

# African archbishops chide Welby for virtue-signaling and with condoning 'evil by hiding behind endless prayer and discussion'

*[The] African Church fathers and Apologists such as Tertullian, Irenaeus, Augustine of Hippo and Athanasius, etc., stood gallantly to defend the Christian faith against Roman persecution and the different heresies and controversies that bedeviled the church, resulting in its consequent decline especially in North Africa and Asia Minor. The current controversy may have the same effect on the future of the Anglican Church tomorrow.*

By **Press Release** - June 13, 2022



10 June 2022

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury & The Most Reverend Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion

Your Graces,

## OUR RESPONSE TO YOUR LETTER DATED 27 MAY 2022

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 27th May 2022, which was a response to the joint statement issued by the Primates of Anglican Provinces of Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda, sequel to our decision not to attend the forthcoming Lambeth Conference. Ordinarily, we are disposed not to engage in further correspondences over the issues in contention, since the basic facts and positions surrounding the crisis in the Anglican Communion are already well-known. However, we are compelled to respond yet again to your letter in order to clarify some assumptions and statements therein.

1. We note your Grace's statement that: "The Bible is at the heart of Christian life. Anglicans hold to scripture as the ultimate authority in matters of faith, as the church has down the centuries". We believe that this fundamental fact should be applied to the rejection of homosexual lifestyle especially among Christians. The Church is an assembly of Believers who are "Called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:9); not a community that indulges unrepentant sinners. While Christians are sinners forgiven by grace, that grace must not be received in vain.

2. We are disturbed by Your Grace's statement that "There has always been disagreements on matters that affect the faith and life of the Church and, from the council of Jerusalem onwards, the way that the church has dealt with disagreements has been by prayerful discussion and listening to the views of those who differ ", because it is somewhat misleading. Sadly, it is an example of virtue-signaling that condones evil by hiding behind endless prayer and discussion, thereby giving the impression that what is really laudable is the discussion rather than the decision to obey the clear word of God on the pressing issue of human sexuality and marriage. Genuine Christian faith does not separate between the faith and the life of the believer.

3. It is noteworthy that the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was presided over by Apostle James; not Peter. Hence, the current debate over Anglican orthodoxy, biblical ethics and human sexuality may not ultimately be decided by the position of the Archbishop of Canterbury, despite his leadership position in the Communion. Faithful Anglicans, including those in GAFCON have a loud voice on this matter despite our resolve not to participate in the forthcoming Lambeth Conference. Our positions and those

of GAFCON and the Global South, have been clearly articulated severally, over the years; they are in the public domain.

4. Your letter acknowledged that "Resolution 1.10 of the Lambeth Conference of 1998 remains the latest expression of Anglican Communion teaching on the subject. It has not been rescinded". Tying this to a resolution against homophobia and discrimination against homosexual people" is unacceptable. Resolution 1.10 did not advocate recognizing homosexuality as an acceptable way of life, rather it simply presents homosexuals as candidates in need of pastoral care and evangelistic outreach. God, who literally destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their practice of homosexuality cannot ever permit accommodating such abominable practices in the Church of His Son, Jesus Christ. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Bible condemns homosexual behaviour. Consequently, standing with the Bible and correcting gay sex and same-sex relationships is not and should not be construed as discrimination against gay people. Insisting that the church of God adhere to the word of God in matters of human sexuality and marriage is not discriminatory by any stretch of imagination. Bishops are called to maintain Faith and Order in the Church. The fact that these self-declared practicing homosexual bishops are welcomed, tolerated and involved by the Archbishop of Canterbury to participate in the councils of the church is dishonoring to the Lord and undermines the integrity and mission of the church in the world. Our desire is that the Archbishop of Canterbury leads the Anglican Communion back to scripture in matters of human sexuality and marriage based on the glorious gospel of Christ.

5. We want to correct the impression that we are opposed to discussions on climate change by the Church. What we frown at is focusing on a climate change related topic- "God's Church for God's world" at the next Lambeth, while sweeping under the carpet, the reality of a fractured Communion, because of the serious issue of human sexuality. Any social gospel that completely ignores the issue of human sexuality within the God-given template is an aberration. While it is important to address issues of poverty, climate change and other social problems, we cannot ignore the main thing which is the church's responsibility, as the pillar of truth, to feed the people of God with the pure word of God. We have an obligation to proclaim Christ to the world.

6. We note Your Grace's statement that "Canterbury, or to be clear, the Church of England has not in any way changed its teaching on marriage or the place of sexual relations". We doubt if this claim can be justified by trends and moves by the Church of England in regard to blessing of same-sex marriages.

7. We disagree with Your Grace's view "that boycotts do not proclaim Christ". Rather, biblical precedents and precepts teach Believers not to 'join the multitudes to do evil' (Exodus 23:2). Right from the earliest Council in Acts 15, and other instances from the Epistles where there were reports of lifestyle in direct opposition to Scripture, there was no place where Christians were enjoined to continue to fellowship with the disobedient members of the Church. The admonition is to 'Come out of them' and 'Do not be unequally yoked together' (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Again, we reaffirm our position that, 'two cannot walk together unless they are agreed' (Amos 3:3).

Our dear Archbishop, we proudly recall the historical fact that in the Early Church era, African Church fathers and Apologists such as Tertullian, Irenaeus, Augustine of Hippo and Athanasius, etc., stood gallantly to defend the Christian faith against Roman persecution and the different heresies and controversies that bedeviled the church, resulting in its consequent decline especially in North Africa and Asia Minor. The current controversy may have the same effect on the future of the Anglican Church tomorrow. Just as the Church Creeds (Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian) served to remind the Christians of the biblical foundations of their faith, the GAFCON 'Jerusalem Statement' is commended

to the global Church of Christ as the way back to genuine Christian faith and indeed, Anglican Orthodoxy.

May the grace and wisdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, guide us aright in the Anglican Communion. Amen.

++Henry Ndukuba Laurent Mbanda ++Stephen Kaziimba

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