

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Religion has always been the main motivator of morality from the inception of the human society. In fulfilling this task, however, there have always been areas of tension and friction, as human beings though receptive to moral values and religious tenets, do not totally keep to the demands of religion. Groups and individuals at times tend to unduly revise and re-appraise beliefs and values in the process of readjusting and re-aligning religious demands to what they interpret as current circumstances and realities of life. Heresies result from such efforts which create tension in the religious community and subsequently in the wider society.

There is no doubt that our modern society is going through a revolution in the area of sexual morality. For instance, the use of the word “sexy” is freely and widely applied to individuals, clothes, cars and other materials in an undue emphasis of masculine and feminine physique and attributes, designed to promote uninhibited sexual freedom as though it must be achieved through unbridled permissiveness. If one is referred to as being “sexy”, it is obviously understood to be a compliment, an achievement meant to evoke pride and a sense of fulfillment. In our society, there is much liberal attitude towards aspects of sexual morality like virginity, pre-marital sex, pornography, abortion, prostitution, homosexuality, etc. than it used to be in the past. This change in attitude has been largely effected by society’s steady progress in the communication, academic, economic and religious areas of human

life. The changes in attitude also evolved from the over-bearing influence of Western culture on the rest of the world, Nigeria inclusive. These changes have been part of the broader changes in the moral ideas and perspective of the modern world, changes which did not happen suddenly, but gradually through profound changes in the cultural, religious and philosophical outlook of the nature and purpose of human life.

With the rise of sexual aberrations, traditional African sexual morality has been rudely crossed by other influences of the modern times. Sexual ethics have become more a matter of personal choice rather than adherence to the stipulation of religious or traditional morality. Some sexual behaviour that once carried heavy negative moral connotation are now viewed as normal or positive by an increasing segment of the population. Among these are masturbation, pre-marital sex and homosexuality.

The Christian religion has always contended that the sexual act has to be confined to a marriage between a man and a woman in a heterosexual relationship. This belief which was inherited from Judaism and also strongly affirmed by Jesus formed the Christian bedrock of sexual morality, which Christianity strives to uphold in all generations, but not without the wears and tears which the agency of moral rectitude has to bear in a fast-changing world of moral relativism.

The most testing moral issues facing the Anglican Church in modern times are those connected with sexual ethics, especially in the area of homosexuality. Christianity has traditionally over the years, put issues of sexual immorality very high in the hierarchy of sins, so whenever there is disagreement or attempt to revise or redefine the morals by any denomination as it is currently the case by some sections of the Anglican Church, it strains the unity of the Church to its limits, with obvious consequences.

In our modern society people, both Christians and non-Christians alike are increasingly being exposed to the lure of non-religious and anti-religious ideas that are characteristic of the wider secular world. Consequently, many people continue being religious, and take part in religious activities, but apparently would like God to keep away from the day-to-day choices they make about their lives, especially their sexuality. Questions relating to the acceptance of homosexuality and other sexual aberrations like bisexuality and trans-sexuality have generally played down on biblical testimony and highlighted rights issues, along with debates about biology versus experience, and on the need for pastoral care for every Church member.

The current practice of the acceptance of homosexuals as priests and even bishops in the Anglican Communion has caused a deep rift in the Church, and the Church of Nigeria has played a prominent role in upholding the supremacy of the scriptural teachings on sexual morality and the Church's tradition, as opposed to the

revisionist tendency of those who are more favourably disposed to working with the changing modern understandings of human biology and society. In as much as this brave new sexual morality is not limited to Anglicanism or to the Church of Nigeria, this study is an attempt to x-ray the implications in the Anglican Communion. The researcher's interest was aroused to undertake this work because of the deep negative impact and the ridicule that the division in the Anglican Communion has brought to Christendom, and the possible ripple effect it might have on other Christian denominations.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Sexual aberrations in our modern society stem from the revolutionary thinking of people in the secular world in which it is wrongly believed by many, that individuals should be left to fashion their own sexual ethics, independent of any divine stipulation. This is relativism or individuation of morals without recourse to objective standard of morality established by divine, natural and positive laws. Though it cannot be denied that every society has had its own share and experience of sexual aberrations since the beginning of the history of man, the modern approach presupposes that codes that guide and regulate sexual morality have lost relevance and need updating. Modern society, though reluctantly accepting that God created sex, has refused to acknowledge that a safe and acceptable sex menu cannot be prepared without God's recipe. It is like disobeying the copyright laws made to protect the intellectual property of an author, or disregarding the patent rights of an inventor in copying, polluting and profiteering from the original

product. In either case, there must be repercussions resultant from the problems created.

The Anglican Communion has recently been under pressure regarding issues of sexual morality. In some sections of the Communion, spirituality and practice have been seriously affected by the culture of modernity. Some Churches have permitted homosexuals to hold leadership positions and even presented the homosexual experience as a normal means of experiencing God, a direct negation of God's injunction against homosexuality in Leviticus 18 verse 22, and elsewhere in the Scriptures.

The problem created by the homosexual debate has formed a strong wall of separation between provinces of the Anglican Church because for the Christian religion, Anglicanism inclusive, the Bible is the sole source of authority for moral principles, but the dynamics of human culture in some cases are incompatible with biblical authority and morality. A good number of influential Anglican leaders and church members in the Western world have let the culture of secularism and relativism to becloud their interpretation and use of the Bible. The problem created is that instead of the Bible being used to judge man-made culture and preferences in order to modify their deficiencies, culture and personal tastes are judging and questioning biblical authority with regards to sexual morality inside the church, of all places.

In times past, control over sexual drives was usually considered a sign of mental health and lack of control indicated mental illness and moral depravity. But the imperative for the civilized modern individual to keep his/her sex drives within the limits set by religion has been replaced with a revisionist emphasis on giving a free rein to the drives in order to achieve a fulfilled, uninhibited sex life. Along this line of thought, what used to be taboos are now accepted and given formal religious backing by sections of the Anglican Communion, including even allowing the solemnization of same-sex unions and the ordination of homosexuals and transsexuals into the priesthood and the episcopacy.

The teaching of the Anglican Church on homosexual acts has always regarded them as unnatural behaviour worthy of condemnation. With liberal Anglican theologians providing the launching-pad for the new move, and the orthodox members maintaining biblical condemnation of homosexuality, a huge tension has been created in Anglicanism which caused the current doctrinal divide that is also threatening the organic unity of the Anglican Church.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is trace the factors that that motivated the growth of revisionism in the Anglican Church, and to assess the efforts of the leadership of the Anglican Church in Nigeria in challenging the excesses of the Western sections of the Anglican Communion with regard to biblical sexual morality and the place of homosexuals in the Church. In a secular society where the laws of

science and theories are recognized and appreciated more than the word of God, this study intends to re-emphasize that God is the creator of human sexuality and His laws about sex are as real and binding as the laws of gravity, inertia, motion, etc. In other words, the repercussions which follow when any law is broken apply to the breaking of God's law in sexual morality, and is bound to shake any Church denomination that tries to revise the law.

At the 1998 Lambeth Conference (the last one before the split in the Anglican Communion), the issue of homosexuality proved to be the most sensitive item on the agenda. There was a charged atmosphere as the pro-homosexuality bloc notably Prelates from America, Canada and England lobbied for support, while the anti-homosexual group headed by bishops from Africa, Asia and South America held meetings to sharpen strategies to counter the other group. This work attempts to trace the controversy and the developments it has engendered in Anglicanism from the perspective of the Province of Nigeria which is playing the leading role in defending orthodox Anglican values of biblical sexual morality in the Anglican Church in Africa and beyond.

Part of the argument of the liberal Western Church theologians is their emphasis on the universality of sin and the pervasiveness of the homosexual phenomenon in every part of the world. Whereas the largely permissive Western society tastes have flooded the thinking of the Church, effort is made to highlight the present level of

intolerance of the homosexual culture in the Nigerian society, a section of which the Anglican Church is called to render pastoral care to, guided by the Scriptures. The effects of globalization along with its moral influences are changing public perception of sex and family life, with the inbuilt agenda of relegating Christian values to the background as much as possible, with the tacit approval from significant sections of the Anglican denomination. This work presents Christian spirituality as part of the bulwark against sexual aberrations, and part of the healing process for deviants who want to make amends. This work is intended to highlight the point of departure from Anglicanism's teaching of sexual morals, for the correction of societal ills that are due to sexual immorality, a departure which is being corporately sponsored by a significant section of the Anglican Church, constituting a very bad example to other Christian denominations.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is primarily concerned with human conduct as it relates to the interpretation of established religious norms and values in the Anglican Church which are depreciating due to the re-interpretation and liberalization of moral values in the modern secular society. All of man's conduct stands in relation to his bearing the image of God, and having priority in the created order. From a religious perspective, when man obeys God he acts morally. In a significant manner, sexual moral conduct is to be measured and determined by God's established laws, not by modern man's free rational conduct, devoid of any obligation to the creator. This research bears out the inevitable disequilibrium resulting from attempts to



‘relativize’ moral imperatives in the Anglican ecclesiastical polity.

In an increasingly secularized modern world, this study is a pointer to the declining power of religious beliefs in the lives of a significant percentage of members of the human society, especially leaders and opinion-moulders who use their enormous influence to unduly lead the attack against the bulwarks of religion-inspired morality. In modern times there is a wrong notion that religion and science are incompatible. Investigative thinking, experimentation and technology which derive from science, to many people are acquiring a relevance and authority which supersede that of religion in relation to moral perception.

This study highlights the in-road that atheists, liberal thinkers and hedonists have made in the Christian religion, especially in the Anglican Communion, jointly fighting with the forces of secularism which are affecting other areas of human life both negatively and positively. Part of this is the questioning of long-established sexual norms, the result of which is the spirited attempt to institute a new culture of liberal sexual morality in the Church. This bears out human unsteadiness in relation to God’s changelessness. Significantly, the Anglican Church which shares part of the moral responsibility of correcting the evils of human society is under pressure to surrender her base as a launching-pad for sexual immorality.

In evaluating the ideals of Christian sexual morality against a background of the current turbulence created by the revisionists in the Anglican Church, this study

underscores the obvious glaring under-performance of a ‘toothless bulldog’ in the form of the international administrative structure of Anglicanism. It also strongly underlines the fact that solution to the many social and moral problems of our highly secularized world may not be forthcoming if there is no agreement on fundamental issues of Christian sexual morality by Christians in Christian denominations, in which case Anglicanism’s example leaves much to be desired. This work serves as a ‘wake-up’ call to other mainline Christian denominations in our society that might face challenges similar to those discussed in this research.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Since the advent of the Anglican Church in the mid-19th century in Nigeria, the Church has spread to almost all the nooks and crannies of the country. The scope of this study is the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), with all its constituent parts, comprising one hundred and sixty-one dioceses under fourteen ecclesiastical provinces, spread across almost every part of Nigeria.

The scope of this research is nation-wide (Nigerian Anglicanism), and the position of its leadership hierarchy in contradiction with theological liberalism of parts of the Anglican Communion since the points presented and discussed are from the Nigerian perspective. However, the ravages of the modern sexual re-orientation, with its consequent aberrations are on a universal scope and not limited to the Anglican Communion. The presentation and discussion of facts in this work though within the Nigerian context, provides a deep foray into the dynamics of Christian moral and ethical change in our modern society, and are in no way disconnected

from the global scope, as Nigerian Anglicans are integral and active members of the larger society.

## **1.6 Methodology**

This qualitative research method work was motivated by the researcher's participant-observer status. The researcher has remained a delegate to the General Synod and the Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria from 2005 till date, and by this privilege, participated in and witnessed some of the unfolding events as the Anglican Church in Nigeria reacted to the revisionist aggression of the Western sections of the Anglican Communion. From the researcher's personal observation right from the parish level up to the Church's national level, his experiential involvement was brought to bear on some of the ideas expressed, and information presented in this work.

This study was carried out mainly by using analysis of data collected from primary sources which include personal communication with some of the key players and stake-holders in the Church of Nigeria, by means of interviews. Written materials both published and unpublished which were consulted formed the secondary sources for this research. The data collected on the evolution of sexual morality both within the wider society and in the Anglican Church were objectively examined and analyzed. Opinions regarding the focus of the research, from documents and resolutions of the highest decision-making bodies in the Anglican Communion and the Church of Nigeria were also utilized in this work.

The nature of any historical investigation determines the sources and method of data collection and analysis. For the purpose of this dissertation, data gathering and analysis were carried out from the perspectives of the culture area approach and the historical method. Kalu (1996) defines a culture area as “a geographical delineation of an area that has some dominant and significant culture traits, complexes and patterns” (p. 9). This method has certain advantages in that it aids in-depth data collection, provides bases for comparison and aids interpretation by showing the impact of ecological, geographical and cultural factors on the growth patterns of religion in a given cultural area. The historical method gives insight into what happened in the past and interprets the correlation of the present cultural, social, political, economic and theological developments for the purpose of the future.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

In order to discuss the topic and the related issues of this dissertation in clear unambiguous terms, it is pertinent at this point to define the major operative terms.

These include:

#### **(a) Anglicanism**

Anglicanism refers to the Anglican Church, its teaching and systems of administration. The Episcopal Dictionary of the Church (2000) defines Anglicanism as “the system of doctrine and approach to polity of Christians in Communion with the See of Canterbury” (p. 20). Anglicanism is largely defined in terms of its English origins and preservation of the language and customs of English-speaking peoples, sharing a common theological heritage with the Church

of England. In this work, Anglicanism and the Anglican Communion are used interchangeably. Coggan (1985) refers to the Anglican Communion as “a fellowship within the one holy, catholic and apostolic church – of those dioceses, Provinces or regional churches in Communion with each other and with the See of Canterbury” (p. 86). The Anglican Communion presently is made up of thirty nine Provinces worldwide, which are both independent and interdependent, and recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury who presides over the Lambeth Conference as the first among equals.

Jenkins (1995) rightly noted that the “Church of England grew rapidly throughout the world due to expanding British influence through trade and colonization and missionary activity...The Anglican family of Churches...after the Roman Catholic Church is possibly the most widespread” (p. 54).

### **(b) Challenge**

Hornby (2006) defines ‘challenge’ in three ways which include:

(a) A new or difficult task that tests somebody’s ability and skill. (b) An invitation or a suggestion to somebody that they should enter a competition, fight, etc. (c) Challenge (to something) a statement or an action that shows that somebody refuses to accept something and questions whether it is right, legal, etc. (p. 231).

The New English Dictionary and Thesaurus (1994) defines ‘challenge’ as “to summon a fight or contest, to call in question, to object to, to hail and interrogate, to demand proof of identity” (p.113). Taking all the elements of the foregoing

views as a working definition for this work, it is clear that any departure from accepted norms elicits reaction in the form of a contest, refusal, questions of the new motives and conscious effort to revert to status quo ante.

### **(c) Sexual Aberrations**

Sex refers first to a state of gender. It refers to the ontological creation and nature of the animal species into male and female. In our context and study, it refers to a physical act bringing two or more people of the opposite or same gender together in intercourse which involves bodily union. Hornby (2000) defines 'sexual' as "connected with physical activity of sex: sexual activity/behavior/desire" (p. 1080). It also refers to sexual orientation i.e. whether one is heterosexual or homosexual. The word is also connected to the process of producing offspring, and pertaining to the characteristics and differences of being male or female. Guralnik (1994) defines '*aberration*' as "a departure from what is right, true and correct; a deviation from the normal or the typical, and a mental derangement or lapse" (p. 2).

The free Online Dictionary states the Latin origin of the word as follows: '*ab*' means away from; '*errare*' – to stray. '*Aberrare*' means 'to go astray'; while '*aberration*' from the same root word means 'diversion from'.

It therefore summarizes "*aberration*" in four definitions:

1. A deviation from the proper or expected course.
2. A departure from the normal or typical.
3. In Psychology: A disorder or abnormal alteration in one's mental state.
4. A defect of focus, resulting in the blurring of an image.

Going by these definitions and in the context of this study, sexual aberrations refer to those aspects of sexual orientation and practices which are a deviation from accepted norms of biblical sexual morality, resulting from a defective re-interpretation of accepted sexual values, which is always inherent in human society.

#### **(d) Response**

The New English Dictionary and Thesaurus (1994) defines 'response' as "an answer, a reaction to stimulation, a replication, rejoinder, reply and retort" (p. 501 & p. 826). Guralnik (1984) defines 'response' as (1) "Something said or done in answer, reply or reaction. (2) Any behaviour resulting from the application of a stimulus" (p. 1211).

#### **(e) The Church of Nigeria**

The Anglican Church came to Nigeria in 1842 and achieved the status of an autonomous Province in 1979. "The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)" is the official designation of the Anglican denomination in Nigeria. The Church of Nigeria has its headquarters in Abuja, from where the Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Primate of All Nigeria, who must also be the Bishop of Abuja, operates as the leader of the Church. The official website of the Church puts the estimated membership at 18 million.



**Figure 1:** Map of the Anglican ecclesiastical provinces in Nigeria that make up 161 dioceses in Nigeria.  
 Source: Metropolitan Almanac.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is pertinent in this chapter to review and appraise what has been written and comments made about the issues concerning this research topic. Review of related literature helps to establish the fact that the subject of the study is researchable. The review of literature that have been written before on the subject will also help to show that there is a genuine gap to be filled in scholarly research by the present study. For reasons of fluidity and convenience, the literature review is undertaken under the following sub-headings:

#### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework deals with the examination of the concepts that are closely related to the research topic. In reviewing these auxiliary concepts, an operational foundation for the study is laid by x-raying some generic topics that will recur in the main body of the research, leading to the findings, and influencing the conclusions to be made. The conceptual framework also gives an enhanced illumination of the definition of the operational terms of the study.

##### **2.1.1 Homosexuality as a Sexual Perversion**

Homosexuality was considered a perversion which had guilt and shame attached to it, but today the term 'gay' is not only a label for a homosexual person but also the name of the public movement fighting for the rights of homosexuals, and the

acceptable way of life. Accordingly, homosexuality has been taken out of the closet and celebrated in some churches and in the society with fanfare.

The strong influence of the Western world on the modern sexual perversion cannot be over-emphasized. The unprecedented openness and permissiveness in sexual matters have largely been exported to the rest of the world in the cultural and religious contexts, with grievous results.

Muggeridge (cited by Golden, 1986) referring to this factor states:

It is sometimes difficult to resist the conclusion that the Western man has decided to abolish himself, creating his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own vulnerability out of his own strength, his own impotence out of his own erotomania...And having convinced himself that he is too numerous, laboring with pill and scalpel and syringe to make himself fewer. Finally, having educated himself into imbecility, and polluted and drugged himself into stupefaction, he keels over, a weary, battered, old brontosaurus, and becomes extinct. (p. 37).

