

## THE THEOLOGY OF EUCHARISTIC SACRAMENT AND OCCASIONAL RITES IN THE LITURGY AND SPIRITUALITY OF ANGLICAN CHURCH

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**ABSTRACT:** *This Paper has examined the Sacrament of Eucharist and Occasional Rites in the liturgy and spirituality of Anglican Church. The work explicated the theology, the administration and the spirituality of Eucharist to the Anglican Church. Occasional rites and homosexuality are also investigated. The objective of the work is to know the spiritual and liturgical implications of Eucharist and the occasional rites to the Anglican Church. The paper, having used exegetical and contextual approaches, discovered that Eucharist is memorial and explicatory in essence; and completely satisfying for the sins of believers in Christ. The work concluded with the recommendation that Anglican Church must not encourage the practice of rites that are unscriptural, abominable and sacrilegious. Hence, same-sex marriage must be eradicated from the church.*

**KEYWORDS:** Anglican Church, Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Matrimony, Penance.

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### INTRODUCTION

Sacrament is derived from the Latin word *Sacramentum*; the term was originally used as oath of enrolment to the Roman armies. But in the New Testament, it is used to describe mystery of Jesus' death.<sup>1</sup> Anglican liturgy defines sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace".<sup>2</sup> "It is a corporeal or material element offered to the senses, which from likeness represents, from institution signifies, and from consecration contains, some invisible and spiritual grace".<sup>3</sup> In short, Eucharistic Sacrament is a mysterious rite of a solemn covenant between the church and Jesus Christ as a means of spiritual grace.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (USA: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2006), 76.

<sup>2</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Order for Holy Communion or the Eucharist* (Lagos: CSS Bookshops Ltd, 1995), 624.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (USA: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2006), 76.

<sup>4</sup> The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition, (U.S.A: Standard International Media Holdings, 2012), 1106.

Anglican liturgy proclaims sacrament as a ritual worship that promotes intimate union with the divine and sufficient for salvation. It is “redemptive because they draw people into the fellowship in which salvation is found.”<sup>5</sup> The spiritual purposes of Eucharist to the Anglican are: First, it makes the church faithful to trust on the sufficiency of the sacrificial death of Jesus. Second, Eucharist is a symbolic ritual for the salvation of the faithful. Third, it serves as a connection between the invisible and visible objects given by Christ as means by which people can receive the grace. Fourth, it provides the ground for forgiveness and remission of sin; and fifth, Eucharist serves as a commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ.

### Anglican Liturgy and Spirituality

The uniqueness of Anglican Church is its liturgy. Liturgy, by definition refers to the patterns, forms, words, singing, dancing and actions by which worship to God is conducted. The Anglican liturgy conducted on Sunday morning is Matins, while the Sunday evening liturgy is Evensong. The daily early morning-prayer is known as Prayer-meeting. Anglican is a spiritual church, its spirituality reflects in the Seven Canonical Hours of Prayer which include:

- i. **Lauds:** A prayer observed at 12 midnight.
- ii. **Primes:** This is observed at 6am, the 1<sup>st</sup> hour of the day.
- iii. **Terse:** Observed at 9am, the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour of the day.
- iv. **Sext:** Observed at 12 noon, the 6<sup>th</sup> hour of the day.
- v. **Nones:** Prayer at 3pm, the 9<sup>th</sup> hour of the day.
- vi. **Vespers:** Prayer at 6pm, the 12<sup>th</sup> hour of the day.
- vii. **Compline:** Prayer observed at 9pm, the 15<sup>th</sup> hour of the day.

### The Anglican Eucharistic Theology

Eucharist is also known as Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper and Holy Sacrament. Eucharist forms part of love-feat (agape) being provided by the wealthy Christian to the poor and the needy. Because of the welfare aspect of Eucharist it was observed weekly and regularly. The Greek word *αναμνησις* (anamnesis) is the term used by the Lord Jesus in Luke 22:19. This word means, “Do this in remembrance of me”. Therefore, Anglican celebrates Eucharist as a commemorative offering in remembrance of Jesus Christ’s atonement.<sup>6</sup>

Eucharist, in the Anglican doctrine, points to the coming of the kingdom of God. It is to be noted that the Eucharist was instituted by Jesus at the Passover time when the Jews were commemorating their liberation from Egypt and they offered a lamb in thanksgiving to God. Jesus on this day of Passover instituted himself as the Passover Lamb who was sacrificed to

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<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), 507.

