecution and very importantly in Phil. 1:27&29; He reminds us that "it is given for us (Christians) on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe but to suffer for him. And as Acts 14:22 says through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. From these cited scriptures, it is evident that suffering is one of the cardinal contents of Christianity.

From the foregoing, one may ask whether it is totally wrong to say that God prospers His children. In answer to that, I think and say No! God actually prospers His Children, in fact in the 3<sup>rd</sup> epistle of John in verse 2 we are told that God wishes that we prosper and be in health even as our souls prosper (KJV). But financial or physical prosperity **is not and must never** be made pivotal reason to serve God. We must worship God for who He is and not merely for what we gain from Him.

The emphasis in this theme as I consider it, is that the gospel is one i.e the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is whole and complete and in it, there is

prosperity, miracles, suffering for the sake of Christ and most importantly the ultimate salvation of the soul. Any attempt to segment and compartmentalize the gospel by laying emphasis on prosperity metamorphoses to a change of the gospel and this is akin to what is predominant in our days.

If indeed we have agreed that the gospel has been changed .by the deceitful handling and delivery of the word of God, who then changed the gospel? -Are you not involved? Am I not involved? When we seat at ease and do nothing, then we are part of them that changed the gospel. When our greed and impatience lures us to be deceived into acting contrary to divine principles because we want immediate answers to our prayers, we are part of those that changed the gospel. As our last year synod theme posits, **Must we continue 'like this? God forbid!**

People of Goo, it is my considered view and submission that to allow this trend of a changed and adulterated gospel to continue unabated is a suicidal mission for the faith of our fathers and will drag Christianity to the quandary.

Having made this little input, may I therefore with every sense of purpose, second the motion of second session of the fourth synod of the Diocese of Aba Ngwa North, calling for a return to the faith of our fathers that is anchored on the redemption of souls and the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. The faith that prevails through the realities of suffering, sacrifice and good work to the glory of God and the blessings of the church. The faith that believes that earthly blessing and fortunes are ad-ons that God gives as and when it pleases Him.

I so second the motion and hereby rest my case.

May it please the house and also please the Lord.