Sexual excesses and the resultant extremes in birth control i.e. abortion are all rightly implied in Muggeridge's near perfect poetic presentation of the situation.

The main impetus for changing attitudes to homosexuality is coming from the trends in the modern society. Bonnington and Fyall (1996) refer to what they call the '*pax Americana*' that stresses individual freedom in ethical matters, a drift which has been encouraged and facilitated by material prosperity and technological advance. As it relates to the Christian religion, they assert:

Christians usually agree that the church should not be following the world on contemporary issues. Either it should be showing the way or heading in a different direction altogether. Too often the churches are caught in the middle- neither resisting convincingly nor leading decisively but reluctantly following the cultural stream. (p. 4).

In modern Christianity it appears that there is no united front against what used to be regarded as sexual aberrations, as the polarity between liberal and secular attitudes and the traditional teaching of Christianity widens.

### **2.1.2 The Effects of Social Upheavals on Sexual Aberrations**

Societal conflicts and upheavals in the modern world have helped to erode morals. In war situations, the peoples' morals tend to breakdown. The two world wars contributed to the downward slide of sexual morality. Rist (1969) points out that "brothels were set up near frontlines of war and war generally encourages the "play today for tomorrow we die" philosophy. It was in the years of the First World War that sex was introduced into theatres and the movies" (p. 20). Similar effects resulted from the Second World War and when the resulting post-war baby boom children became teenagers, the sexual revolution of the sixties blossomed. (p. 20).

Wars and other related violent disturbances affect people's attitudes to morality since the disruption of social order invariably leads to the disruption of moral order. Cases of rape of conquered or defeated peoples, homosexual experimentation as an alternative for soldiers on the war-front due to shortage of

the womenfolk, and other aspects of sexual permissiveness are the hallmarks of social upheavals.

The modern expression of sexuality has its roots not only in the change in perspective of modern life, but also in the major strides being recorded in modern technology, education, legislation and scientific research. Smedes (1985) points out the effects of the wide studies of human sexuality from the psychological, sociological and neurological studies:

From Freud to Havelock, Ellis to Masters and Johnson, sex has been set on the laboratory table and observers have watched what is going on. Sociologists reassure us that our wild fantasies and kinky inclinations are not off-beat as we feared, and it makes people feel good to know that lots of other people do crazy things. (p. 354).

The many theories being propounded have made sex an appealing field of experiment in which people who like to be seen as 'modern' would not like to be seen as under-achievers or as backward in the game of sex. Consequently, the important question for many members of the secular society is not whether moral rules on sex are obeyed but whether people have learned the facts about sex and mastered the techniques of various acts of sexual experience.

### **2.1.3 The Influence of Pornography on Sexual Aberrations**

Western society's unwillingness to put legal restraint on the sale of pornography has motivated the spread of pornographic materials to all parts of the world. Though pornography may not generate the same effects on individuals who look at

it, it is obvious that the open market for it has helped create a new sexual culture for the modern world. Commenting on the inherent evil in the use of pornographic materials, Shields (2004) states:

Like drugs or gambling, pornography is highly addictive and can become the master of those who resort to it...The advent of and wide availability of video recorders, of explicit (blue) films, of interactive computer programmes and of the internet have added sinister dimensions to pornography. It is a well-known fact that the reading or viewing of pornographic materials is often an important predisposing factor in crimes of sexual abuse. (p. 96).

Jones (2006) x-raying the negative effect of pornography on the youth in America states inter alia:

Dating is out. Hooking up is in. Almost like animals, young people make genital contact without ever making friends...The available pornography includes images of heterosexual and homosexual intercourse, masturbation, bestiality, sadomasochism, bondage, rape, incest and much, much more, all justified in the high goal of sexual liberation. (p. 24).

Pornography is literature or act calculated to supply sexual arousal and excitement. It involves obscene literature, and movies featuring different types of the sex act. Since there is no effective legal control on pornography in modern society, pornographic literature and films are sold openly in public and in the internet for every one interested to buy.

With the advent of the internet and modern gadgets through which the internet can be accessed like the computer, i-pads, mobile phones etc., pornography has a wider appeal and is readily available to the teeming population of willing consumers who learn all types of sex from them.

#### **2.1.4 The Connection between Feminism, Women's Rights and Lesbianism**

Feminists see the distinction of the sexes as an obstacle to women's rights and personal freedom. They therefore fight to obliterate the differentiation. Feminism has made significant progress in trying to attack religious understanding of sexual differences between male and female and their complementarity. Feminists attack everything that supports the traditional roles of men and women which includes marriage, the family and heterosexuality. Gert (1998) asserts that feminism has a target which supersedes 'equal rights' for both sexes. He further states:

As one set of demands leads to another, the feminists' denial of sexual distinction between man and woman and their call for the obliteration of all sex roles necessarily requires one to alter the Biblical concepts of marriage, family and God...When marriage is rejected as oppressive, sex is opened up to a number of possibilities beginning with promiscuity. (p. 50).

Women who subscribe to the liberation movement believe they have been liberated from the myth that women endured while males enjoyed sex. Today more women are ready to complain about the sexual inadequacies of their husbands. In the modern world, men and women meet on equal terms in search of happiness in the

game of sex. The gains made by feminism also easily translate to a strong motivation for lesbianism.

Many women have also been liberated from confinement at home as housewives. They now compete favourably with men for all types of jobs and this has given them the opportunity of meeting with more people of the opposite or same sex and deciding whether to develop relationships with them whether they are married or not. This is partly due to increasing literacy rate among women and ladies. Feminism and the women's liberation philosophy have led to the rejection of heterosexuality as the natural orientation. Gert (1998) asserts that:

Radical feminists even see heterosexual promiscuity as narrowing the options, and oppressive on the female sex. As a result, feminism ends up not only endorsing but promoting lesbianism, presenting the lesbian as the ultimate feminist and the model for all others, and as an embodiment of complete freedom from male domination. (p. 61).

Lesbianism can be a reaction against the alleged male domination and the alleged second class status of women in the society. So for many women, sex with a fellow woman means independence from men. The practice of single parenthood in order to escape the 'shackles' of marriage has also been considerably accepted by 'liberated' women. Part of the threat to the existing sexual morality was the development of scientific thinking which assumed that reliance on the revealed truths in religion is to be done away with. Blamires (1999) opines that:

Faith came to be regarded as a kind of provisional, pre-suppositional footing in an as yet unexplored terrain. It was an inferior substitute for knowledge, a

substitute that humanity needed only where knowledge was not yet available. Progress toward true knowledge was a matter of patiently observing... assembling evidence and establishing conclusion. (p. 14).

The over-emphasis on sexual freedom in modern society has led to erotic passion being worshipped as a strong surge that overtakes and overwhelms people in an irresistible manner. It is treated as a god whose authority people can hardly resist.

### **2.1.5 The Effects of Sexual Aberrations on Family Patterns**

In the secular world, the definition of a family strictly on the basis of man, wife and offspring/s has been put to question. So many babies are born to single mothers and so many marriages end in divorce, the traditional nuclear family has become less of the norm and the idea of 'family' has become much more complex.

Nicolson (1996) states other factors that affect formation of modern 'family' as follows:

Because our expectation that marriage means having a house and financial independence, young people come to sexual maturity many years before they regard themselves as being in a position to marry. During those years, they do form sexual relationships, sometimes with the person whom they will eventually marry, sometimes with several people before finding that person. (p. 119).

In not waiting to meet society's expectation for marriage, so many people go ahead to engage in sexual activities which result to co-habitation, homosexuality, abortion and single parenthood.



Sexual intercourse between unmarried men and women has traditionally been viewed as immoral. The reasons that have upheld this view include religious prohibitions and practical considerations such as unwanted pregnancy and venereal diseases. However, Ruggiero (1992) has agreeably stated that “the improvement of birth control techniques and the development of antibiotics have resulted in a softening of the traditional judgment” (p. 135).

In modern society, supreme value is placed on rights and freedoms and this has made the traditional limitations in sexuality to be viewed negatively. However, there is no moral justification for regarding moral constraints as negative. Starkey (1997) states:

The constraints of a life jacket keep us afloat; the constraints of walls keep in heat and keeps out burglars. But when contraception and abortion became widely available in the 1960s, few young adults stopped to ask if the walls so carefully built around sexuality for centuries might in fact have been protective walls. All that mattered was that they were constraints, and constraints were bad. Any limitations had to be blasphemy against the hallowed idol of personal freedom. (pp. 46-47).

Thus, the underlying individualism of our modern society has profoundly affected the way people view the whole of life, including sex – before, during and after marriage. There is the trend to deny certain known acts of sexual perversion by re-defining them to make them sound more acceptable to people and thereby remove the moral imperative that something should be done about the problems. This trend is also affecting people’s attitude to the marriage institution and the morals guiding

it. In the past, adultery was considered as a sin committed mainly by men. It was a taboo for a married woman to have a close friendship or a sexual relation with any man other than her husband. Women were seen as being naturally loyal, faithful and trustworthy. But in modern society, the story is not quite the same. Odukoya (2007) states:

It would appear that women are not done with proving that “whatever a man can do, a woman can also do” in just the business/career arena. Some women now try to ‘show’ their erring husbands that they can also commit adultery. (p. 4).

Because of the moral pressure of the modern society, many married people fail to protect their marriages and emotions from external attacks and thereby fall into adultery and which though still regarded as a sexual aberration, has a definitely less pronounced social stigma, as it ends only in separation or divorce in most cases. Homosexual couples also claim that ‘family’ need not be solely defined as a father, mother and children set-up, claiming that their own relationship should be also regarded as a variant type of modern family.

#### **2.1.6 Problems Associated with Sexual Aberrations**

Any perverted moral standard is likely to have repercussions on the society to bear out the fact that there has been a departure from the normal to the abnormal. Acts of sexual immorality are vices that destroy interpersonal relationships and the moral fabrics of the society in general. According to Nduka (2003):

These evils disorganize and destroy relationships in homes, communities, churches and even nations. No man or woman, husband or wife...is ever happy when sexual immorality is committed against the other. It brings shame, disdain, distrust, violence, breakup, disease and even death. (p. 12).

Freeman (1987) states that the 'new morality,' referring to the modern sexual permissiveness, is leaving its mark in the world in terms of the world witnessing the greatest increase in venereal diseases and illegitimate births. The increase in rape and other crimes involving sexual perversion has the government authorities concerned. (pp. 18-19).

Alcorn (2000) in agreement that there is a visible impact of the effects of sexual immorality in the society states that:

Incest is at epidemic proportions. Whether at day care centers or in prostitution - pornography rings, child molesting makes the papers virtually every week. So do rape, sodomy, and serial sex murders. Organized clubs of transvestites, sado-masochists, and pedophiles have joined homosexuals by coming out of the closet and actively lobbying for their rights. (p. 5).

Commenting further on the root of the problems emanating from sexual perversions Alcorn (2000) states:

We have turned our backs on the Architect, Engineer, and Builder of human sexuality. We have denied his authority and ridiculed his servants. Our glands are our gods, we have discarded his directions, burned his blueprint,

trampled on the ashes, and like rebellious children, stalked off to do our own sex our own way. And we are reaping the results. (p. 11).

Alcorn's view is quite agreeable since the act of perverting anything points to a robust disagreement with the original intention and goal of its blueprint. Vertefeuille (1988) points out the confusion about sexual identity in society and the resultant "disconnection from any lasting sense of fulfillment in marriage and family". In the wake of this confusion he asserts, "society is paying a high price; the family continues to disintegrate, threatening the stability of our culture" (p. 13). Nicolson (1996) points out the fact that traditional sexual ethical norms have broken down all over the world. This has enabled AIDS to spread rapidly. He states: "As well as AIDS, the growing numbers of single mothers, broken families, and other social problems are often consequences of this breakdown of sexual standards" (p. 103).

Commenting on the psychological problems which homosexuals encounter, Peschke (1994) asserts that homosexual gratification is ultimately inadequate and is laden with feelings of frustration and depression. He states:

Few homosexuals, if any, are actually at peace with their lifestyle, the pathway of gratification being unstable and incomplete. The factor of unconscious guilt looms large in many of them...The partners are at the same time attracted to each other by emotions of love and repelled by feelings of aversion, a trait which strongly militates against the stability of

homosexual unions... In old age many homosexuals eventually find that they are left without family, roots and friends. (p. 459).

Referring to the problem experienced by children from destabilized families due to sexual immorality and divorce, Okwueze (2004) agreeably states that children whose parents do not get married or stay married are more likely to slip into poverty, to become welfare-dependent, to be physically and sexually abused, to experience both physical and mental health problems and to be involved in criminal activities. They will also invariably contribute their own quota to sexual immorality with their tendency to “become sexually active at young ages and with multiple sex partners, and to become themselves young and unmarried/unwed mothers and fathers (if they do not become habitual abortionists)” (p. 251). Thus it is obvious that poor parental or non-parental upbringing of children makes them more prone to early sexual experimentation which leads to exposure to the homosexual way of life as an alternative sexual orientation.

Generally, the modern sexual revolution has affected not only the landscape of sexual morals and practices, but that of marriage patterns in the modern world. This is in terms of removal of certain inhibitions to co-habitation, premarital and non-marital sex, extra-marital, post-marital and homosexual relationships. The fact that the society has largely ignored sexual relationships outside the marriage institution means that family roles and marriage patterns have invariably changed, and will continue to change in modern societies.

### **2.1.7 The Concept of Homosexuality**

Homosexuality is sexual attraction and relationship between members of the same sex. Homosexual men are often referred to as 'gay' while the women are called 'lesbians', but male and female homosexuals are also collectively referred to as 'gay people'.

Smedes (1985) referring to the evolution of homosexuality in modern time states:

Homosexuality was long considered a perversion to be kept hidden in a twilight zone of guilt and shame. Today 'gay' is not label for a homosexual person, but is the name of a public movement for the acceptance of homosexuality as a normal lifestyle. Taken out of the closet, homosexuality is now celebrated in some cities with an annual parade. (p. 349).

Secular society believes that the emphasis of religious moral authority on sexuality gets in the way of individual freedom. Commenting on this erosion of moral authority, Rathus (2005) states that:

Some gay people object to the term 'homosexuality' because they feel that it draws attention to sexual behavior. Moreover, the term carries a social stigma ... The word 'homosexual' has also been historically associated with concepts of deviance and mental illness. It perpetuates negative stereotypes of gay people. (p. 292).

Morris (1978) in presenting a clinical definition of homosexuality states:

Homosexuality will be defined as a symptom of neurosis expressed by an erotic impulse towards members of the same sex. A homosexual obviously, is a person whose erotic impulse (sexuality) is characterized by

homosexuality. By this definition then, bisexuals and ambi-sexuals are in fact homosexuals. (pp. 37-38).

Many homosexuals argue that they have been created so, believing that they are products of genetic configuration, thereby attempting to credit God with their homosexuality. Morris (1978) states, "Among the most ardent in their commitment are the homosexual Christians...if God is really responsible, then all of the passages in the Bible which discuss the subject must be reevaluated" (p.40). This homosexual postulation is an effort to gain societal acceptance for those who practice homosexuality. The main bone of contention has been whether the tendency to be gay or lesbian is natural, or just acquired through some environmental influence. Muchmore (1991) in supporting the genetic origin of homosexuality posits that:

Homosexuality or gayness is not a disease. It may be caused by genes or environment, some combination of these or something else entirely nobody knows. It is clear that homosexuality has been in existence throughout history and that it is practiced by some lower animals as well. Curing a man of his desire for other men may be as impossible as the task of curing blue eyes of their color. (p. 23).

With the pervasiveness of the homosexual lifestyle in modern times, no society has yet totally accepted it as the norm. Negative attitudes towards gay people have continued, giving credence to traditional sexual morality which views homosexuality as a crime against God and nature. But it is clear that gay pressure for acceptability is not relenting. Bonnington and Fyall (1996) however note that:

The main impetus for changing attitudes to homosexuality is coming from the world in which we live. Today the general drift under the Post-Cold War *Pax Americana* is in a liberalizing direction stressing individual freedom in ethical matters. This drift has been facilitated and encouraged by material prosperity and technological advance. (p. 4).

In the context of family life, lesbian and gay couples consider themselves as families, in negation of the orthodox definition of a family. In highlighting this, Curry (1993) asserts:

Over the past 20 years, same-sex couples have sought societal recognition of their families. It began in the early 1970s, when lesbian and gay couples applied for marriage licenses, asked courts to allow one partner to adopt the other and took other steps to legally cement their relationship. Most of these efforts failed. (p. 1).

On the modern history of gay marriage, Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia enumerates the countries where same-sex marriages are approved or legalized:

In 2001, the Netherland became the first nation in the world to grant same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage was also granted and mutually recognized in Belgium in 2003; Spain in 2005; Canada in 2005; South Africa in 2006; Norway in 2009; Argentina in 2010. In Mexico, same-sex marriage is recognized in all 31 states, but only performed in Mexico City... 250 million people (or 4% of the world population) live in areas that recognize same-sex marriages. Same-sex marriage is also recognized in the United States of America.



In citing African countries that have stepped into accepting the gay practice, Bolberg (2014) states:

The practice of homosexuality is legal ... (in South Africa). Consensual same-sex relationships are also legal in Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Chad – all Francophone African countries. (p. 113).

Homosexuality has always been seen as unnatural by the vast majority that opposes it in human society. The notable theologian Thomas Aquinas (cited by Rathus, 2005) argues that:

The purpose of sexuality is reproduction or procreation. Sexual activities are natural if they fulfill this purpose and thus in accord with the eternal or natural law. All non-procreative sexual activities are unnatural. What is unnatural is abnormal. What is natural is normal. (p. 530).

Based on this approach, rare or unusual sexual behaviors are considered abnormal, and more especially when they run counter to religious values. However, with the dynamism of culture in human society, what is considered unnatural and abnormal in one culture at a particular time might with time be considered and accepted as normal. Rathus (2005) tracing the point of departure from taboo to acceptability posits:

A gay or lesbian orientation was considered abnormal throughout most of Western history and was once labeled a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. But in 1973, classification of a gay male or lesbian

orientation as a mental disorder was dropped from the association's diagnostic and statistical manual. (p. 574).

In the Western world, sexual practices that were once considered abnormal or sinful such as oral sex, homosexuality and masturbation are today practiced so widely that fewer people are ready to label them as abnormal. Hoose (2000) in corroborating this assertion states:

This change in the climate of thought about sex has multiple roots. Since Freud, much public emphasis has been placed on the importance of sexuality as an element of human personality. Sex is no longer seen simply as a way of propagating the species, nor as occasional and potentially enjoyable necessity, but as an essential and defining aspect of each person's character, having an all-pervasive influence on human behavior and attitudes. (p. 224).