<sup>6</sup> Ferguson S.B and Wright D, *New Dictionary of Theology* (USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 238.

liberate humanity from sin. “The Supper took place on the same day as the crucifixion, according to Jewish reckoning. Jesus spoke and acted as someone already on his way to die.”<sup>7</sup> “He began to create a new agreement between God and mankind.”<sup>8</sup> When Anglican communicants take the bread and wine, they take the blessings arising from Jesus’ death. The celebration of Eucharist on regular basis is a renewal of the grace made available by Jesus Christ. So Jesus becomes present and available as the Anglican worshippers gather for Eucharist. However, the Catholic theology of “Real Presence of Jesus” in the Eucharist is rejected by the Anglican as too superstitious. Rather, Eucharist is considered as a memorial sacrament. When Jesus instituted the Eucharist “the appearances, the shape, color and taste of the bread and wine remained. Therefore, our Lord gave his Body and Blood to be received under the form of bread and wine.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, It is the opinion of Anglican that:

Christ is both encountered and incorporated. As such, the Eucharistic action looks backward as a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice, forward as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, and to the present as an incarnation of Christ in the lives of the community and of individual believers.<sup>10</sup>

In Anglican Church, participation in Eucharist is based on baptism and confirmation rites. Eucharistic rubrics of Anglican stipulate further that everyone intending to participate in the Eucharist must examine themselves, love their neighbors and repent of their sins. The Anglican Eucharistic rubrics operate on the concept of ‘lex orandi, lex credendi’ i.e. the law of prayer is the law of belief. For this reason, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer serves as the guiding manual for the celebration of Eucharist.

The Anglican theology of bread and wine is at variant with Catholic theology. The Catholic teaches that the bread and wine change to the actual Body and Blood of Jesus immediately the Priest offers the prayer of consecration. This theology is known as transubstantiation. However, the Anglican theology teaches that the bread and wine are a mere symbol of the physical Body and Blood of Jesus. This theology is referred to as consubstantiation. The bread and wine are visible signs of the invisible grace. The Anglican believes in the spiritual eating of Christ’s Body and Blood but not that the bread and wine itself will change to become Jesus in his real essence. The position of Anglican Church is that Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Communion’s elements (bread and wine) spiritually but not bodily or super-physically present. At the consecration, the bread and wine do not become fused or disappeared but remain the visible symbol of the crucified Body.

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<sup>7</sup> John Hargreaves, *A Guide to St Mark Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1989), 23.

<sup>8</sup> John Hargreaves, *A Guide to St Mark*.

<sup>9</sup> Federick J.K, *A Practical Commentary on Holy Scripture* (USA: Tan Books Publishers, 2003), 633.

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia, *Anglican Sacraments*, retrieved from [www.en.m.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.m.wikipedia.org). Last modified June 24, 2014.

The Body of Christ is signified and represented by bread; he had said formerly (Jn. 6:35), I am the bread of life, upon which metaphor this Sacrament is built, as the life of the body is supported by bread, which is therefore put for all bodily nourishment, so the life of the soul is supported and maintained by Christ's mediation.<sup>11</sup>

Anglican teaches that just as Jesus broke the bread so was his Body broken for us. That everyone who has broken the law, the commandment, the covenants, and the Words of God would receive the atonement for their sins. The wine Jesus gave to the disciples has explicatory meaning. Jesus said in Mt. 26: 28 "This is my Blood of the New Testament that was shed for you." In the Old Testament, the Blood of Jesus was represented with the blood of animals in atoning for sins. Now that the Blood of Jesus (human blood) has been shed; the New Testament represents it with wine, the blood taken from the grapevine. This Blood that was shed for the remission of sins:

Is to purchase forgiveness of sins for us. The redemption which we have through his Blood, is "the remission of sins" Eph. 1:7. The covenant which is procured and ratified by the Blood of Christ, is a charter of pardon, an act of indemnity, in order to a reconciliation between God and man; the atonement was made only for the children of Israel (Lev. 16:34): but Jesus Christ is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Administration of Eucharist in Anglican Liturgy**

In the administration of Eucharist the position of the priest is important. The Anglican Church maintains that the unworthiness of the priest would not defile the Sacrament. The article xxvi stipulates that:

Although in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacrament, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in

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<sup>11</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the whole Bible* (USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 1755.