This new flow of thought coupled with the ever increasing emphasis on individual liberty in Western societies and increasingly widespread education have encouraged people to think for themselves and define their own values in sexual as well as other areas of ethics. These factors led to the rise of the feminist and gay movements, the progress of which has largely undermined traditional values.

### **2.1.8 Homosexuality and Christian Bioethics**

Bioethics is an interdisciplinary discipline, a systematic reflection on human behaviour regarding life or the life sciences. According to Nwaezepu (2005) though bioethics is not majorly concerned with the marriage institution as its specific content, it is definitely interested in human sexuality and human behavior

within marriage, which has very significant implications for life, as the proper setting for procreation. (p. 20).

Christian bioethics is the imprint of Christian morality and ethics on the issues about human life and relationships, which present very serious controversies due to a variety of opinions and choices which contradict traditional religious morality. Engelhardt (2016) is of the opinion that the decline of Christian bioethics is often attributed primarily to the secularization of the public fora and public spaces of the West. In line with this he asserts:

Christian ethics lost its prominence in the 1970s and early 1980s in great measure due to the form of self-demolition tied to a failure to be authentically Christian. A discount of the doctrinal differences separating Christianity from secular, thought was encouraged by the ethos of dialogue and ecumenism. It became socially acceptable to underscore the gulf separating Christian morality and bioethics from that of secular culture. It became politically incorrect to forthrightly recognize the obvious differences separating the Christianities by what in a different age would have been termed matters of heresy.

The new postmodern attitude to Christian bioethics also obviously disregards the core Christian teaching on the unacceptability of homosexuality. It also seeks to remove the moral inhibitions on practices such as sex-change surgery (transsexualism), abortion, the use of donor gametes in reproduction, etc.

Ashley and Rourke (1992) commenting on the hedonistic attitude of modern day society point out that human pursuit of freedom has the goal of creating many

alternative means to a goal, some of which are clearly inappropriate and disadvantageous. This makes it impossible for people to reconsider their goals and to redefine or even alter them in view of some higher goal. (p. 58).

Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation on the Family (cited by Ashley and Rourke, 1982) speaks in favour of a "personalized sexuality" in which the begetting of children in a heterosexual marriage is a true and responsible usage of sex for interpersonal purposes. The papal exhortation questions homosexual unions because the love so expressed lacks the complementarity of male and female related to the fruitfulness of marriage. In homosexuality, the full meaning of sexuality is essentially frustrated and its integrated values separated. (p. 213-214).

Another Papal Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (cited by May, 2000) takes in details the threats menacing human life today, at the root cause of which is the emergence of a perverse idea of human freedom, understood as the autonomous freedom of individuals to be the arbiters of good and evil, right and wrong. (p. 20). Christian ethics stipulate that the only sexual relationship that is acceptable is the integration of sexual pleasure with love and family life in a heterosexual marriage. On this premise, the hedonistic ethics inherent in homosexual practices is unrealistic and unwarranted in Christian ethics.

In terms of the continuity of the human race, homosexuality is always a threat to species survival. Rohy (2012) asserts that one of the facets of homosexuality - gay marriage should be prohibited because same-sex unions do not like heterosexual marriage enable the "survival of the species". In endorsing biblical teaching on

heterosexual marriage, Carson (cited by Rohy, 2012) identifies science as the pretext for heteronormative bias. She postulates:

New research guided by evolutionary theory does agree with Genesis that humans, from our very origin as unique creatures on earth, have been defined by heterosexual monogamy, in view of which homosexuality emerges as an obvious biological and cultural dead end. (p. 101).

Even going by the theory of evolution which is concerned with the propagation of species, Holowell (cited by Rohy, 2012) states that to recognize homosexuality and same-sex marriage would "bring reproduction to a screeching halt, leading to the eventual extinction of the human race", and that heterosexuality is synonymous with procreation which ensures futurity for collective survival, making the confrontation with the homosexual culture a matter of life and death. (p. 105).

In essence, Christian ethics on human life and man's continued existence is basically negated by the very practice of homosexuality which for the vast majority of Christians worldwide is an aberration of heretical dimensions. This is more so because apart from the ethical and moral undermining of both divine and natural law which homosexuality represents, if it is accepted as one of the sexual orientations which people can freely choose, and if it happens that every human being opts for it, that would invariably lead to the extinction of the human race on our planet.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This section presents an examination of the operational theories used in the research, and the relationship of the theories to the deductions and conclusions that are presented in this work. Philosophies help to mould world-views, and world-views which are generally shaped and influenced by theories affect the culture and behaviour of human beings in society. In the aspect of sexual ethics, a number of theories have been put forward by scholars to explain man's sexual potentialities as they manifest in and affect inter-personal relationships in the society. This section will examine six major theories that are related to the topic of human sexuality especially as they relate to sexual aberrations in both religion and in the human society in general.

### **2.2.1 The Psychoanalytic Theory**

Sigmund Freud proposed the famous psychoanalytic theory of human sexual development in which he proposed five stages of human psychosexual development. Freud (cited by Matlin, 1999) asserts that growing children experience conflicts between urges in the erogenous zones of their body and the rules of society. During the phallic stage at which emphasis shifts to the sex organs, the growing child finds pleasure in masturbation and boys experience an Oedipus complex in which conflict of his sexual impulses are directed toward his mother, and he views his father as a rival. Freud maintained that a girl in the phallic stage notices her lack of a penis, and decides that her mother was responsible and

therefore develops hostile feelings for her mother while her love for her father grows.

Through proper resolution of the Oedipus complex, a boy will forsake his incestuous desires for his mother and come to identify with his father. As a result, his attraction will be eventually and naturally transferred to more appropriate female partners. A girl through proper resolution of her Electra complex will identify with her mother and seek sexual fulfillment with men when she becomes sexually mature. In other words, the child's identification with the same-sex parent leads to the successful resolution of the Oedipus and Electra Complexes and results to his and her developing a mature and natural sexual identity.

In Freud's view, a gay or lesbian sexual orientation results from failure to resolve the Oedipus/Electra Complexes successfully. In men, this will most likely lead to a boy identifying himself as a female, because of the close bonding with his mother. This Freudian theory with its interesting concepts such as 'castration anxiety' in the male child and the 'penis envy' in the female child are believed to operate at the level of the unconscious and as such, they are beyond the level of scientific observation and proof. However, in spite of the lack of proof and the uncertainty of the Freudian theory, homosexuals and their sympathizers wrongly invoke the 'complexes' in the theory to aid their argument that homosexual traits are innate in homosexuals or result from the circumstances surrounding their upbringing. In this aspect, Freud's theory has contributed to the spread of sexual aberrations in modern society.

### **2.2.2 The Humanistic Approach Theory**

The humanistic approach of behaviour patterns argues that people have enormous potential for personal growth. Matlin (1999) states that “this approach gained prominence in the early 1960s when Carl Rogers (1961) and Abraham Maslow (1962) published books on humanism; these two developed the humanist approach as an alternative to other theories on human behavior” (p. 428). To expatiate on this theory, Rogers used the term ‘self-actualization’ to capture the natural underlying tendency of humans to move forward and fulfill their true potential. Rogers emphasized that this active self-development tendency provided the underlying basis of the person-centered approach. Rogers claimed that self-actualizing tendencies were frequently stifled by restricting self-concepts which lead to people acting in ways that distorted their “true selves” in order to win positive regard from other people in the society. He therefore recommends that everyone should be given “unconditional positive regard” which is non-judgmental and genuine love without any strings attached.

The snag in this theory is that it has been proven that permissive parents who allow children to make their own decisions often produce immature offspring with little or no self-control, whose unsupervised psycho-social development with regards to sexuality, leads to their ending up as deviants, and contributing to the spread of sexual aberrations in society. Unconditional positive regard does not necessarily encourage self-actualization. The most successful parenting style is the



authoritative approach, with both love and clear-cut moral standards being used to influence behaviour in compliance with accepted norms in society.

### **2.2.3 Environmental Theories of Homosexuality**

Many environmental theories have been floated to explain the origins of homosexuality. The Freudian theorists argue that a male is likely to become gay when raised by a weak, detached ineffectual father who is a poor heterosexual role model and by an over-protective, overly-attached mother with whom the boy identifies. Weiten (2005) states:

Behavioral theorists argue that homosexuality is a learned preference acquired when same-sex stimuli have been paired with sexual arousal perhaps through chance seductions by adult homosexuals. Extensive research on homosexuals' upbringing and childhood experiences has failed to support either of these theories. (p. 273).

Learning theorists agree with Freud that early experiences play an important role in the development of sexual orientation. They concentrate on the role of the reinforcement of early patterns of sexual behaviour rather than on the resolution of unconscious conflicts. People generally repeat pleasure activities and discontinue painful ones. Thus, people may learn to engage in sexual activity with people of their own sex in the sexual experimentation of their immediate environment in pursuance of sexual pleasure.

Gagnon and Simon (1973) state as follows:

If sexual motivation is high, as it tends to be during adolescence, and the only outlets are with others of one's own sex, adolescents may experiment sexually with them. If these are pleasurable, and heterosexual experiences are unpleasant, a firmer gay male or lesbian sexual orientation may develop. (p. 24).

Conversely, pain, anxiety or social disapproval may be connected with early contacts with people of one's own sex. In such cases, the child may learn to inhibit feelings of attraction to people of his or her own sex and develop a firmer heterosexual orientation. Although people's recollections of the past need to be interpreted with caution, these findings suggest that the roots of homosexuality are more biological than environmental.

Commenting on the pressure for acceptance being exerted by homosexuals on the society and the significant progress that has been recorded, Foucault (1978) agreeably states:

We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was characterized less by type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a specie. (p. 56).

The strong influence and growing acceptability of homosexuals and homosexuality is a pointer to the fact that in modern times the homosexual way of life has matured to infect and saturate the human sexual environment. In general terms, morality

that is firmly grounded on cultural or religious principles should not depend on the whims and caprices of environmental factors which tolerate constant change. Religious tenets hardly change and as most ethics derive from religion, the environmental theories of sexual behaviour which motivate sexual deviance are clearly at odds with the Christian and other religious teaching on sexual morality.

#### **2.2.4 The Natural Law Theory**

Thomas Aquinas (cited by Reich, 1995) propounded the “natural law” theory which helped Christianity in the Western world for many centuries and remains a significant basis of Roman Catholic moral philosophy. Aquinas argued that whatever was natural was good, and anything unnatural was sinful. On the issue of human sexuality, his argument anchors on two major assumptions: that good sexuality cannot be determined by asking what social role sexuality plays in human affairs in society, secondly, that the world was created and is governed by divine reason. Human beings participate in the divine reason through their own reason, which gives them access to the eternal law, the natural law which he calls God’s plan for the world. Succinctly put, Aquinas believes that sex was intended for procreation, and that all non-procreative sex violates natural law and is sinful, being opposed to both human nature and the will of God. (p. 47). From the foregoing theory, one can say that all same-sex practices and marriages are unnatural and sinful since they cannot lead to procreation.

In human society, it is generally believed that individuals have rights to life, liberty and property. In the course of their co-operative co-existence, individuals must be willing to exercise considerable tolerance of the religious and moral opinions of other members of the society, for them to enjoy their own rights. Although individual liberty is taken for granted in any free society, natural rights extremists take a much more permissive interpretation by maintaining that individuals are also free to choose the sexual acts in which they want to participate, and that right and wrong sexual conduct depends on free consent and respect for the rights of others. Carson (2008) exploring the notion of freedom and democracy in the secular world states:

Democracy is...tied to notions of freedom. Yet freedom is far more than a political theory. One may be “free” from constraints of the state, but one may also be “free” from traditions, free from God, free from morality, free from inhibitions, free from oppressive parents, free from wise parents, free from assignments of various kinds, free from sin and much more. (p. 128).

The notions of freedom and democracy have therefore been over-exploited to the point of rejecting natural law on human sexuality in search of a new morality, at the whims and caprices of modern man. The natural law theory stipulates what should be the right attitude to human sexuality, as it is in tandem with the requirements of nature, and accommodates both religious and cultural stipulations of sexual behaviour.

### **2.2.5 The Categorical Imperative Theory**

This theory was propounded by Immanuel Kant and it emphasizes absolutism (the opposite of relativism) which states that the responsibility to keep moral law is a duty that allows no exceptions. Kant (cited by Richardson, 1983) presents the notion of a categorical imperative as an action which is objectively necessary in itself, quite apart from any relationship to a further end. (p. 85). As a created being, man is subject to the laws of nature and reason, and bound by rational law to treat the rest of humanity in every case as an end, and never as a means only. In other words, neither private interest nor personal feelings can be the grounds of the moral imperative.

The categorical imperative theory aligns with axiology which posits that standards of moral value are absolute, objective and eternal, and not merely relative to human interpretation. Kant refers to 'autonomy' as the human will giving itself the law independently of any other property or objects of volition, and 'heteronomy' which entails something other than the will giving it the law. Tillich (cited by Runes, 1962) modifies Kant's theory by adding the term 'theonomy' which asserts that "the superior law is at the same time the innermost law of man himself, rooted in the divine ground which is man's own ground" (p. 254). In other words, as man originated from God, divine law is man's imperative, and compliance is particularly expected of adherents of religions that have what they take as divine laws.

Gert (1998) in referring to the imperative nature of moral laws asserts that the generality of moral rules simply prohibit or require general kinds of actions, and

this means that considerations of persons, place, group, or time are irrelevant. (p. 127).

The categorical imperative theory disagrees with libertarian supposition that right and wrong sexual conduct depends on an independent personal evaluation of good sexuality. Kant (cited by Reich, 1995) did not argue from the primacy of individual will or rights, but rather that “moral judgment depends on a maxim of action determined by the categorical imperative: act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become universal law” (p. 39).

The Kantian understanding is expressed in the judgment that sexual relationships ought to be characterized by mutual respect, trust and love, and that using persons as sex objects is dehumanizing and morally wrong. Voluntary free consent in sexual relationships though recommended, is not sufficient as a standard of human sexual morality. Hence, the overemphasis on free consent as the sole requirement for sexual relations between two or more persons, which is one of the supposed strong contentions of liberalists in modern times, falls far too short of the moral framework that is required to maintain sexual sanity in human society

### **2.2.6 The Theory of Hedonism**

Hedonism is a school of thought that argues that pleasure is the only intrinsic good.

In very simple terms, a hedonist strives to maximize net pleasure minus pain.

Ethical hedonism is the idea that all people have the right to do everything in their power to achieve the greatest amount of pleasure possible to them. Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, credits ethical hedonism to Aristippus of Cyrene, a student of

Socrates. While Socrates emphasized the higher pleasures of the intellect, hedonists stressed bodily pleasures as being more simple, intense and preferable. However, even hedonism recommends that a wise person should be in control of pleasures rather than being enslaved to them otherwise pain will result. Judgment is required to evaluate the pleasures of life and regard should be paid to law and custom because violating them will lead to unpleasant penalties being imposed by others.

Similar to hedonism is Epicureanism which was founded by Epicurus (c. 341- 270 BC). As a form of hedonism, it declares pleasure as the sole intrinsic good worthy of pursuit, with the absence of pain as the greatest pleasure. On the issue of sex, Epicurus recommended moderation and cautioned that sex could lead to increased lust and eventual dissatisfaction with the sexual partner.

Encyclopedia Britannica (1975) states that:

The later followers of Epicurus, like Lorenzo Valla further projected the philosophy by adding that the true good is pleasure, not virtue. Epicureans refuse to be perturbed by any metaphysical or religious doctrines which impose duties that hinder the freedom of pure enjoyment. (p. 911).

Hedonism and Epicureanism in spite of their shortfalls have remained some of the outstanding behavioural attitudes adopted and pursued by man in modern society, and they help to breed sexual aberrations of all types.

### **2.2.7 Relativism**

One of secularism's most useful devices for weakening religious sexual morality has been the policy of relativizing and individualizing values and beliefs. Religious

doctrines are treated with personal tastes as if there are no absolutes which require compliance in the context of morals applicable to all. The dictum of relativism is pursuit of individual choices without recourse to the general good of the society.

Blamires (1999) points out “the subtle use of “Sexual Orientation,” a modern concept which suggests that individuals have a range of possibilities before them as they consider what is to be the object for satisfaction of their sexual drives” (p. 97).

The modern individual feels free to choose a member of the opposite or the same sex; a little boy or girl; a four-legged animal or a corpse to derive sexual satisfaction from. Blamires states further:

Once the individual impulse toward sexual satisfaction by means of this or that object is labeled as “sexual orientation”, it is thereby put in the same category as the normal sexual desires of men and women... The battle for morality and reason is often lost or won when a new verbal usage is accepted or rejected. (p. 97).

Along this line of thought is society’s acceptance of a term like ‘single-parent family’ without objecting to its absurdity and the acceptance of the term ‘homosexual’ and granting it equal status with ‘heterosexual’ as two sexual options to be chosen from freely without any moral scruples, and the basis on which ‘family’ could be defined.

The tolerance and acceptance of nearly all sexual acts between “consenting adults” is the present standard of the modern secular societies. The fact that ‘adults’ are willing and give consent even if for indulgence in mutual acts of sexual depravity is being presented as the norm, regardless of the creator’s consent or otherwise.



Golden (1986) points to the contribution of the Humanist Manifesto which was promulgated in 1973 to the modern trend. One of the principles of the Manifesto states:

There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitative, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit by law or social sanction sexual behavior between consenting adults. (p. 16).

The Humanists have significantly contributed to the revisionist attitude to morality in modern times by placing human needs and experience far above the authority of religion and creeds in their philosophy. This they hope to achieve by rejecting those features of traditional religious morality that they suspect would deny human beings a full appreciation and enjoyment of their potentialities. With this modern trend, what may seem as sexual perversion to a person may mean sexual liberation or an alternative lifestyle. Whatever two consenting adults decide to do sexually is their business, as long as it does not hurt anyone. This trend towards greater tolerance by society can be seen in the changes being made in sexual language, as noted by Gagnon (cited by Nduka, 2003), “Words such as nice and virtue, grace and sinfulness gave way to such terms as ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ mature and perverse. Today we hear with equal frequency, expressions such as ‘meaningful relationships’ and sexual variations instead of deviations” (p. 79).

In trying to mellow down the sinfulness of sexual immorality, modern society has subtly adopted terms like ‘having an affair’, ‘having a swing’ or ‘having fun’ to refer to sexual experience outside marriage. Thus the ‘fun’ derivable from sex is advertized for all to partake in.

In all societies, religion used to be the sole source of morality. In the modern society, religion is turning into something which responsible people feel they do not need any more for ordering their lives. Haselbarth (1976) opines that:

The philosophical trend of idealism tried to separate ideas of the good from traditional religious support and build up a system of independent self-evident values thereby following the famous Greek philosopher Plato... If at first ethics were derived from religion so today the so-called “humanists” agree among themselves to their independence. (p. 3).

The widespread changes in attitude to sex are part of widespread changes in moral attitudes towards life in general in the society. These changes are best understood in the context of the broader changes in philosophical and moral ideas of modern society. Smedes (1985) has pointed out the features of what he called the ‘brave new sexuality’ as the increase in pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, variant sex, homosexuality and public sex. Variant sex implies using any type of material, and unlimited experimentation in search of sexual pleasure. Public sex refers to the lifting of the privacy that sex used to have, for public discussion and viewing.

## **2.3 Empirical Studies**

This section of the work reviews literature that has been written on the subject matter of sexual aberrations and their influence on the Anglican Communion. The aim of this section of the review is to highlight the record of written evidence that proves that there is actually the practice of sexual aberrations in the Anglican Church, from the previous studies undertaken on the topic of homosexuality and other sexual aberrations in the Church, which is the problem that motivated this research. This section is treated under four sub-headings.

### **2.3.1 Sexual Aberrations in the Anglican Communion**

It is obvious that the Anglican Church's teaching has been deeply affected by cultural assumptions of the society, and Christians whose ideas have been influenced by the prevailing worldviews tend to disregard the established beliefs and practices of the Church, especially with regard to human sexuality. The need to identify with the current cultural trends is a huge emphasis in our modern society, and Anglican Christians who want to 'flow with the times' have readily allowed secular agenda to influence their religious beliefs. Lamenting this unfortunate development sweeping across the Christian denominations, Ellul (cited by McGrath, 1993) states:

What troubles me is not that the opinions of Christians change, nor that their opinions are shaped by the problems of the times... What troubles me is that Christians conform to the trend of the moment without introducing into it anything specifically Christian. Their convictions are determined by their

social milieu, not by faith. Thus, theologies become mechanical exercise that justify the positions adopted, and justify them on grounds that are absolutely not Christian. (p. 121).

The encounter between liberal Western Anglicanism and the orthodox stand of the Church of Nigeria with regard to Christian sexual morality is traceable to the influence of certain agents of change in the Western societies, whose impact overflowed into Nigeria and other parts of the Anglican Communion where Western cultural influence dominated through colonization and missionary work. Biema and Mayer (cited by Nebo, 2008) in reference to the crisis in the Anglican Communion posit:

The simmering debate on homosexuality has exploded into a "brutal battle", pitting some of the wealthiest and most liberal of the 38 Provinces notably those in North America, against a larger, more socially conservative group concentrated in Africa and Asia known as the Global South. At the 1998 edition of the Lambeth Conference, the concluding language called homosexual practice "incompatible with Scripture". Yet in 2003, the Episcopal Church, the Anglican body in the U.S made Gene Robinson, an openly gay man, bishop of New Hampshire. (pp. 50-51).

In total agreement on the damage the adoption of sexual aberrations has done to the Anglican Communion, Nmah (2004) states:

The new marriage partnership which gay Bishop Gene Robinson of Anglican Episcopal Church of America who was consecrated by 50 bishops including the Archbishop of Episcopal Church of America, Griswold has generated a

lot of heated debates among Christians especially among the Anglican faithful. (p. 75).

The world-wide Anglican Communion has been under pressure ever since because of sharp differences over scriptural interpretation and re-interpretation especially on whether the Bible bars gay relationships. The disagreement worsened in 2003 after the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson contrary to the recommendation of Lambeth Conference 1998. Amagada (2010) states:

This wave of strange doctrines had steadily crept into the church in 1998 during the Lambeth Conference in the United Kingdom, where the Western leaders of the church tolerated the idea of gay priests in its fold. Since then, the gay issue continues to dominate discourse within the global Anglican community. (p. 88).

Amagada further states that following the 1998 Lambeth Conference that affirmed the teaching of the Holy Scripture regarding faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in a life-long union, then General Convention of the Episcopal Church USA responded in July 2000 by approving Resolution DO39 acknowledging relationships other than marriage “in the body of Christ and in this Church” and that “those who disagree with the traditional teachings of the Church on human sexuality, will act in contradiction to that position!” (p. 47).

Thus ECUSA’s Resolution DO39 gave the impetus and set in motion the revisionists’ processes for the preparation of official rites for the blessing of the relationships other than the Church’s accepted definition of marriage.

### **2.3.2 The Ordination of Homosexuals**

The unnecessary changes in theology and practice regarding human sexuality by Anglicans in the Western world and the effects of such changes have actually damaged the credibility of the Anglican world mission in no small measures. Okoye (2009) points to a disturbing event that testifies to a regrettable deviation from the biblical requirements for ordination in the form of admission of some homosexuals into the holy orders in the Western Churches. He states:

That perversion of the word of God concerning the ministry of the church has given impetus to homosexuals and lesbians to seek the blessing of their perverse relationships in the Church. The wedding of some gays and lesbians in some churches in America and Canada and attempts to re-write the Bible and Liturgy to suit their decadent lifestyle are steps being taken to glorify the prince of darkness. (pp. 30-31).

Though there has been a long history of homosexual practices since the creation of man on the earth, the idea of same-sex marriage was rare and widely unacceptable until in our modern times. The growing agitations for the acceptance of homosexual marriages also called civil unions have brought a paradigm shift in the societal understanding and attitudes towards homosexual relationships, even in the Anglican Church. Uzoma and Okoye (2010) assert that the complex, divisive and delicate issue of same-sex marriage has split the unity of the Anglican Church which now operates under two umbrellas – the conservative group and the liberals. While the liberals advocate that same-sex marriage should be legalized and accorded full rights of recognition, conservatives maintain that the Church is not

prepared to abandon its traditional teaching in favour of the idea of a gender-neutral marriage. (p. 78).

Homosexuals in the Anglican Church argue that they are being denied of their human rights and freedom of choice of marriage partners and demand that they should be allowed to express their sexual needs in the church, which according to them, should have no outcasts. In tracing the progress of the liberals in England, Uzoma and Okoye (2010) state that Civil Partnerships were legalized in England in 2010 by the Labour Equality Act. The further posit:

The major issue of the debate is that such (civil partnership) contracts should be held in religious worship centers... The Equality Act removed the express prohibition on Civil Partnership registration taking place in religious premises. The liberal Democrats insisted that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender marriages be conducted with religious language, music and Bible readings. (p. 79).

Also Crammer (cited by Uzoma and Okoye, 2010) states that in June 15, 2008, the first Church of England's gay marriage between Peter Cowell and David Lord (both priests) was performed in defiance of the conservative Bishop of London. (p. 79).

These moves in England which drew inspiration from the progress of the liberals in America, Canada and Australia have put the Anglican Church under pressure because while the revisionists insist that homosexual marriage be integrated fully as a Church rite, the conservatives are fully resistant to the new trends in the Church.



**Figure 2:** Wedding of Anglican gay priests- Peter Cowell and David Lord in June 2008.  
Source: Daily Mail.



Lewis (cited by Slocum, 1999) traces the ordination of homosexual persons in the Episcopal Church in America to the mid-1970s even when the Church has not formally accepted homosexuals. He states:

The ordination of avowed homosexuals is not new to the church. Bishop Paul Moore of New York ordained Ellen Barrett in 1975, which earned him the censure of the House of Bishops... Bishop Walter Righter, assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Newark, was brought to trial for the ordination of a gay man to the diaconate. But the ecclesiastical court found that the Episcopal Church had no “core doctrine” prohibiting such ordination. (p. 17).

Goss (cited by Brunskill, 2003), tracing the origins of the modern demands for emancipation by homosexuals, identifies the Stonewall riots of June 27, 1969 in New York’s Greenwich village as the moment when the gay and lesbian community began to come out to fight back publicly against police harassment and entrapment. Brunskill further states that before Stonewall, lesbians and gay men largely remained quietly in the background and tolerated the activities and attitudes of the oppressive majority. From that time onwards, homosexuals responded to oppression by organizing marches and sit-ins and demanding their rights to be accepted as part of the society. In this way the relationship of homosexuals to the majority of the population and their right to freedom from oppression was forced into the public domain as well as into various Christian denominations. (pp. 73-74). As the homosexuals made progress in both the church and in the wider society, instead of them seeking forgiveness which Christianity demands, they accused the

church of sponsoring homophobia (fear of homosexuals) and insisted that the church should be making atonement for the harm it has inflicted on homosexuals over the centuries.

Schmidt (2004) asserts that biblically-minded Christians who oppose the current growing sexual immoralities like sex outside marriage and homosexuality are negatively referred to as 'bigots'. Though Christianity greatly elevated the world's sexual morality, it appears that the too many nominal Christians in America no longer seem to appreciate, much less defend the God-pleasing sexual standards which are a major contribution by Christianity to world civilization, rather feverish efforts are underway to bring back the sexual debauchery of ancient paganism (p. 94).

Referring to the Church of England's attitude to the cultural context and sensitivity of its members, Starkey (1997) asserts that for a church to be culturally-attuned to the people around is no shame, but states the inherent danger that "the culturally-attuned church could become the culturally-captive church, a church so pastorally sensitive to its people that it ceases to offer any sort of challenge" (p. 55). Citing the Church of England's 1995 report titled "Something to Celebrate" which noted the current massive changes in sexual mores and the variety of household types now on offer in the society, Starkey rightly disagrees with the report's suggestion that Christians need to develop a new sexual ethic to keep in step with the times, and that not to affirm the whole variety of sexual arrangements presently on offer will make the Christian gospel out of touch with today's world. In conclusion,

Starkey notes that the Church of England was heavily in favour of its pastoral ministry to its members much to the detriment of its prophetic call to make God's word known. He summarizes thus:

To adopt a pastoral mode at the expense of the prophetic is to conspire with the spirit of the age and turn a blind eye to the hopes and lives it is destroying. It is to shake hands with a compulsive, damaging culture and say it was right all along. To bless the sexual choices of our culture and suggest we reshape our ethics accordingly is equivalent to telling the alcoholic he can have that extra Scotch if he believes it will make him feel calmer. (p. 56).

The unspoken assumption by the liberals in the Church of England is that culture leads and then the gospel follows, as if whenever the ideals of the Church fail to match with the reality in modern society then such ideals should be either reassessed or discarded. This modern 'consumer culture' approach typified much of the attitude of liberals in the rest of the Anglican Communion when pastoring of church members has been reduced to mere pampering, to accommodate all their new tastes and sexual orientations.

Germond (2004) highlights the problem created by the fact that modern man sees the churches and their messages of sexuality as already largely irrelevant to the world. Bemoaning the situation in the Anglican Church occasioned by the disagreement on homosexuality, he states:

The Anglican Church faces an extremely testing period where the basis of its unity is challenged, by the appointment of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New

Hampshire. Can Anglicans agree to differ on the understanding and interpretation of sex and sexuality as they have agreed to do on many other crucial issues? (p. 65).

The Communion's present division is caused mainly by the severe disagreement in the church created by liberal sections which accepted acts that were formerly viewed as sexual aberrations in the church. This attempt to reconfigure sexual moral theology in the Anglican Church has naturally occasioned serious and painful strains on the foundations of the unity of the Church.

Goldengay (2011) in highlighting the fact that the divide in the Anglican Communion is mainly between liberal Western Anglican Provinces and the non-Western global South Provinces cites an outstanding exception:

Desmond Tutu a high-profile non-Western Anglican supports gay rights for the same reason that he worked for the rights of blacks in South Africa for an end to apartheid. From this perspective, it seems that homosexuals are an oppressed group in need of liberation from prejudice and oppression, and so he would argue...that Christians ought to side with those seeking equal rights for homosexual persons. (p. 8).

In spite of this and other few exceptions, the majority of Anglican Church leaders in the developing countries especially in Africa still regard the attempts to accept in the Communion the sexual aberrations inherent in homosexual acts and marriages as unbiblical and an example of Western imperialism.



**Figure 3:** African gays and lesbians cheer the Church of England's vote favouring same sex unions and denounce the stand of the Orthodox Anglicans in the Communion, on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.

Source: Out and Proud African LGBTI.

### **2.3.3 Blessing of Same-Sex Unions**

In utter disregard of the decisions and resolution of the Lambeth Conference on human sexuality, the Episcopal Church in America apart from accepting homosexuals into the church's life and ministry also institutionalized and formalized its action by the formulation of the backing-up liturgies for homosexual marriages. Wirenius (2004) states that at its 2012 General Convention, the Episcopal Church adopted a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex couples entering into marriage which could be used within dioceses whose bishops approve of its use. (p. 505). This act of consolidation came when the Anglican Communion has literally been torn apart over the recognition and acceptance of homosexuals in the church.

The ecclesial structure in Anglicanism allows much autonomy to dioceses i.e. bishops, and this allows each bishop to lead his diocese either in the liberal or in the conservative traditions. This has greatly nurtured the growth of sexual aberrations to the point of the acceptance of homosexuals in significant sections of the Western Church today. Bartel (2007) highlights what he refers to as the 'scandal' in the Anglican Communion as having developed from the intransigence of the Churches in America and Canada in pursuing the incorporation of homosexuals into their Churches. In reference to the stipulations of the Windsor Report which the liberals continue to flout, he states:

It is of paramount importance to realize that the scandal test is not intended merely to determine whether a church should submit a proposed innovation

to the wider Communion for consideration; it is also supposed to determine whether the wider Communion should approve of that innovation. Hence, as long as consecration of non-celibate gay bishops, the blessing of same-sex unions, and similar measures cause considerable scandal and offence to fellow Anglicans, all Churches in the Communion should desist from such measures. (p. 405).

Thus it is very clear that the widespread disaffection in the Anglican Communion occasioned by the disagreement on the place of homosexuals in the church is a sign that something is wrong with whatever reasons the revisionists are putting forward in favour of an innovation on sexual morality as the Church teaches it.

The North American churches which are duty-bound to consult with the wider Communion or at least delay action until some sort of approval was obtained went on to unilaterally implement their 'new theology' in favour of homosexuals in their Churches. The impact of the sexual aberrations adopted by some Churches in the Anglican Communion, especially the election and confirmation of the gay Gene Robinson as a bishop in America affected both whole Provinces and ordinary Anglicans on the ground. Presler (2007) commenting on the backlash states:

Bishops in Kenya reported that some Anglican Church members had left the church, including ten prominent lay leaders in one diocese. A bishop in Burundi reported that when news of the confirmation reached his diocese ...he convened the clergy, some of whom wept at the impact of the news and questioned what could be happening to Anglican belief and practice. (p. 258).

The disruption of the traditional Anglican teaching and practice of sexual morality is thus established as the major cause of the present polarization of the Anglican Communion. Regarding the Western churches' view that the Episcopal Church's decision in favour of homosexuals represented an attempt to relate the gospel to a specific cultural context, Presler rightly states that Africa and other conservative Anglicans worldwide dismissed it as an empty argument "because homosexuality is sin" (p.260).

#### **2.3.4 The Acceptance and Ordination of Transsexuals**

Similar to the problem created by the acceptance of homosexuals in the church is also the developing problem of the place of transsexuals in the Anglican Church. Trans-sexualism involves female to male or male to female sex change through surgery. Watts (2002) states the growing tolerance of transsexuals in the Church's ministry in England inter alia:

The first public example of a transsexual priest in the Church of England, the case of Carol/Peter Stone in the Diocese of Bristol, has been instructive and encouraging. The congregations of the parish concerned were clear that they wanted their vicar to continue in the post after changing sex. The Bishop was happy to support that, and did so publicly and confidently...Gender reassignment is almost certainly not an offence that an ecclesiastical court would accept as unbecoming a clerk in holy orders. (p. 81).



With the growing trend of liberalism which breeds revisionist acts in the Anglican Churches of the Western world, it will not be a difficult venture by the church to add the blessing of marriages involving transgendered persons to the list of oddities, considering its similarity to same-sex unions which are already being contracted in the churches. Charry (2004) referring to the general decline of sexual morals in the Western society and in the Anglican Church laments:

Our culture has rejected the notions of sin and holiness, and also, for most people, sex is no longer a moral issue...The fact that the homosexuality debate has not been framed in terms of marriage and family indicates the separation our culture has made between “lifestyle” and social responsibility. (pp. 288-289).

For conservatives who hold that homosexuality is a misuse of the body, the appeal that homosexuals make to the loving context of their relationships is to no avail. As sexual holiness is a form of social responsibility, the practice of the ordination of sexually active homosexuals within the ecclesiastical regulation of some parts of the Anglican Communion clearly undermines the responsibility.

Bonnington and Fyall (1996) commenting on the tension between the Christ-against-culture model of the church and a Christ-and-culture model state that those who prefer the latter model tend to have greater sympathy for secular norms of behaviour. Those who argue for a revisionist position on sexual morals in the Church are guilty of following the ethical direction of the changing world rather than the teaching of Scripture. (p. 4). Referring to the experience of the Anglican Communion, they assert further:

This is a stern challenge...particularly in Churches like the Church of England, which contains a significant liberal group who are theologically predisposed to the greater acceptance of homosexuality in the church. Although evangelicalism and homosexuality are strange bedfellows, greater influence and responsibility have left evangelicals having to face the struggles of exercising sensible and effective pastoral oversight. (p. 14).

Part of the effort of managing the problem by conservatives of biblical teachings on human sexuality in the Anglican Church has been trying to provide the best possible pastoral care to the deviants who refuse to acknowledge their acts as aberrations. This is the only viable alternative since in the face of the steadily growing numbers and influence of the revisionists in the church, it has become impossible to isolate them.

## **2.4 Summary of Literature Review**

Over the centuries, religious ethics have had to battle excesses in sexual morality in successive generations in different human societies. Due to the forces of secularization in the modern world, it appears that religion is losing this battle in the Western world.

On the issue of sexual aberrations, homosexual orientation proponents are strongly pushing the rest of the society to accept that genetics, personal choices, environmental variables such as societal influences, early sexual trauma and family system or dynamics are responsible for homosexual orientation. In view of the fact

that there are no clear explanations for the cause of homosexual desire, some people in sympathy with them, believe they should be treated with compassion, and their sexual orientation respected. Unrepentant homosexual practice is however, not tolerated by orthodox Christianity, and the same intolerance is the current prevailing attitude of the majority of people generally in African societies, and particularly in Nigeria.

Some of the theories cited in this work like relativism, humanism, hedonism and the psychoanalytic theory have obviously been deeply entrenched in the academic and cultural psyche of many Christians in the Western world, and they act as the driving force propelling the spread of sexual aberrations in the other developed countries of the world. However, this dissertation is premised on a combination of Thomas Aquinas' natural law theory which generally rejects all unnatural sexual activity as sinful, and Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative theory which states that it is a necessary duty of all human beings to uphold and keep moral law without exceptions. The usage of the two theories was necessitated by the fact that the major problem of the research bothers on disagreement on moral and ethical issues within a religious group in human society.