<sup>12</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the whole Bible*.

hearing the word of God, and in receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished.<sup>13</sup>

The Anglican believes that the priest does not consecrate Eucharistic elements (bread and wine) on his own worth but on the name of Jesus Christ. He is just a channel through which people hear the Words of God and receive the consecrated elements which do not belong to him, but to Jesus. Hence, the efficacy of Christ's Sacrament cannot be removed by the misconduct or the unworthiness of the priest. What is most important is that the Sacrament is received faithfully and worthily by the communicants. But if wicked people take the Eucharist without repentance, they take it for their own damnation and peril.

Anglican teaches that the Eucharist is perfect, absolute and completely satisfying for the sins of believers in Christ. The church believes in one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross; and by this, no ritual or any sacrifice is allowed among the Anglican faithful.<sup>14</sup>

The Anglican priest who conducts Eucharistic service is called, President. He must be a priest and his principal roles in Eucharistic service include: Giving the opening greeting, reading the collect, giving absolution, rendering the Eucharistic prayer, performing the breaking of bread and consecrating the wine, receiving the elements first and pronouncing the final blessing.

### **Occasional Rites in Anglican Liturgy**

Apart from the Sacraments of the gospel (Baptism and Eucharist), there are five other occasional rites considered as lesser Sacraments in Anglican liturgy: These include:

#### **Reconciliation Rite**

The reconciliation rite is also called sacrament of Penance which is the reconciliation of the penitent to God. Penance is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ through which sin committed after baptism that is confessed is granted forgiveness through pronouncement of absolution. Penance is considered as "an outward sign instituted by Christ to impart grace to the soul. The grace conferred is deliverance from the guilt sin and, in the case of mortal sin, from eternal punishment."<sup>15</sup>

The first objection to the Sacrament of Penance was made by the Scribes when Jesus said to the sick your sins are forgiven. They condemned the Words of Jesus as blasphemy. Jesus, however, endowed the disciples with the power of Penance in Mat.16:19; Mat.18:18; and the early Church exercised this power. It must be emphasized that Penance is only applicable to

<sup>13</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer* (China: Nanjing Amity Printing Ltd, 2007), 494.

<sup>14</sup> The Church of England, *What is Confirmation*, retrieved from <https://www.churchofe>. Last modified date October 13, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia, *The Sacrament of Penance*, retrieved from [www.vewadvent.org](http://www.vewadvent.org). Last modified date January 12, 2015.

those who have been baptized: “No un-baptized person; however deep and sincere his sorrow, can be validly absolved. Baptism is the first essential requisite on the part of the penitent.”<sup>16</sup>

The practice in Anglican Church is that “those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.”<sup>17</sup> Anglican Church considers the sacrament of penance as a means of grace and it evolved in the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Penance enables the Anglican faithful to receive God’s mercy for a confessed sin which is committed after baptism.

The practice of penance can be traced to the beginning of the church up to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The early church obtained forgiveness of their casual sins through prayer, fasting and alms-giving. But those guilty of grave sins (such as violation of God’s law or turning man away from God) were excommunicated from the church; while sins like backsliding and dissention were made to be confessed in the open church in the presence of other believers. The individuals’ sins were confessed privately to the church’s leaders or the apostles who would then absolve the sinner with the laying on of hands to show true reconciliation with God.

In Anglican Church, before absolution, the penitent makes contrition for his sin. The contrition is a prayer of remorse for the sins committed. Anglican rubric provides that the prayer must be said after the priest with everyone humbling kneeling.