Many scholars have written on various aspects and from different perspectives regarding the factors that engender and motivate sexual aberrations, but none have bothered to approach this problem from the perspective of the Anglican Church in Nigeria. Hence, this work is an attempt to provide the missing link in relation to the

effects of the Western revisionism and the attempt to 'modernize' Christian sexual morality in the Anglican Communion.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CHRISTIANITY AND SEXUAL ABERRATIONS**

Christian tradition was unquestionably opposed to homosexuality from the inception of the Christian religion. Normative sexual activity was construed solely in terms of sexual contact with the opposite sex within the bounds of marriage. Sex used to function at the command and constraints of religion to ensure procreation and the continuation of human life.

Germond (2004) states that in Christianity, licensing rules were regarded as absolutes, derived from revelation and ordained by God at creation for male-female marital union. He expatiates:

This truth was construed as timeless and authentic, the intended outcome of the creator's will, the original, essential and natural expression of human sexuality. The Christian rules about marriage were handed down from Christ, they were non-negotiable and were simultaneously universal and impersonal, giving no thought to the vagaries of time and place nor to needs of individuals. (p. 59).

In modern times, sexuality has moved from religious cum social licensing to individualized licensing and sexual contacts are going from being governed by objective rules, and being grounded in subject satisfaction of individual appetites. This has been the major cause of sexual aberrations in the society.

### **3.1 Sexual Aberrations in Religion**

From the word go, man in society has been subject to one form of ethics or the other, as a means of holding society together. Much of the ethics emanated from the primal religious traditions of the ancient peoples, and homosexuality and other sexual aberrations were not uncommon in ancient cultures, though the forms and views of homosexual behaviour vary significantly. Armstrong (1973) observes that most ancient civilizations grew powerful and prospered under a relatively stiff code of sexual ethics, and then when they gradually relaxed the standards at their height of influence, they declined amidst widespread immorality. He states:

Egypt is no exception. Many ‘modern’ ideas of the ‘new’ morality were quite old hat by the time of the early dynasties. If you have seen Egyptian hieroglyphics, you know that pornography is nothing new. Women were often the sexual aggressors...Genesis 39 gives an example of such an Egyptian temptress, Potiphar’s wife attempting to seduce young Joseph. (p. 16).

Wrong sex also played a significant part in Egyptian witchcraft and religion, as priests masquerading as gods, often took sexual advantage of gullible women. Concluding on sexual mores in ancient Egypt, Armstrong (1973) further points out that “incest became so common among Pharaohs in later dynasties, that many died early of inbred congenital deformities, including the famous Pharaoh Tutanhkamen who died at the age of 18” (p. 16).

In ancient polytheistic Greece Armstrong continues, the male human body was literally deified and revered as the epitome of Greek sexuality. Like the Egyptians the Greeks believed that their gods were born through incest with other gods. He refers to Hesiod's 'Theogony' (begetting of the gods), replete with stories of copulation, incest, rape, and orgy which resulted in the Greek Pantheon of gods. Since the gods who controlled much of Greek human life set such a libertine example in sexual matters, the Greek society naturally followed suit. The Greeks considered man to be naturally bi-sexual and this gave a boost to homosexuality. In militaristic Sparta for example, boys had older male 'lovers' by age 12, usually being their military commanders. Armstrong (1973) concludes that homosexuality was not limited to men in ancient Greece. "Women on the island of Lesbos were almost exclusively lovers of women, from where the modern word 'lesbian' originated. In Lesbos, the poetess Sappho ran a school for her girl lovers" (p. 17).

Rist (1969) highlights the Greeks' effrontery in perverted sexual morality in the orator Diogenes' argument that public masturbation should be upheld and incest to be treated with indifference. Diogenes also held that sexual intercourse should be "a matter of agreement between parties concerned. If a man can persuade a woman, that is all that is required" (p. 56).

Armstrong (1973) commenting on the Roman Empire states: "The early Roman Empire was morally strong, helping Rome grow to its pinnacle of power. After the advent of the empire, morals reached what may be an all-time low" (p. 18). After the Grecian empire was subsumed in the Roman Empire, much of Greek religion

and way of life were adopted, with similar effects on sexual morality. The Roman philosopher, Seneca, wrote at that time that lust was the primary satisfaction, and its consummation of the most common factor in social life. Armstrong further lamenting the situation states:

Emperors, supposedly the leaders of the people were perhaps the most depraved of all Romans. Nero, besides having frequent incestuous relations with his mother, once turned a young boy, Sporus into a girl by surgical means. He had a marriage ceremony with this young “it” with bridal veil and all. Caligula committed incest and other perversions...The Emperor Hadrian married a young Greek pageboy and orgies were common royal activity. (p. 18).

On the issue of wide practice of abortion, Armstrong quoted the Roman poet Juvenal as writing, “so subtle is the skill, so strong the drugs of the abortionists” (p. 19). The modern trans-sexual practice was also common in ancient Rome as “hybrids of men and women ...desired to be completely changed into women and went on to mutilate their genital organs” (p. 19).

Stott (1984) points out that one of the major signs of decadence in the Roman Empire was that its unwanted babies were ‘exposed’ that is abandoned and left to die. This was another alternative to abortion then. Historians agree that such depraved attitude to sex and its related issues helped quicken the downfall of the empire. Commenting on the contribution of religion to the sexual depravity of the Roman Empire, Schmidt (2004) states:



Whether it was the craving to have sex with boys or to have sex with all sorts of women, the conscience of the Roman populace and its emperors was dead as stone. The pagan gods whom the Romans worshiped did not set high moral standards, nor did they ask for contrition or repentance—that was foreign to Greco-Roman paganism. Instead...the pagan gods were often seen as the first cause of the spiral of desire. (p. 87).

Schmidt also sees a strong connection of societies that have perverted sexual practices with the prevalence of strong pagan values. He cited Walter William's work on homosexuality among American Indians as follows:

The Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia, the Crows, the Klamaths, the Hopi, the Sioux, the Navajo, the Zuni, the Yokuts, and other tribes in the United States all practiced homosexuality before contact with Westerners. Sometimes homosexual acts were intertwined with the religious ceremonies performed by shamans. (p. 89).

Mazrui (cited by Mbefo, 1996) referring to sexual morality in Africa states that Africans, like other human beings, are sexual beings, but by no means depraved when compared with the Euro-American sexual culture. He affirms:

The moral code was very strict in the largely conservative tribal groups. Female and male circumcisions were practiced in order to curb sexual drive. Men and women kept apart and carried out their functions in separated groups. There were severe actions against sexual misdeeds. Whosoever was responsible for a pregnancy had to marry the girl. A married woman that was

found unfaithful was sent back to her parents and the bride-price paid on her head repaid. (p. 140).

The fore-going largely represents the core African approach to sexual morality, in which setting, homosexuality was rarely heard off. Mazrui goes on to emphasize that polygamy for which European writers and missionaries criticized Africa was not a sign of sexual promiscuity, but has significant reasons other than gratification of the flesh.

In African societies, the system of ethics and morals are ingrained in the people's religion, customs and tradition, the three of which are inseparable. There is a community-based approach to moral issues in the society. Any violation of the moral order normally has a social aspect which involves serious social consequences which affects members of the society. Any negation of moral norms used to be interpreted as wronging the cosmic order, in which case the community was at risk if it condones the individual culprit. This makes righting the wrong a communal religious responsibility.

Foreign religions like Christianity and Islam to some extent disrupted African traditional life but helped in strengthening African traditional values on sexual morality. Magesa (2003) points out that Islam especially did not alter much of the African perception of the expression of human sexuality. (p. 205). With regard to the foregoing, the teaching of Judeo-Christianity is basically the same thing on sexual morality. Neal (cited by Curran, 1996) asserts that the relation of sexuality

to religious belief can only be discussed meaningfully within the context of a religious commitment rooted in the creator's willingness to share creation with man. She states, "As long as the central human need called for was continued motivation to propagate the race, it was essential that religious symbols idealize the process above all others" (p. 240). The forces of secularization in modern society have created a tension between religion and sexual morality with visible effects in the widespread acceptance of sexual aberrations in modern times. In as much as religion has not been totally abandoned, conscious effort has been made to excise its utility value from other spheres of life like sex, education, commerce, etc. The deteriorating rejection of Christian religious norms as they relate to the problem of homosexuality could also be viewed as a 'spiritual' problem. D. K. Bello (personal communication, January 9, 2014) believes that homosexuality and other sexual aberrations are signs of the end time events predicted in the Holy Scriptures. According to him "Things are not going to improve morally. In fact, morality shall continue to degenerate in human society and Christians must be awake lest they are overtaken by the satanic influences of the time".

Lyon (1985) posits that sexual morality like religion itself has been forced to flourish in people's private lives. The secularization of human thought produces a shrunken and shriveled view of God, who "supposedly squeezed out of the picture is safely shut off in the private areas of life with no contribution to make to operating the rest of his world" (p. 30).

Generally, the gratification of sexual desire outside heterosexual marriage is against the mores of the people in Africa. The act was however done in a clandestine manner and was comparatively less frequent before the encounter with Western civilization. This is because in spite of the modern day permissiveness in sexual matters, no generation, age or clime can be said to be totally devoid of deviants and sexual immorality. The desire to have offspring remains the fundamental motive for marriage in most societies. However the fact that there are sexual rules guided by religion and punishment for deviants confirms the fact that every society has the probability of non-conformists who go against the morals of sexuality in it.

Human beings are sexual beings, whose sexual nature has been pre-determined from creation. Because of the susceptibility to sexual urge which may go against established religious and cultural norms, all societies have built-in restrictions on indulgence in sexual activity. Norris (2008) rightly asserts:

No doubt it is for just this reason that human beings have found it useful to restrict sexual activity by custom or law i.e. to have what might be called sexual “institutions” which are perforce at the same time social institutions, like the various forms of marriage concubinage...they represent the organization of sexual activity in a collective, social or cultural, as distinct from an individual form, and as such they are susceptible to moral judgment as virtuous or vicious. (p. 468).

Before the emergence of Western colonization and missionary enterprise, African societies were highly organized. Akhilomen (2005) states that “all things were

functionally spiritual...thus the essentials of what constitutes the culture of the people were based on religious and in deep spiritual appreciation” (p. 51).

### **3.2 Types of Sexual Aberrations**

Sexual aberrations have been as old as the human race itself, since man’s imperfection is a strong factor in determining his behaviour. Nduka (2003) has rightly stated that despite the defense put up by psychologists, sociologists and other experts in other areas of knowledge, sexual perversion is a fact of modern society. He goes on to define sexual perversion as “the denial of, or deviation from the proper and natural function for which the sexes were created” (p.77). Homosexuality, going by this submission is a major sexual aberration.

Further reference to the Biblical definition of perversion in the book of Romans is made as “exchanging natural relations for unnatural ones”. Nduka agreeably concludes:

Implied in this definition of perversion is that there is a normal or natural function of human sexuality which can be deviated from or somehow distorted ... sexual perversion therefore is a departure from the created order, and by implication is rebellion against God. (p. 79).

Sexual perversion is largely motivated by modern understanding of man as having no imperatives, i.e. sex was no longer only for procreation and expression of love, but a means of recreation. Vertefueille (1988) states:

This novel attitude toward sex opened the door to all kinds of sexual experimentation such as multi-partner sex, same-sex relations, anonymous sex and bestiality, bisexuality, sadomasochism, pedophilia and other previously forbidden sexual experiences became the new frontiers. The more people experimented, the less gender distinctions mattered. (p. 13).

Other acts of sexual perversion include oral and anal sex which also fall into the unnatural order. Vertefeuille concludes that “sexual experiences which prohibit the meeting of persons such as voyeurism or fantasizing and masturbating over pornographic material also constitute a kind of perversion” (p. 35).

Digiacommo (1993) lists other aspects of sexual perversion as follows:

- (a) Sexual sadism – the practice of receiving sexual pleasure from inflicting pain on others.
- (b) Sexual masochism – the condition in which receiving pain is sexually exciting.
- (c) Voyeurism – the practice of obtaining sexual pleasure by watching others undressing or having sex.
- (d) Exhibitionism – the act of obtaining sexual pleasure by exposing one’s genitals to others.
- (e) Incest – sexual intercourse with blood relations.
- (f) Rape – forced sexual intercourse
- (g) Sexual harassment – unwanted sexual advances by word or deed. (pp. 442-444).

Commenting on the effects of pornography on the spread of sexual aberrations, J. B. Omole (personal communication, February 19, 2014) posits that acts of sexual deviance that are available on the internet and in other print and electronic media are not helping matters in modern day sexual morality. The menace of various aspects of the abuse of human sexuality is eating deep into the moral fabrics of every society. In fact, according to her, the wider and easier access to pornographic materials facilitated by modern information and communication technology largely motivates people to experiment with and indulge in various acts of sexual perversion.

Ruggiero (1992) also points out another aspect of sexual aberration:

The modern practice of wife-swapping or mate-swapping; this is the practice where a 'liberated' couple joins a mate-swapping club, attend parties together, and engage in sexual activities with other club members of their choice, and then go home together. (p. 137).

Similar to this according to Ruggiero, is the nude encounter group in which men and women who have sexual problems meet as a group and learn to perform sexually by experimenting with one another, as part of the therapy.

Campbell (1987) points out the working definition of a normative sexuality as “A heterosexual intercourse within a stable adult partnership, which is traditionally sanctioned by the form of marriage” (p. 250). This implies that any act of pre-marital, extra-marital or post-marital sex forms a deviation. Campbell outlines more aspects of perversion as follows:

- (i) Necrophilia – sex with a dead body.
- (ii) Fetishism – sexual attraction by one part of the body or by an inanimate object belonging to another person.
- (ii) Transvestitism – derivation of erotic excitement from dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex.
- (iv) Prostitution – making money from sexual intercourse. (p. 250).

Comer (1995) points out one of the most fascinating disorders related to sexuality as gender identity disorder or trans-sexualism. This is a disorder in which people persistently feel that a vast mistake has been made – they have been assigned to the wrong sex. Such persons are pre-occupied with getting rid of their primary and secondary sex characteristics, and finding their own genitals repugnant, such people seek and acquire the characteristics of the opposite sex. Comer gives more insight:

The first sex-change actually took place in 1931, but the procedure did not gain acceptance among practitioners...until 1952 when an operation converted an ex-soldier named George Jorgensen into a woman renamed Christine Jorgensen... By 1980, sex-reassignment surgery was routine in at least forty medical centers in the Western hemisphere... Approximately, 1,000 sex-change operations are performed each year in the United States. Studies in some European countries suggest that 1 out of every 100,000 women seek sex-change surgery. (p. 512).



This type of sex-change surgery is preceded by years of hormone treatment which culminates in the amputation of the penis and the creation of an artificial vagina for men, and the creation of a penis through the process of phalloplasty for women, and face-altering plastic surgery for both.

From the religious and cultural points of view, this is an act of deviation and perversion against both God and nature. Another popular aspect of modern sexual perversion is bisexuality which involves an individual combining both heterosexuality and homosexuality at the same time. Christian tradition was unquestionably opposed to homosexuality from the inception of the Christian religion. Normative sexual activity was construed solely in terms of sexual contact with the opposite sex within the bounds of marriage. Sex used to function at the command of society to ensure procreation and lineage interests, and was controlled by the granting or denial of the license to have sex and reproduce by both religion and the society. Religion and society through their mechanisms determined who had the right to marry, with whom and what kind of sexual activity was allowed.

Sexual aberrations obtain in virtually all societies in the world, but homosexuality is much more pronounced in Western societies than in Africa and the rest of the developing nations. According to S. C. Ezeofor (personal communication, January 10, 2014) the Christian gospel is really making impact on the lives of the people in Nigeria in the area of Christian sexual morality, in keeping the evils of homosexuality at bay. From his viewpoint, the most visible sexual aberrations

obtainable in the Nigerian society are fornication and adultery. Corroborating this viewpoint, I. U. Ordu (personal communication, January 8, 2014) states that people in his locality including Christians are still involved in fornication and adultery as in most parts of the world, despite the preaching of the church against them. In his own input, P. O. Chinyemugo (personal communication, February 19, 2014) asserts that because members of local church congregations are prone to their cultural beliefs and practices, though people accept that the marriage institution is honorable, still sexual promiscuity such as premarital sex and adultery are prevalent. In the same vein, E. T. C. Ifediora (personal communication, February 19, 2014) laments that despite the advancement of the Gospel in our local areas, the aberrations of co-habitation, polygamy and other aspects of sexual immorality prevail among both the youth and the married people. In essence, there is no society that can be said to be totally free from the practice of one sexual deviance or the other.

Given the peculiar circumstances of the church in Africa and Nigeria in particular regarding sexual morality, most Anglican dioceses in Nigeria frown at pre-wedlock pregnancy even for intending couples. H. A. Oguike (personal communication, February 20, 2014) points out that one of the ways the church tries to discourage this anomaly is to refuse wedding the pregnant lady to her husband until after child birth, when the marriage is then formally blessed in the church without the full trappings of an original church wedding. In supporting this input, A. Afiesimama (personal communication, February 20, 2014) states that part of the major cause of

the problem of pre-marital pregnancy, fornication and adultery is the churches' weakness in the conduct of a sustainable pre-marriage and post-marriage counseling for intending couples and those already married. On the issue of polygamy as one of the sexual anomalies in Christian ethics in Nigeria and Africa, D. N. Olinya (personal communication, January 9, 2014) states that the high rate of polygamous marriages in the Anglican Church in Nigeria is problematic because not much attention is given to its effect on the people and in the Church. According to him, this problem presents internal challenges that the Church must find solutions to, in the quest for members' total compliance to Christian sexual morality in the Anglican Church.

### **3.3 Homosexuality in Old Testament Teaching**

There is a deep correlation between the biblical understanding of God and the practical issues of human morality, especially human sexuality. Pagan misunderstanding of nature has been proven to antagonize heterosexual morality because polytheism tends to favour poly-gender, poly-sexuality and subsequently, homosexuality. Jones (2006) states that the Bible's theistic teaching reveals God not as the spirit within nature, but as nature's distinct creator and emphasizes the created distinctions of heterosexuality, which Judeo-Christianity maintains as a witness to the pagan world. (p. 103).

In modern society, the boundaries set by Judeo-Christianity regarding sexuality are widely ignored and the virtues they recommend are even described as defects.

Words like virginity, chastity, and abstinence are sneered at and sexual freedom and sexual fulfillment are presented as evidence of maturity, and this has motivated many people not to restrict their sexual activities to a monogamous heterosexual marriage. In the book of Genesis, the last divine act of separation in the creation narrative is when God makes humans male and female. Through this account, the Bible reveals that heterosexuality is the only model for human sexuality. This fundamental male-female distinction in the civil code of Israel is consistently maintained as the only sexual form acceptable to God. The male-female distinction and heterosexual sexuality are therefore spelled out as the norm in the Old Testament.

Hays (2003) notes that in the holiness code in Leviticus 18:22; and 20:13, male homosexual intercourse is expressly prohibited, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman, it is an abomination”. In Leviticus 20:10-16, the same act is listed as one of a series of sexual offenses along with adultery, incest and bestiality that are punishable by death. This unambiguous legal prohibition stands as the foundation for the subsequent universal rejection of male and female same-sex intercourse within Judaism. (p. 381)

Jones (2006) postulates that if creation is an interlocking network of separate but organically related spiritual and physical elements, anything that is discordant will skew the whole system. Man is the crown of God's creation and male-female intimacy in marriage reflects the very intimacy of God with man. The best place to

start dismantling creation is at its most beautiful element: human sexuality. (p. 150). After the fall of man through the entrance of sin, sexual deviance like adultery, rape, prostitution and homosexuality entered into human sexuality and man's pretended autonomy from God through disobedience left the most fundamental divine-human relationship in tatters.

Shields (2004) posits that the earliest mention of homosexual inclinations and attempted male homosexual activities is in the story of Lot in Sodom, Genesis:19 (1-11). The men of Sodom came with the intention of gang-raping Lot's two angelic visitors. This was the precipitating factor in the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and gave rise to the name "sodomy" for acts of the type the Sodomites practiced. (p.199). In essence, homosexuality was regarded by God as wickedness that called for a decisive and catastrophic punishment, and this theme runs through the Old Testament of the Bible.

The authors of the Old Testament Scripture were acutely aware of the power of the natural human sex drive in both men and women. But because of the need for restraint and the proper channeling of human sexuality, Old Testament law was quite specific in condemning sexual misconduct. The Scripture presents sexuality as a gift from God to be honoured and used as he intended, and to give him glory. Hence Old Testament Scripture sets clear boundaries within which sexual activities can legitimately take place.

Gehman (1970) states that sacred prostitution was part of the fertility cult in the worship of Ishtar in Babylonia, and at the shrines of the Canaanites in connection with the worship of Astarte, Asherah and Baal. The Old Testament condemns these rites as cult prostitution was inconsistent with the worship of Yahweh, and also has possible elements of homosexuality (Deut. 23:17-18). The prohibition in Leviticus 19:29 probably is a reference to cult prostitution. (p. 771). One of the highlights of King Josiah's sweeping religious reformation of Judah in the aspect of restoring sexual sanity is noted in II Kings 23 verse 7, "And he broke down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove." This was in keeping with Old Testament sexual ethics which taboos all acts of homosexuality and other acts of sexual perversion.

Biblical writers did not recognize the existence of homosexual orientation and it was assumed that perpetrators of homosexuality acted out a perversion of the natural and divinely approved sexual relations in a heterosexual marriage. Condemnation of homosexuality in Mosaic Law was also seen in the light of its being a common abominable practice in pagan temple rituals. Stivers (1989) states that Paul's later condemnation of homosexuality may have been motivated by the Greek practice of pederasty, the sexual exploitation of young boys by older men, a practice which was prevalent in the Graeco-Roman world up to the time of the New Testament writings. (p. 247).

### **3.4 New Testament Perspective on Homosexuality**

Generally, Christian scripture insists that every individual is responsible before God for his or her actions and this includes the ways his or her sexual powers are used or abused. The early Church did in fact consistently adopt the Old Testament teaching of sexual morality, including homosexual acts. For example in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10, homosexuals are included in the list of persons who do things unacceptable to God.

Though there is no record of Jesus making specific mention of homosexuality during his earthly teaching ministry, he takes the Genesis creation statement as pragmatic. Jones (2006) notes that in Jesus' endorsement of heterosexual marriage, he replied to the trick questions of the Pharisees, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the creator made them male and female?" Jesus simply assumes without question the normative status of heterosexuality as taught in the creation account.(p.129). Much of the New Testament teaching against homosexuality comes from the Epistles written by St. Paul, who also taking his bearing from the creation account sees humanity only as "male and female", (Galatians 3:28), and calls homosexual relations "unnatural".

Paul's most significant teaching on homosexuality is found in Romans 1:18-32. It is also the only place lesbian relations are mentioned. Jones (2006) states that Paul addresses three essential areas of human religious life affected by sin, mentioning three exchanges that drive his point home. The three exchanges are:

1. In theology, (Rom.1:23) “they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”
2. In spirituality, (Rom. 1:25) “they exchanged the truth for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator.”
3. In sexuality, (Rom.1:26) “they exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.”

These exchanges turn creation on its head - a radical apostasy in the essential areas of theology, spirituality and sexuality. (p. 142). As it relates to sexuality, those who reject the creator also reject the notion of the created natural order, and homosexuality aims to destroy the heterosexual separation that God has placed between male and female. Jones (2006) in line with New Testament stand on homosexuality states that “the joining together of the opposites that God has separated is both a radical rejection of creational norms and a powerful expression of pagan monistic rebellion” (p. 147). Paul's position was that homosexual acts are a product of man's fallen condition and an expression of a godlessness that sets aside the divinely initiated order in which marriage is to be a union of male and female, in a permanent relationship. Heterosexual marriage and the intimate physical and psychological relationships it entails are used to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church, (1 Cor.7:4). This relationship is the only one context for sexual intercourse that is approved by Christian Scripture. Relationships like those created by fornication, adultery, harlotry and homosexuality are different, and do not have divine or biblical approval.



Paul describes homosexual and lesbian relations as being against nature (Rom.1:26-27), and he is echoed by the apostle Jude who speaks of those who go after “strange flesh” (Jude verse 7). Both writers find no place for the unnatural and the strange in God’s ordered creation, and both predict ruinous consequences.(Jude verse 8). For Paul, the immediate reason for sexual perversion is the worship of the creation rather than the creator. For him, once creation is worshipped, anything is possible, even practices that go against nature. In the case of sexuality, the overturning of the created order and the endorsement of the unnatural and the perverted order gives rise to the existence of homosexuals and their practices.

In New Testament theology, God places a high premium on the physical human body and its usage. Jones (2006) asserts along this perspective:

God is in the body business. To be holy in the body is to use the body in the correct way in accordance with God’s creational design... In ancient Israel, the body’s physical state symbolized God’s demand for moral purity both of the individual and the nation. (p. 126).

According to Paul the chief writer of the New Testament scripture, God does not call a person to be impure, but to live a holy life (I Thess. 4:7). Believers are to serve and honour God in their physical bodies and misusing of the body is part of the constituent of sin. Consequently, the body is referred to as "the temple of the Holy Spirit," (I Cor. 6:19). Perhaps to counter the libertarian hedonistic understanding of the Greek world-view towards the human body, the New Testament teaching gives strong and equal priority to the body as well as the soul

and spirit. Greek philosophy and the greater part of the pagan world often dismissed the physical body as a worthless illusion. Christian teaching places the body at the center of Christian discipleship and service to God.

Shields (2004) states that the physical body and bodily sexuality are so important in the service of God and hence the Scripture's great attention to their rightful use. The Bible is aware of the power of sexual desire for good or for ill, and notes the transgression of sexual boundaries as a common expression of human rebellion typical in homosexual acts. (p.173). Exclusive heterosexuality within the bounds of marriage is what God requires from the Scripture as this reflects the identity of the creator's own nature and character on the created order.

Hays (2003) relates God's attitude to depravity in the context of Paul's teaching as that of wrath because acts of wickedness are a suppression of the truth and a radical rebellion of the creature against the creator. He further postulates:

Rebellion against this creator who may be "understood and seen in the things he has made is palpable in the flouting of sexual distinctions that are fundamental to God's creative design. Paul portrays homosexual behaviour as a "sacrament" (so to speak) of the anti-religion of human beings who refuse to honor God as creator. When human beings engage in homosexual activity, they enact an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality: the rejection of the creator's design. (p. 386).

Thus Paul's choice of homosexual and lesbian acts as a vivid illustration of human depravity serves his purpose by highlighting humanity's primal rejection of the

ruler ship of God over his creation. In essence, Paul's teaching which anchors New Testament theology on homosexuality is premised on his Jewish religio-cultural context in which homosexuality is regarded as an abomination. Going by Paul's inspired New Testament writings especially the Epistle to the Romans, God's wrath and indignation culminate in letting human idolatry and rebellion run its own self-destructive course. Homosexual activity does not merely move God to wrath, rather it is the consequence of God's wrath on those who deliberately choose to defy the creator and exchange the natural for the unnatural.

### **3.5 The Stand of Major Christian Denominations on Homosexuality**

Homosexuality has always carried a strong disapproval in the teaching of all Christian denominations. Christians believe that human sexuality is a gift from God, and not an awesome force over which men and women have no control, nor is it a drive that is strictly earthly and physical, outside the boundaries and interest of morality and religion. Hays (1996) states that far more emphatically than Scripture itself, the moral teaching tradition of the Christian church has for more than nineteen hundred years declared homosexual behaviour to be contrary to the will of God. (p. 397).

The authority of the Bible for Christians is the weapon against the perversion of sexual morality typified by homosexual practices. Prior to the liberalization of the theology of human sexuality in modern times, orthodox Christian teaching has never tolerated homosexuality across the major Christian denominations. In this

section is a resume of the teaching of some major Christian denominations on homosexuality apart from the Anglican Church.

**(a) Roman Catholicism**

Homosexuality from the perspective of the Catholic Church in line with the Scripture is unacceptable as a sexual behaviour. Homosexuality as an orientation is considered as an “objective disorder” as it is seen as ‘ordered toward an intrinsic evil.” Pope John Paul II (1986) in his Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church, the church refuses to consider a person as a "heterosexual" or a "homosexual" and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: the creature of God and by grace, his child and heir to eternal life. In the document *Personae Humanae* (1975) cited by Flannery, the Catholic Church while recommending pastoral care for homosexuals who have some kind of innate impulse states that:

Sexual relation between persons of the same sex is necessarily and essentially disordered according to objective moral order. Sacred Scripture condemns them as gravely depraved and even portrays them as the tragic consequence of rejecting God. Of course, the judgment of sacred Scripture does not imply that all who suffer from this deformity are by that very act guilty of personal fault. But it does show that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and may never be approved in any way whatever. (p. 516).

Finnis (2016) posits that Catholic teaching on sexuality from the beginning has done no more, and no less, than point out the ways in which every kind of sex act

more than authentic marital intercourse, is opposed to the good of marriage. One of the core teachings of the Church is that sexual intercourse and married love are ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and so the sexual act must allow openness to fertility. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in this context on chastity and homosexuality concludes that homosexual acts which are contrary to the natural law, close the sexual act to the gift of life and therefore, under no circumstances can they be approved. (2357).

The Catholic Church, in spite of the mounting pressure from gay rights activists strongly believes and teaches that marriage is only between one man and one woman, and opposes same-sex marriage at both the religious and civil levels. The Church holds that same-sex unions create an unfavourable environment for children, and that the legalization of such unions damages society.

#### **(b) Eastern Orthodoxy**

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia states that the Orthodox Church holds the opinion that sexuality as we understand it is part of the fallen world only. In Orthodox theology, both monasticism and marriage are paths to salvation i.e. becoming whole. Celibacy is the ideal path, exemplified in monasticism, while marriage between a man and his wife is blessed under the context of true love. Traditionally, the Orthodox Church has adopted a non-legalistic view of sin, in which case homosexuality is regarded as sinful.

However, all jurisdictions of the church such as the Orthodox Church in America have currently taken the approach of welcoming homosexuals while encouraging them to work towards overcoming the harmful effects of homosexual acts in their lives. The Orthodox Church denies the sacraments to people who seek to justify homosexual activity. In the 2013 assembly statement on marriage and sexuality, the Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, the highest body of the Orthodox Church America reaffirms:

The Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, firmly grounded in Holy Scripture, two millennia of church tradition and canon law holds that the sacrament of marriage consists in the union of a man and a woman and that authentic marriage reflects the sacred unity that exists between Christ and his bride, the church. Acting upon any sexual attraction outside of sacramental marriage, whether the attraction is heterosexual or homosexual, alienates us from God.

However, the Orthodox Church's approach to people with homosexual orientation is that they are to be cared for with the same mercy and love that is bestowed on all humanity by Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity.

### **(c) Methodism**

Given the evangelical nature of the circumstances surrounding the founding of the Methodist Church, its traditional belief is in line with biblical teaching that individuals should remain chaste outside the marriage between a man and a woman. According to P.E. Nmah (personal communication, October 10, 2016), the Constitution of the Methodist Church makes no provision for the acceptance of

homosexuality, and Methodism's core teaching on human sexuality singles out homosexuality in particular as an abomination.

The Methodist Church of Great Britain with the current liberalist swing of sexual morality has not reaffirmed its traditional stand on homosexuality. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia intimates that the United Methodist Church (in America) as its official position on homosexuality has maintained that homosexual practice is incompatible with Christian teaching. Following the 1972 Incompatibility Clause, other restrictions have been added at subsequent General Conferences. Currently, the Book of Discipline prohibits the ordination of practicing, self-avowed homosexuals, forbids clergy from blessing or presiding over same-sex unions, forbids the use of Church facilities for same sex-union ceremonies and prohibits the use of Church funds for "gay caucuses" or other groups that promote the acceptance of homosexuality. Despite these prohibitions, members of the Church are not of one mind on this issue. The Book of Discipline also asserts that homosexual persons are not less in sacred worth than heterosexual persons, and that both are included in the ministry of the Church and can receive the gift of God's grace. However, in spite of the rising clamour for the civil rights of homosexual persons, efforts to pass resolutions to fully include gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the life of the Church have failed so far.

#### **(d) Presbyterianism**

In the Presbyterian Church, Wikipedia states that the Presbyterian Church (USA) is currently the only Presbyterian denomination in the United States that allows same-sex marriage, and ordains openly LGBT members in committed relationships as teaching elders (clergy), and ruling elders (elders elected to serve on the Session).

Other Presbyterian bodies such as those in Africa, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church all condemn same-sex behaviour as incompatible with biblical morality, but believe gays and lesbians can repent and abandon the lifestyle. A Statement of the Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches (2016) in highlighting the orthodox biblical stand of Presbyterianism on homosexuality lists homosexual conduct, same-sex union and marriage and gender reassignment as sinful forms of sexual practice against which the Church shall continue to teach in their churches and in the public arena.

The liberalist Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2014 voted to change its definition of marriage, allowing its pastors to officiate same-sex marriages wherever gay marriage is legal, and also voted to change its Book of Order to describe marriage as being between "two people."

#### **(e) Pentecostalism**

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia asserts that most churches within the Pentecostal group of Christianity view homosexual behaviour as sin. The second largest



Pentecostal Church in the USA, the Assemblies of God makes its view clear on homosexuality in a position paper in 2010:

It should be noted at the onset that there is absolutely no affirmation of homosexual behavior found anywhere in Scriptures. Rather the consistent ideal is chastity for those outside a monogamous heterosexual marriage and fidelity for those inside such a marriage. There is also abundant evidence that homosexual behaviour, along with illicit heterosexual behaviour is immoral and comes under the judgment of God.

The Assemblies of God Churches along with the generality of Pentecostal Churches insist that those who engage in homosexual activities should desist from such behaviour as it also applies to any other sin. Pentecostal Christians worldwide strongly oppose same-sex unions, and the idea of gay or lesbian pastors is viewed as an abomination. Pentecostals tend to ridicule and openly discriminate against their members who engage in homosexual activity. However, no section of Christianity is free from the negative effects of the current theological revisionism. Wikipedia states that there is a growing number of LGBT affirming Pentecostal Churches especially in the Western world. Such Churches include the Anointed Affirming Independent Ministries, The Anthem Church, the Affirming Pentecostal Church International, and the Covenant Network, to mention but a few. These Pentecostal Churches welcome gays and lesbians in all levels of their Church hierarchy and base their position on research done into Scripture in the original languages, where they believe they find no condemnation of homosexuality.

## **(f) The Baptists**

The Baptist Church is traditionally opposed to homosexuality. The Southern Baptist Convention, the single largest of the Baptist denominations in the U.S. believes that the Bible condemns homosexuality as sin. Baptists affirm God's plan for marriage and sexual intimacy as one man and one woman for life and that homosexuality is not a valid alternative lifestyle. Mainline Baptist Churches in keeping with this stand do not allow gays into their pastoral ministry, and their clergy do not officiate at ceremonies for same-sex unions. Baptists also believe that homosexuality is not an unforgivable sin, as the same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals.

However, Wikipedia reports a number of Baptist Churches that have less orthodox views on homosexuality. Among these include the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a group of some fifty Churches and organizations committed to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian persons in their churches. It also notes that the historically African-American denominations of the National Baptist Convention have avoided issuing public statements on homosexuality, neither condemning nor endorsing it.

In summary, the issue of homosexuality in Christianity is a subject of on-going theological debate within and between Christian denominations. The traditional Christian rejection of homosexuality and its related acts according to biblical injunction was accepted across all Christian denominations and groups in times past. However, with the ever declining conformity to religious norms in our highly

secularized society, many aspects of doctrines that used to be sacrosanct have been questioned, scrutinized, re-interpreted and “updated” to suit new moral tastes. This has evidently resulted in many Christians within different denominations holding different views on, and even differing definitions and attitudes towards homosexuality and the family.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND TEACHING OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

Anglicanism as used in this work refers to the Anglican denomination as a branch of the Christian religion in the world. The name structured from its English origin and history evolved from the influence of English Christian missionaries working under the opportunities and tutelage provided by the British Empire.

#### **4.1 The Origin of the Anglican Communion**

The word 'Anglican' originated from ancient Latin words "ecclesia anglicana" which means the English Church or Church of England. According to Neil (1977) no one can actually tell exactly when Christianity came to the British Isle. Obviously Christianity in England can be traced back to earlier than in AD 597 because when St Augustine and some monks came from Rome for missionary work in AD 597, Christianity already existed in England. (p.1). According to Ibeto (2012) the history of Christianity has produced numerous notable separations. In 1054 came the first major schism which brought the Eastern Orthodox Church into existence, apart from the Roman Catholic Church. (p. 15).

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe were times of change and upheavals in Church and society. The beginning of the sixteenth century marked a significant dissent to the Church authority in Rome when Martin Luther challenged the status quo with his famous 95 theses in 1517. The influence of Luther's

Reformation obviously reached England and seventeen years later in 1534, the English branch of the Church formally challenged the authority of the pope under the leadership of King Henry VIII.