After the prayer the priest pronounces absolution. The tradition is that, the priest must not include himself in the absolution. He remains standing with his right hand lifted up towards the congregation. But, when a bishop is available in the service, the priest gives a self inclusive absolution. However, where there is no priest, a deacon or lay-reader could give absolution. But must be given on his kneel and should not lift up his hand towards the congregation.

In conclusion, the authority of the Anglican Church to give absolution is drawn from Jesus’ directive: “Received the Holy Spirit if you forgive anyone his sins they are forgiven, if you do not forgive them they are not forgiven.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it is the tradition of Anglican Church that the sacrament of penance should be observed at every service for the spiritual growth and grace through repentance and submission to God. In this way, believers are reenacted as children of God, reincorporated to the church and reunited with one another as neighbors.

### **The Holy Matrimony:**

Marriage is a life-long relationship and covenant between two opposite sexes, a man and a woman. Anglican insists that both parties in holy matrimony must be baptized Christians.<sup>19</sup> Matrimony is a sacrament not important for everyone and not required for salvation like baptism and Eucharist. God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden immediately after creation<sup>20</sup>. The reasons for the institution of marriage are: First, to allow multiplication of family through children which should be nurtured in the fear of God. God has sustained

<sup>16</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia, *The Sacrament of Penance*.

<sup>17</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer* (China: Nanjing Amity Printing Ltd, 2007), 494.

<sup>18</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>19</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>20</sup> Gen. 2: 21-24.

mankind through marriage without which humanity would have gone into extinction. Second, marriage provides solution to the sin of adultery and fornication. People who do not have self control can keep themselves holy from sexual immorality. Third, it was ordained for companionship, help and comfort of each other.

It was Jesus that elevated marriage to the status of sacrament and he modified marriage as a fusion of two people to produce one union. Immediately the sacrament of marriage is contracted between a man and a woman, it becomes valid until the death of one party. The sacramental vow cannot be revoked.<sup>21</sup> The physical sign of the sacrament of holy matrimony in the Anglican Church is the marriage ring that is made without any joint, and which symbolizes endless love relationship. By this act, each partner has unquestionable right to the spouse's body and privacy. This is referred to as marital right between couples.<sup>22</sup>

There are three basic concepts of marriage among the Christians. First, the Christian Egalitarian School teaches equality of man and woman in marriage. They believe that everyone is equal before God.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, there must be no subjugation on the basis of race, class, gender, education or religion.

The second concept of marriage is championed by the Complementarian School, who advocates husband superiority to the wife. They teach that leadership is the exclusive responsibility of males. But that husband should only be genial and loving while wife should be obsessively submissive as a help-mate.<sup>24</sup>

The third group is the Patriarchal School who teaches extreme husband domination; whereby the wife should be obedient as a weaker vessel. The husband is expected to maintain sovereign roles which include protection and fending for the wife. The patriarchists teach husband domination that: God is Father not mother, Jesus is Son not daughter; and man was the first to be created but woman is a mere essential comfort for the existence of man.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, husband must play domineering and lordship roles. Jesus does not approve Patriarchal concept of marriage but teaches egalitarian i.e. equality of husband and wife; as they are no longer two but one.<sup>26</sup> The corner pillar of Christian marriage is mutual submission to one another and not lordship.<sup>27</sup>

In conclusion, the solemnization service in Anglican Church begins with marriage banns which must be published during the martin and for three Sundays.

### **The Confirmation Rite**

Anglican does not accept Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation as it is a practice in some Christian denominations. It is a symbol of adulthood, a sacrament of Christian maturity in faith conferred at the age of discretion (18 years); and a seal of baptismal covenant. "Confirmation marks the point in the Christian journey at which you affirm for yourself the faith into which

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<sup>21</sup> Matt. 19: 3-6.

<sup>22</sup> 1Cor. 7: 1-3

<sup>23</sup> Gal. 3: 28.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 2: 18.

<sup>25</sup> Gen. 2: 23.