Bays (2001) asserts that it was the political difficulties around the succession to the English throne, and the wish for a stronger monarchy to preserve England's sovereignty from domination by foreign powers, that led Henry to remove the Church in England from the control of the pope. (p. 25). According to Culling (1996) most accounts of the Anglican Church begin with the divorce story of Henry VIII and the separation of the English Church from Rome. But the roots of the Anglican Church goes back far deeper in time and is tied to the beginnings of Christianity in the British Isle. Christianity was probably first brought to Britain by the Roman army. Culling states that much of the early history of the Church in Britain was penned by St Bede who gives the name of the first known Christian, St Alban, who was martyred for protecting a Christian priest early in the fourth century. (p. 71). In summing up the early origins of the Anglican Church, she states:

The Anglican Church was not created out of nothing in the sixteenth century. The slate could not be wiped clean in order to start again, even if the Reformers had wished to do so. It is equally important to avoid seeing everything as leading up to the Reformation, however important the period was for the formation of the Anglican way. The word 'Anglican' as a term

emerged only in the nineteenth century, but its distinctive forms and practices had been in the making for much longer. (p. 71).

However, the role of King Henry VIII in the formation of the Anglican Church cannot be over-emphasized. Ezeakunne (2016) states that Henry's face-off with the pope started with his (Henry's) desire to annul his dynastic marriage with Catherine of Aragon, widow of his brother Arthur. The King claimed that his lack of a male child by Catherine was because the marriage was blighted in the sight of God. Another reason of his wanting the annulment of the marriage was to make a way for him to marry Anne Boleyn, Catherine's 'Maid of Honour'. When Henry petitioned Pope Clement VII to annul the marriage and he refused, this precipitated the King's separation of Church in England from papal authority. He consequently dissolved the monasteries in his domain and established himself as the 'Supreme Head of the Church of England'. (p. 20). Theologically, Henry and his government did not consider that they were establishing a new Church when they broke from Rome, rather, they were taking full control of the church.

According to Nazir-Ali (1996), the Church of England was powerfully renewed by the Evangelical Revival and this led to the formation of missionary societies. The emergence of the Church Missionary Society in 1799 was an aspect of the renewal when Anglicans came together to take the Gospel across cultures. They worked for Churches that were truly indigenous, planted in the soil and culture of their country and people to be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, with special relations with the Church of England but with full autonomy in ordering their life.

(pp. 56-57). Culling (1996) states that the king himself was a thoroughly conservative Catholic but because of the break with Rome, he was prepared to dally with reforms so long as they suited his political intentions and also to accommodate the views of reform-minded church leaders in England whose support he also needed. (p. 37).

Culling (1996) commenting on how the Anglican Church became a world-wide communion, states that as English explorers, traders and colonists travelled from the sixteenth century onwards, they took the Anglican way with them. By the early eighteenth century, there were Anglican congregations in the Caribbean islands along the North Atlantic Coast from Newfoundland to Georgia and congregations were formed in territories of the East India Company on the Indian subcontinent. There was further transformation as the national churches of England and Ireland along with the disestablished remnants of the Episcopal Churches in Scotland, became part of a much wider Anglican Communion. (pp. 78-79).

It is a fact that the expansion of the Anglican Church has been closely linked with British expansion overseas during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Majority of Anglicans live in countries where English is the official language and by the beginning of the twentieth century, Anglicanism has been established in all the continents. Culling (1996) states that the term 'Anglican Communion' was first used in 1851 as Anglicanism came to be a world-wide fellowship. (p. 79). On the North American continent, following the American Revolution, Anglican

congregations in the U.S.A and Canada were reconstituted into independent churches (Provinces) with their own bishops and self-governing structures. With the continued expansion of the British Empire and the activities of mission, this model was adopted for many newly formed churches especially in Africa, Australia, Asia and the regions of the Pacific. The Anglican Church came to Nigeria in 1842 through the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) led by Rev. Henry Townsend through Badagry in the western part of the country.

#### **4.2 Organization and Structure in Anglicanism**

In the reforms made in the Church of England in the sixteenth century, a complicated interplay between the king and parliament along with the convocation of Bishops and clergy served to form the early administrative form of the Anglican Communion. According to Ibeto (2012) these three groups were responsible for the formulation and approval of the formularies (liturgy) of the church and the exercise of doctrinal and moral discipline. (p. 5).

With the growth of the Anglican Church into a worldwide communion, the office and role of the Archbishop of Canterbury assumed historical significance for member churches of the Communion. He is the spiritual head of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Church has an Episcopal system of church government, a system of church administration involving the Bishop as the head of democratic institution comprising Synod, Boards, Councils and Committees of both clergy and laity. Basically, Anglican Church administration depends on the local constitution



of each diocese and the Canons (laws) of each autonomous church (Province). At the world level, a characteristic of Anglicanism is that it has no international juridical authority as each of the thirty nine provinces of the Communion is independent, each with its Primate and governing structure. According to Ezeakunne (2016), these Provinces may take the form of national churches (such as Nigeria, Canada, Uganda or Japan) or a collection of nations (such as the West Indies, Central Africa, or South East Asia), or geographical regions (such as Vanuatu and Solomon Islands), etc. (p. 102).

The Archbishop of Canterbury has a 'Primacy of Honour' over the other Primates of the Anglican Communion and ranks as the *primus inter pares* (first among equals) even though he does not exercise any direct authority in any Province outside England. As the Spiritual head of the Anglican Communion the Archbishop of Canterbury maintains a certain moral authority, and has the right to determine which Churches will be in communion with his See. He hosts and chairs the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican bishops every ten years and decides who will be invited to them. He also presides over the Anglican Communion Primates' Meeting as well as the Anglican Consultative Council.

All the international bodies are consultative and collaborative, and their resolutions are not legally binding on the autonomous provinces of the Communion. This lack of a central cohesion in matters of authority means that decisions are often expressed and understood in permissive rather than obligatory terms. This principle

is also true of the decisions made by Provinces, to some extent, as they apply to the constituent dioceses. The structures of communion or instruments of unity that allow Anglicans to meet recognize the prevalence of the diversity of opinions among Anglicans and allow unilateral actions by provinces on certain issues as they have no enforceable legislative authority over autonomous provinces and dioceses.

In spite of the high emphasis on provincial autonomy of Churches in the Anglican Church, over time, the four 'Instruments of Unity' evolved in the Communion. Ibeto (2012) lists them as follows:

1. The Archbishop of Canterbury as 'the first among equals' among the primates and bishops.
2. The Lambeth Conference of Bishops meeting every ten years.
3. The Anglican Consultative Council that serves in between the Lambeth Conferences as a sort of Anglican Communion secretariat.
4. The Council of Primates which was given an enhanced and expanded role at the Lambeth Conference of 1978. (p. 5-6).

In each Country where Anglicanism exists, the Church develops its language, music and customs, promoting a wide variety of practice which also tends to breed opposing viewpoints.

There are five basic levels of church administration in the Anglican Communion and these are discussed as follows:

### **(a) Provincial Level**

Emmanuel (2002) commenting on the administrative structures in the Anglican Church states the next level of structure after the world wide conglomeration as the autonomous Province level. (p. 135). Presently, there are thirty-nine autonomous Provinces in the Anglican Communion. Each Province is headed by a primate who is always in the rank of an archbishop and presides over the General Synod, the Episcopal Synod and the Standing Committee meetings of the national Church. Like the Primates' Conference at the world level, the Episcopal Synod is a conference of all the bishops in an autonomous Church. The Episcopal Synod provides the forum for the bishops to harmonize their positions and consult with one another to keep abreast with common developments and trends.

The Standing Committee is the executive arm of the General Synod, and both comprise of the houses of bishops, clergy and laity. Whereas the General Synod meets once in three years, the Standing Committee meets at least twice a year to appraise and monitor development in the churches.

Each autonomous Church is divided into ecclesiastical provinces within the national Church headed by Provincial archbishops from whom the primate is elected whenever there is a vacancy. The ecclesiastical province is administered by means of provincial Council and Standing Committee, as well as by the meeting of the bishops in the province.

### **(b) Diocesan Level**

A province is made up of dioceses, each headed by a bishop. He presides over the diocesan synod which holds a session once a year and three of such sessions make one synod. After three sessions, the house of laity is literally dissolved and new diocesan officers are appointed or nominated, while various constituencies elect new delegates to the next synod.

### **(c) Archdeaconry Level**

Each diocese is divided into Archdeaconries. An archdeaconry is a group of parishes under an archdeacon who is appointed by the bishop. The archdeacon presides over the archdeaconry board which like the diocesan board meets regularly to appraise the work of parishes and churches in the archdeaconry and reports back to the diocesan board if need be.

### **(d) Districts and Parishes**

An archdeaconry is in turn divided into districts and parishes. A district or parish may comprise of one or more churches according to the local constitution of each diocese and strength of the churches involved. Districts and parishes consist of local church stations and they are headed by district Superintendents or parish vicars and administered through the district or parish church councils.

### **(e) Episcopal Polity**

Government in the Anglican Church is synodical (by Synods) consisting of three houses: laity (usually elected parish representatives), clergy and bishops. National, Provincial and diocesan Synods maintain different scopes of authority, depending on their canons and constitutions. The bishop supervises the clergy within his

diocese and is their representative to both civil structures and hierarchy of the Church. Expounding the principle of the synodical government of the Church, Evans and Wright (1991) cite a report of the 1867 Lambeth Conference as follows:

In the organization of synodical order for the government of the Church, the Diocesan Synod appears to be the primary and simplest form of such organization. By the Diocesan Synod, the co-operation of all members of the body is obtained in Church action; and the acceptance of Church rules is secured, which in absence of other law, usage or enactment, gives to these rules the force of law 'binding' on those who, expressly or by implication, have consented to them. The constitution of the Diocesan Synod maybe determined either by rules made for that branch of the Church established by the Synod of the province, or by the general consent in the Diocese itself. (p. 332).

In summary, while the apostles of Jesus made binding legislation on issues regarding idolatry and sexual morality (Acts 15:1-21), Anglicanism has no legislative authority at its international level to which various provinces and dioceses owe allegiance. At the onset of inter-province relationship in the nineteenth century, prelates from the Western world opposed the idea of a supreme Synod with binding authority, in favour of a Conference which is the present nature of the Lambeth Conference. In this type of loose federation of national Churches, individual bishops and their dioceses have the right to accept or reject resolutions

passed by the Conference, or to interpret and apply such resolutions strictly to the context of their social and cultural environment.

### **4.3 Teaching Authority in the Anglican Church**

While it would seem that Anglicans have no enforceable Communion-wide *magisterium* since the powers of the Anglican instruments of unity are largely recommendatory, there is however a basic requirement for which a province or a diocese can be recognized and operate as part of the Anglican Communion. Neil (1977) states the basic sources of the Anglican doctrine as follows:

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation. The three ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian). The dogmatic decisions of the first four general Councils of the Church. The Book of Common Prayer together with the Ordinal, as setting forth not only the Anglican order of worship, but also the theology of which that worship is the expression. The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion as the official summary of the Church's stand point in relation to central issues of theology and to a number of controversial points of doctrine and practice. (p. 399).

Anglican tradition towards authority has leaned more in the direction of mutuality expressed in the synodical government of the Church. Bays (2001) rightly observes that for Anglicans, primacy must be exercised collegially and synodically in consultation with the clergy and laity of the Church. A primate exercises leadership in preaching and teaching, yet this teaching needs always to be open to the

judgment of Scripture, Tradition and Reason and exercised in dialogue with the whole Church. (p. 109). The concept of "infallible authority" has no provision in Anglicanism and in fact, Article 21 of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion affirms that Church Councils and the human beings that constitute them can err and sometimes have erred in things pertaining both to God and in worldly matters.

Being a loose federation of national Churches, the Anglican Communion naturally cannot forge a formidable central authority with legislative powers. As Bays (2001) puts it, "The Anglican Communion is held together by bonds of affection, the goodwill of its members rather than by legislation" (p. 29).

The report of the Lambeth Conference 1948 describes authority in Anglicanism as follows:

Authority as inherited by the Anglican Communion from the undivided Church of the early centuries of the Christian era, is single in that it is derived from a single Divine source, and reflects within itself the richness and historicity of the divine Revelation, the authority of the eternal Father, the incarnate Son, and the Life-giving Spirit. (p. 85).

The report goes on to say that authority is found through Six Sources: Scripture, Tradition, the Creeds, the Ministry, the Word and Sacraments, the witness of the Saints, and the *consensus fidelium* (a recognition of truth by the body of the faithful people in the Church). Holy Scripture is the basic authority for Christians because

it is the record of God's revelation to human beings. The Tradition of the Church and the historic creeds also have authority because they represent the Church's faithful working out of the meaning of God's salvation down through the centuries. Authority is exercised through leaders called by God through church ministry for the proclamation and teaching of the word, administration of the sacraments and other pastoral services to the people. (p. 86).

In the Anglican Church, teaching and administrative authority is exercised through the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, formally chosen, trained and lawfully ordained, and through synodical government in which lay people share with the clergy in the decision-making process. Commenting on the sharing of authority in the Anglican Communion, Sykes (1978) notes that the distribution of God's gift to the whole Church means that there are voices of authority, not one unequivocal voice of authority. He further asserts:

Authority comes as a call of God and a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Church as a community, participates in the power of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. This power is shared in the Church by clergy and laity... All authority stems from the spirit of Christ who fills the Church and leads it into truth. And Christian authority is found in individuals and institutions when the Spirit of Christ is discerned in them. (p. 169).



### 4.3.1 Liturgy and Authority in Anglicanism

Anglican belief is drawn from the Holy Bible and encapsulated in the Articles of Religion. Anglican liturgical tradition is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer the first of which was produced by Thomas Cranmer in 1549, and the most significant revision being the 1552 edition. Ibeto (2012) affirms that the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer forms the historical basis for most Anglican liturgy around the world. (p. 17). The Book of Common Prayer also contains the catechisms of the Anglican Church through which the systematic teaching of the Church's doctrines are effected down to the grass root level.

According to Ezeakunne (2016) Anglicans take the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief) seriously, regarding the content, form and rubrics of liturgy as an important element of doctrinal understanding, development and interpretation. Also, Anglicans cite the work of foundational theologians of Anglicanism as instructive. Such include Cranmer, Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrews and John Jewel. (p.50). However, due to the decentralized authority structure of Anglicanism, Evans and Wright (1991) refer to Resolution 8 of Lambeth Conference 1867. This resolution is in the spirit of Article 34 of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion which grants Churches the freedom to make appropriate provision for local needs in decreeing rites and ceremonies. The resolution reads in part:

That, in order to the binding of the Churches of our colonial Empire and Missionary Churches beyond them in the closest union with the Mother

Church, it is necessary that they receive and maintain without alteration the standards of Faith and Doctrine as now in use in that Church. That nevertheless, each Province should have the right to make such adaptations to the services of the church as its peculiar circumstances may require. Provided, that no change or addition be made inconsistent with the spirit and principles of the Book of Common Prayer and by any Synod of the Anglican Communion in which the said Province shall be represented. (p. 334-335).

#### **4.3.2 The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion**

The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were established in 1536 and they constitute the historic statements of Anglican doctrine in relation to the controversies of the English Reformation. The articles also evolved as a reaction to the theological challenges posed by the Roman Catholic and Calvinist doctrines to the nascent doctrine of the evolving English Church.

Chapman (cited by Ezeakunne, 2016) states that as the Church of England was charting out its doctrinal identity, a series of defining documents were written and replaced over a period of thirty years. The very first attempt was the Ten Articles in 1536, the next revision was the Six Articles in 1539 and then followed by the Forty Two Articles in 1552. Finally upon the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were established by a convocation of the Church in 1563, under the direction of Matthew Parker the then Archbishop of Canterbury. The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion which were finalized to their present form in 1571

were to have a lasting effect in England and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion as a major source of theological authority. (pp. 43-44). The Thirty-Nine Articles can be broadly divided into four sections- the fundamentals of the Anglican faith; the interpretation of the Scripture; the Scripture and the authority of the Church; and the relationship between the Church and the society.

### **4.3.3 The Books of Homilies**

Another major source of Anglican teaching authority is The Books of Homilies. These are two books containing thirty-three sermons developing the reformed doctrines of the Church of England in greater depth and details than the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. Many of the sermons are straightforward exhortations to read the Scripture daily. The other works are lengthy scholarly treatises intended to inform church leaders in theology, church history and against heresies. Each homily is heavily annotated with references to the Holy Scriptures, the Church Fathers and other primary sources. The First Book of Homilies published in 1547 was written mainly by Thomas Cranmer with twelve sermons, while the Second Book of Homilies with twenty-one sermons was written by John Jewel and published in 1571.

### **4.3.4 The Lambeth Quadrilateral**

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral frequently referred to as the Lambeth Quadrilateral is a four-point articulation of Anglican identity often cited as encapsulating the fundamentals of modern Anglicanism. According to Wolf (1982)

the Lambeth Conference of 1888 produced an important document for the future of Anglicanism especially in its relation with other Churches. The four points of the conference include:

1. The Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary to salvation.
2. The Creeds (specifically the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds) as sufficient statement of Christian faith.
3. The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as ordained by Christ himself.
4. The historic episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the people of God. (pp. 167-168). The Quadrilateral as a source of Anglican authority has had a significant impact in the Anglican Communion since its passing. It provided a basis for shared character as colonial Churches influenced by British culture and values evolved into national ones influenced by their local customs.

The Anglican Communion does not possess a one-volume confession of faith like the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians, nor does it claim a founding theologian like a John Calvin or a Martin Luther. In the same vein, it has no central authority such as the Roman Catholic *Magisterium* to set generally accepted parameters of belief and practice. The universally accepted foundations of Anglican doctrine that guides her faith and order are the Holy Scriptures, the great Creeds of the early ecumenical councils, the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-

Nine Articles of Religion and the four principles enshrined in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.

A wide range of customs and practices and its historic tolerance for diversity and ambiguity are among the most notable characteristics of Anglicanism. However, in the modern day Anglican Communion, there is a notable breakdown in mutual tolerance occasioned by the wider polarization of opinion between the theologically conservative and the liberals.

#### **4.4 The Challenge to Anglican Teaching on Human Sexuality**

Generally, traditional Anglican Christian view of sexual ethics is anchored on five core beliefs as outlined by the document published by the House of Bishops' Group on Issues in Human Sexuality in 2003. These include:

1. That God's intention for human sexual activity has been made known to us primarily in the Holy Scripture. (1.2.5).
2. That the sexes (male and female) are complimentary. (1.2.9).
3. That the purposes of marriage are as the Book of Common Prayer says. (1.2.13).
4. That sexual union has a legitimate place in the context of marriage. (1.2.14).
5. That the unmarried should not engage in any sexual activity at all. (1.2.19).

The document deals with other issues in sexuality such as further marriage of divorced people, contraception and abortion, etc.