<sup>26</sup> Mat. 19: 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Eph. 5: 21.

you have been baptized and your intention to live a life of committed discipleship.”<sup>28</sup> Confirmation was an ancient tradition of the early church which was done by laying hands on people to invoke the Holy Spirit to possess them. Anglican practice does not allow any person to take Eucharist if they have not been confirmed. By confirmation rite, an Anglican member becomes an elder of the church and can now be consulted in matters relating to church’s administration and discipline.

Confirmation in Anglican Church completes the infant baptismal grace. At confirmation the work of the Godmother and Godfather comes to a successful end. Anglican does not confirm people unless they have reached the age of decision, reason and determination. The practice of confirmation is traced to the early church whereby only the senior apostles lay their hands on candidates that had been baptized so that they could receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Confirmation in the early church deepens the baptismal grace and it unites the confirmed persons to the body of Christ. Confirmation consolidates believers’ spiritual strength to witness for Jesus Christ and to also defend the Christian faith during persecution. That is why the church would not confirm someone who is a new comer in faith. In Anglican Church, while the priests are allowed to conduct baptism, only the bishops are eligible to do confirmation. This is also in conformity with the early church practice where only Peter, John and few leaders could lay hand on the baptized person to receive the Holy Spirit.

The Catholic refers to confirmation rite as a ‘Chrismation’ instituted by Jesus to deepen baptismal grace and to strengthen the union with Christ. But, Anglican believes that confirmation was not personally instituted by Jesus. Therefore, it is considered as a pastoral office not necessary for salvation but affords the candidates the opportunity to “confirm and ratify the promise made for them at baptism and rededicate themselves to God.”<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, confirmation makes the Anglican faithful to be considered as ambassadors of Christ with the status of ‘church Militants.’ But the confirmed members who have died are regarded as ‘church Triumphant.’

### **The Ordinal Rite:**

Ordination is the ritual process of consecrating men in apostolic succession, to perform religious functions and spiritual duties; after attestation that the men have been called by God to the sacred ministry; and have gone through a period of training related to their callings.

Anglican Church has three ecclesiastical offices which are: Deacon, Priest and Bishop. The person to be admitted Deacon must have public approval of good reputation. He must be stable and should not be duplicitous, not given to too much wine and not greedy; he must be able to uphold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.<sup>31</sup> Anglican prefers the word clergy to the word minister when referring to the ordained ministry. The clergy in Anglican carry out

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<sup>28</sup>The Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (England: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd, 1968), 428

<sup>29</sup> Acts 8: 14-18.

<sup>30</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>31</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.



mission and governance in collaboration with the laity. The lay ministry in Anglican includes: lay-reader, vergers, warden, sexton, usher, evangelist, chorister, church-chiefs. The bishop's wife is referred to as president in all women's organizations. As the president, she coordinates the women section of the diocese. The bishop, clergy and laity meet yearly as a synod to formulate policy, maintain discipline, address economic and spiritual matters, appraise the performances of each archdeaconry and evaluate the clergy welfare, salary and preferment.

For easy administration, the Anglican Church is divided into a diocese, cathedral, archdeaconry and parishes. The Bishop heads the diocese, Dean, Provost or Canon residential heads the cathedral, archdeacon supervises the archdeaconry and priest leads the parish as a vicar. The administrative titles are designated as: Right Reverend for bishop, very Reverend for Provost, Venerable for archdeacon, Canon for senior priest and Reverend for both junior priest and deacon. In Anglican term, the bishops are translated and the clergy are transferred. Also, the catechists are commissioned; clergy are ordained, while the bishops are consecrated.

In the liturgical functions, the bishop performs exclusively: Confirmation, ordination, consecration, enthronement and induction. Baptism is performed by priest and bishop but the laity can be allowed in exceptional emergency cases. The Eucharist is administered by the priest and bishop but a licensed lay-reader is also allowed in emergency situation. The reconciliation sacrament is administered by both the priest and bishop. Others such as healing, holy matrimony, naming and house warming are performed by bishop, priest, catechist and licensed lay-reader.

In conclusion, Anglican believes that ordination belongs to God and his church and that it is Holy Spirit that can equip clergy and bishops for service within the church and in the world.<sup>32</sup>

### **Introduction of Homosexual Rite in Anglican Church**

The struggle for the inauguration of same-sex marriage as a rite in Anglican Church began in the 13<sup>th</sup> Lambeth Conference of 1998, under the leadership of George Carey, the archbishop of Canterbury. When Carey knew that the North American Bishops were planning to sponsor a gayness memo at the Lambeth Conference; because of his aversion to it, he organized a preconference meeting to muster support against the homosexual agenda. On the other hand, the homosexual Bishops solicited the African Bishops for support with a promise to sponsor them to the Lambeth Conference since most of the Bishops were insolvent.

When Peter Akinola, the Primate of the Church of Nigeria who was also the chairman of the African Bishops, observed that many Nigerian Bishops had applied for the bait-and-switch grant of the North American homosexual liberals. He quickly directed that each Diocese in Nigeria should sponsor their Bishop and wife. Akinola also coordinated all African Bishops to reject the grant. The courage of Akinola and the obedience of the entire African Bishops gave them the independent mind to resist the homosexual liberal Bishops.

The homosexual group was led by John S. Spong, the Bishop of Newark, New Jersey. Spong and his group demanded for a revised Book of Common Prayer that will accommodate homosexual marriage, ordination and consecration of gay men as Clergy and Bishops in the Communion universally. After an exhaustive debate, the Conference decided to put the matter to the ballot. Peter Akinola led the 224 African Bishops to vote against the proposal and the

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<sup>32</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

homosexual agitators lost the battle. Hence, the Conference passed a resolution that homosexual acts are “incompatible with the scripture.”<sup>33</sup> The Evangelical Bishops were still basking in the euphoria of their victory when in 2002 the Diocese of New Westminster of the Province of Canada authorized the blessing of same-sex marriage and by 2003 homosexual men were elected Bishops in England and United States.

At this juncture, Anglican Church ceased to exist as a Communion; when, for the first time, the aggrieved African Bishops boycotted the 2008 Lambeth Conference and organized an alternative Conference in Jerusalem in 2008. They designated their own conference as ‘Global Anglican Future Conference; and they took a position that they:

Acknowledge God’s creation of human kind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family, We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.<sup>34</sup>

The imposition of homosexual marriage by the Church of England, Canada, Australia and United States is not only unscriptural but has also taken the Anglican Church back to the dirty saga of its foundation. The Church began on the foundation of marriage annulment controversy of King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon in 1527. The Pope had refused to grant the request of King Henry VIII to divorce Catherine, his wife; and marry Anne Boleyn, his Mistress. For Henry to achieve his sinister motive, he renounced Roman Catholicism and severed churches in England from Rome’s control having declared himself as the head of state and the ‘Pope’ of the churches in England. As the ‘Pope’ of the Church of England, he annulled his marriage with Catherine by an act of parliament on May 23, 1533 and married Anne Boleyn the same year.

Henry was expecting a male child from Anne but she bore him a female, named Elizabeth. This frustration made Henry to annul his marriage with Anne and also executed her on false accusation of adultery. He, thereafter, married Jane Seymour. Though, he got a male child from Jane, the child died later. Consequently, Henry divorced Jane to marry Anne of Cleves, a German lady. Just after a year, Henry divorced Anne of Cleves to marry Catherine Howard and because Howard was barren, he divorced her to marry Catherine Parr. In short, Anglican Church scrambled up on the podium of marriage indecency and is segregating on the dais of marriage perversion, the kind of sodomy that is abhorrent to God.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude this work, it is necessary to make a few recommendations that:

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<sup>33</sup> Idowu Fearon, *Diocesan Report in EFAC Bulletin*, September 22, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

- i. Anglican Church must not encourage the practice of sacraments or rites that are not in conformities with their liturgy and with the scripture. Hence, abominable and sacrilegious unions like Homosexuality, Lesbianism and bestiality must be eradicated from the church;
- ii. the church must lay emphasis on the Sacrament of Penance to enable their faithful to continually receive God's mercy, assurance of pardon and grace; and,
- iii. The church should enforce and maintain the tradition of confirmation at the age of discretion which should be put at 18 years.