The section on the ‘development of Anglican thinking on homosexuality’ (1.3) refers to the many articles and reports beginning in 1952. It acknowledges that in as much as the Wolfenden recommendations which set the pace for legal recognition of homosexuality in British society received strong support from members of the Church of England, conservative evangelicals have led the opposition to an acceptance of same-sex relationships by the church (1. 3. 25), reaffirming that for them, the fact that the Bible is clear in its rejection of same-sex sexual activity necessarily settles the matter.(1. 3. 26).

The document revisited the Lambeth Conference decisions of 1978, 1988 and 1998 ‘that the official teaching about homosexuality in both the Church of England and the Anglican Communion in general has remained more conservative than it has on other subjects connected with sexual morality’ (1. 4 .1). The conservative Christian approach to homosexuality applies in both Protestant and Catholic traditions. A document, ‘The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons’ published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and endorsed by Pope John II in 1986 gives a great insight on this issue. The authors of the document grounded their rejection of homosexual practice on the creation story particularly in Gen. 1:27 ‘in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’. The letter further states:

Human beings, therefore, are nothing less than the work of God himself; and in the complementarity of the sexes, they are called to reflect the inner unity of the Creator. They do this in a striking way in their co-operation with him

in the transmission of life by a mutual donation of the self to the other... To choose someone of the same sex for one's sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals of the Creator's sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complimentary union able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living. (Para. 6-7).

The Letter concludes that although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin on its own, it is more or less a strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil, and thus the inclination (orientation) must be seen as an objective disorder. (Para. 3). Those who perceive themselves as 'homosexual', who want to conform themselves as closely as possible with the demands of the gospel have only the option of celibacy open to them, a position also re-stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This conservative position is also supported by Barth (cited by Sollis, 2000) that "the theology of (the) complimentary meant that all single-sex institutions were liable to lead to homosexuality by violating the covenant between men and women established at creation" (p. 103). In the Anglican circles, a theological group met in response to the request of the Church of England Evangelical Council in 1995 with the aim of providing some definition of the theological ground upon which the contentious issue of homosexuality in the Church should be addressed. Bradshaw (1997) noting the thoroughly Christological point from which the scholars started quotes the St. Andrew's Day Statement which resulted as follows:

At the deepest ontological level...there is no such thing as 'a homosexual' or 'a heterosexual'. There are human beings, male and female, called to redeem humanity in Christ, endowed with a complex variety of emotion potentialities and threatened by a complex variety of forms of alienation. Adopted as children of God and called to follow in the way of the cross, we are all summoned to various forms of self-denial. The struggle against disordered desires, or the misdirection of innocent desires, is part of every Christian's life consciously undertaken in baptism. (p. 103).

The authors of the St. Andrew's Day Statement also maintain the traditional stand that only marriage and singleness are the forms of vocations accepted in Christian human sexuality. The conservative position maintains that the church has no choice but to condemn homosexual behaviour and do all it can to prevent its promotion and tolerance in the church and society. It also calls for work for the redemption of those who suffer from it either through a life of celibacy or through healing and deliverance. Sollis (2000) commenting on the conservative stand of the church states inter alia:

Arguments from Scripture are often supported by appeals to natural law and a pathological construction of homosexuality... and some within this group would advocate a healing ministry to lesbian and gay people in the belief that it is possible to realign a disordered sexual orientation to literally set someone straight. (p. 104).

The Montreal Declaration of Anglican Essentials was adopted at a national conference of Anglicans from across Canada in June 1994 and serves as the



theological basis of those involved in the movement. Paragraph 14 on “The Standards of Sexual Conduct” states:

God destined human sexuality not only for procreation but also for the joyful expression of love, honor, and fidelity between wife and husband. These are the only sexual relations that biblical theology deems good and holy. Adultery, fornication, and homosexual unions are intimacies contrary to God’s design. The church must seek to minister healing and wholeness to those who are sexually scarred or who struggle with on-going sexual temptations, as most people do. Homophobia and all forms of sexual hypocrisy and abuse are evils against which Christians must ever be on their guard. The Church may not lower God’s standards of sexual morality for any of its members, but must honor God by upholding these standards tenaciously in face of society’s departure from them. Congregations must seek to meet the particular needs for friendship and community that single persons have.

Paragraph 15 on “The Family and the Call to Singleness” states:

The family is a divinely ordained focus of love, intimacy, personal growth and stability for women, men and children. Divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, rape, pornography, parental absenteeism, sexist domination, abortion, common-law relationships and homosexual partnerships, all reflect weakening of family ideals... Singleness also is a gift from God and a holy vocation. While single Christians are called to celibacy God will give them grace to live in chastity.

In the conclusion titled 'The New Beginning', it states:

Together we reaffirm the Anglican Christianity that finds expression in the historic standards of the ecumenical creeds, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Solemn Declaration of 1893, and the 1962 Book of Common Prayer. Respect for these standards strengthens our identity and Communion. In humility we recognize we have often been ashamed of the gospel we have received and disobedient to the Lord of the Church. God helping us, we resolve to maintain our heritage of faith and transmit it intact... We invite all Anglicans to join us in affirming the above as essentials of Christian faith, practice and nurture today. In this declaration, we believe that we are insisting upon only what is genuinely essential. In regard to non-essentials, we should recognize and respect that liberty and that comprehensiveness which have been among the special graces of our Anglican heritage.

Hays (2003) concurring with the foregoing states that:

Far more emphatically than Scripture itself, the moral teaching tradition of the Christian Church has for more than nineteen hundred years declared homosexual behavior to be contrary to the will of God. Only within the past twenty years has any serious question been raised about the Church's universal prohibition of such conduct. (p. 397).

Hays concludes that in the mid-twentieth century, the Conservatives began to lose their majority in America and the Church of England, giving liberals more opportunity to express their beliefs.

Lewis (cited by Slocum, 1999) attributed the rise of the homosexual movement in the Episcopal Church to the abolition of racism in America due to the success of the civil rights movement. He cited the historic *Brown versus Board of Education* judgment by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 which ruled against racism and segregation in schools. Consequently in 1955, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church urged members to accept and support the ruling of the Supreme Court and urged that the Church should welcome people of any race at any service conducted by a priest or layman of any ethnic origin, and bring them into the full fellowship of the congregation and its organizations.

Following increasing pressure from the civil rights movement on both the government and the church, The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) was formed to enforce equal rights for all the members of the church. The huge success of the civil rights movement in turn gave rise to agitation from other groups in the society who saw themselves as oppressed. For example, the struggle for women's rights in secular society served to encourage many Episcopalians, men as well as women to make similar demands on the church, which paved way for the ordination of women in the church.

Lewis (cited by Slocum, 1999) further tracing the progress, states that persons of homosexual orientation were the next group to seek redress for having been victims of discrimination. This led to the formation of Integrity, a caucus of gay Episcopalians and their supporters in 1974. Lewis further states:

Emboldened by the attention given to homosexuals in society at large, and their success in removing some of the barriers that had been erected in such arenas as employment and housing, it made demands on the church for full recognition. Thus, homosexual persons...became a vocal and strident force in the life of the church, much to the discomfort of many Episcopalians. (p. 7).

The Integrity group sought open acceptance of homosexuals in the church. The church did not counter this move quickly, more so as it came with the tide of the acceptance of blacks and the women's liberation movement. Thus, the two previous concessions constituted a big encouragement to the homosexual movement. Today, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has made resolutions which would have been unimaginable some decades ago, including the ordination of homosexuals, the sanctioning of same-sex marriages, and the authorization of a liturgical rite for them.

Lewis (1999) further posits that what facilitated the acceptance of ordination of homosexuals was a resolution passed by the General Convention of TEC in 1976, declaring that, "homosexual persons are children of God, who have a full and equal claim with other persons upon the love and acceptance and pastoral concern of the church" (p. 10). While many in the church would assert that there are theological, moral, or even practical reasons to deny ordination to homosexual persons, the fact remains that it is inconsistent and impossible for the church to do so, given its own

newly articulated theology of ministry which allows anybody to participate in any ministry, for fear of infringement on human rights.

Jenkins (2004) points out that:

Liberalists believe that a human rights approach requires homosexual persons to be admitted to all forms of church leadership worldwide no matter what the Bible has to say on the matter – and where they are not admitted, that the exclusionary church must be backwards and fundamentalist. (p. 300).

Platen (2000) has partly blamed the growth of revisionism in the Anglican Communion to the inductive method with which Anglicanism has tended to approach theology. He states:

From the beginning, Anglicans have worked with the raw materials of the world in which they have found themselves and then moved on to extrapolate a theological analysis from the engagement of that world with the church and its traditions...Perhaps we should not be too alarmed when we discern imperfections with the Lambeth Conference or with other instruments of Communion...There may be a contrast, for example, between an easy acceptance of dispersed authority and a carefully argued theological model of reconciled diversity. (pp. 179 -180).

The much quoted ‘Unity in diversity’ in Anglicanism has proven to also mean diversity of theological opinion on issues that hitherto were not subject to debate, especially sexual norms. Liberalists claim that there is no cause for alarm regarding

the areas of disagreement in the church, as such are indicative of an ecclesiology in making. However, a world-wide communion that parades discordant theologies does not present a model to the entire Christian world, since considering the immutability of Scripture, the mere thought of biblical re-interpretation to meet the secular pressures of the modern times is in itself a theological aberration of heretical dimensions.

Our modern society has much to say about the human body. In its emphasis on health, strength and beauty, the Western world today places the medical, athletic and aesthetic aspects of bodily existence at the top of its concerns. By contrast the concerns of the Bible with the body are more ethical and eschatological. Bonington and Fyall (1996) state that “the cry of Scripture is neither ‘health and beauty’ nor ‘eat, drink and be merry’ but God-related, ‘Glorify God in your body’ (1Cor. 6:20)” (p. 6). The revisionists have applied the modern concern for the body to shape their biblical thinking about both sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular. Revisionists also believe that their views are compatible with Scripture, in citing that texts should not be interpreted in relation to the culture of their time in order to avoid inappropriate comparisons between contemporary lifestyles, thereby imposing their own modern interpretation to suit the present age. In essence, they also claim having a high view of the authority of Scripture.

Revisionism also thrives on the theology of God’s grace for everybody, on which premise revisionists argue that the Church should take gay people take into

consideration. According to Vasey (1991) “sexual sins should not be emphasized above other sins and the instructive role of grace “points to some pastoral pragmatism and implies some penitent tolerance of some imperfection in ... sexual matters” (p. 60).

Sedgwick (1985) has also sought to mellow down the attack on homosexuality by attempting to trace what she calls ‘homo-social’ relations as distinct from homosexual relations, a concept that relates to male-bonding, encompassing the whole realm of ways that men interact. (p. 22). Sedgwick denies a strong link between homo-social desire and same-sex genital contact. However, it is certain that unbridled same-sex social bonding is one of the surest ways to homoerotic motivation and eventual homosexual acts.

Stuart (1999) points out that:

Liberalism has demonstrated that it cannot deliver its promise of a rational, universally convincing argument for the acceptance of gay and lesbian Christians and their relationships in the church. The liberal tendency towards foundationalism, expressed in this case by a tendency to rely on biological given/genetic understandings of sexual orientation, is increasingly unconvincing. (p. 10).

The revisionists regard the creation stories in the Bible as outdated myths on which normative heterosexuality should not be grounded. Brunskill (2003), a revisionist writer, postulates that "to maintain patriarchal gender roles and prohibitions in the face of new scientific knowledge seems irrational" and argues that modern insights

into human behaviour also reveals God's intention. (p. 79). Yungblutt (1991) also states that:

The Church should re-examine the outdated creation myths on which homophobia is based, so as to remove the implication that heterosexuality is the only way for human beings to express their need for love and mutual support. In its place...a new myth, such as that outlined by Teilhard de Chardin should be developed, which is able to fit scientific observation and individual experiences into a new understanding of humankind. (p. 63).

Yungblutt concludes that Anglicans in America consider six factors when they develop and change their religious beliefs and policies. These include specific biblical references, actions of biblical leaders, general biblical themes, church traditions, scientific findings and personal experience. Conservatives within the denomination tend to stress the first four factors, and hold that same-sex behaviour is among the most serious of sins. On the reverse, liberals whose number is on the increase tend to stress the last two factors and conclude that the three sexual orientations – heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality – are all morally neutral. Liberals regard the real sins to be homophobia, and sexual acts which are unsafe, non-consensual, manipulative and or without commitment. Thus, the liberalists' agenda include the rejection of parts of Scripture as myth in order to provide a modernist alternative including science and human experience which they bring to the fore as equally as important as the parts of Scripture they accept. Emboldened by the sweeping gains of feminist theologians in recent times, gay men and lesbians working with and invoking their own experiences of life, have



tried to show that same-sex relationships can offer mutual support and companionship equally as marriage can. From the insights of feminists and homosexuals, the traditional concept of sexuality has broadened in a way that seems to make the biblical view of sexuality no longer sufficient. Thus revisionists in the Anglican Communion believe that the role of the Bible in sexual theology should be to testify to proven scientific and human experience, rejecting it (the Bible) as the authority for imposing controls. Rather than conform to the biblical view point which they believe were expressed centuries ago, revisionists want the Church to come to terms with their recommendations for a modern approach to human sexuality.

Liberalists believe that orthodox Christians are interpreting biblical teaching on human sexuality in an oppressive manner against homosexuals due to their extraordinary fear of sexual difference. Tracing the socio-cultural roots of the revisionist movement, Thatcher (2005) commenting on the sweeping changes recorded in the last twentieth century states:

That century saw the exposure of racism and sexism, and the patriarchy associated with both. It ought to be straight-forwardly depicted as a century that came to sanction multiple choices in sexual behavior... The rise of equal opportunities, and of human rights (two other achievements of the twentieth century) are linked to the realignment of power in social relationships, and these are the 'operators' in some of the changes in attitude towards sex. (p. 11).

The current sexual 'revolution' has enabled those who view themselves as sexual minorities to go public and protest against what they perceive to be discrimination and oppression against them, as typified by the homosexual movement. Perhaps majority of supporters of homosexuality see marriage as a failing heterosexual institution that they would be unwilling to adopt as their own. Revisionists who yearn for the Anglican Church to extend marriage to gays and lesbians who want it even argue from the provisions of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Thatcher (1998) posits:

The first two purposes of marriage according to the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England are 'that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other, in love, and through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives'. These descriptions could easily be appropriated by thousands of lesbian and gay partners. (p. 90).

Revisionists claim that since two of the Church's stated three purposes of marriage can well apply to homosexual unions, homosexuals should be wedded in the church since such unions can sustain the fundamental good of constancy and fidelity which can as well provide a striking image of God's love.

The liberals of sexual morality in the Church emphasize freedom of choice of alternatives as part of human rights. Griffin (2000) states that:

If heterosexual relationships were fulfilling for all people, there would be no need to 'choose' same-sex sexual relationships. Moreover, even when

homosexuality is experienced as a matter of choice (as it is for some individuals), just as people have a right to choose their religion, food and professional lives, every individual must be able to make choices as long as those choices do not coerce, physically harm or destroy others within a free society. (p. 91).

Thus in exercising the freedom of choice, biblical stipulations are seen as narrowing the options available for choice by the tilt towards heterosexual normativity in human sexuality. However, from an African Christian perspective, G. E. Okoroafor ( personal communication, January 9, 2014) maintains that it is not much a matter of narrowing of options but more of a neglect of biblical teachings by some people who want to do things their own way. For him, homosexuality as a sexual aberration is and will still remain alien to African culture and remains a taboo in our generation even if it is being accepted in other parts of the world.

In the same vein, S. Muyiwa (personal communication, February 20, 2014) laments that the unduly high emphasis and regard for human rights in the developed societies have overwhelmed the Scriptural emphasis of Christians in the U.S.A., and she strongly commends Christian churches in Nigeria for their important role in lobbying the National Assembly in voting against the legalization of same-sex marriages in the country. In a similar reaction, A. B. Olabisi (personal communication, February 19, 2014) charges that "people are generally confusing what is right with human rights" and looking for justification to satisfy their base immoral instincts.

Revisionism points to the fact that the Bible did not give a heavy focus on homosexuality with only six references on the whole and thereby claims that traditionalists use the Bible as a convenient tool to support religious and social bigotry against lesbians and gay men. Stuart and Thatcher (1997) point out that:

While the churches have endless discussions about homosexuality trying what to do, many lesbians and gay men moved out of the churches, came together to explore their experiences of life and began to develop 'queer' theology. This burst onto the scene in the 1990s and tries to offer new understandings of the message of the Bible in favor of homosexuality. (pp. 1-5).

Yip (2003) conducted a research on 565 lesbian, gay and bisexual persons in Britain between the ages of 18 and 80, of which almost half were Anglicans. The result of the research, indicative of the rest of the populace, is a strong pointer to how far homosexuals are convinced of their lifestyle. The respondents strongly agreed by an overwhelming majority to the following research questions bordering on sexuality and belief in God:

1. All sexualities are created by God and to be fully accepted.
2. A person's sexual orientation is established early in life and cannot be changed radically.
3. The traditional biblical exegesis on homosexuality is inaccurate.
4. The churches have not taken due account of the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual Christians in their examination of the issue of human sexuality.

5. The churches have encouraged heterosexism in society.
6. The churches have contributed to the perpetuation of homophobia in society.
7. Christian sexual ethics should be concerned much more with responsible behavior and justice to individuals, rather than the acceptability of particular kinds of genital acts.
8. God is genderless.
9. God is love.
10. The Bible cannot always be taken literally.

Conversely, the respondents strongly disagreed with the following points:

1. Same-sex genital acts are always incompatible with Christian principles.
2. Sexual intercourse should always be potentially procreative.
3. God determines your destiny and fate.
4. God's will is final and there is no questioning of his will.
5. The Bible is a sufficient guide for everyday living. (pp. 142-148).

Yip's research findings largely represent the creed of the revisionists in Anglicanism as majority of the respondents appeared to have developed positive self-identities which they believe harmoniously incorporated their otherwise stigmatized sexualities and their Christian faith. Homosexuals and those sympathetic to their cause are highly critical of the institutionalized churches for the lack of progress in adopting an inclusive attitude toward sexualities which to them, are all God-created and therefore deserve equal treatment. Yip (2003) concludes that:

The emphasis on lived experiences as the basis of religious faith is illustrated more clearly in the respondents' beliefs about the Bible. Although the Bible was considered still relevant to everyday life, it is nevertheless considered an insufficient guide for Christian living. They acknowledged the 'situatedness' and 'constructedness' of the Bible, thus the need to interpret it through the lens of shifting socio-cultural realities and personal experiences. (p. 151).

Consequently, liberalist thinkers argue that the churches' refusal to re-interpret Scripture in line with new social realities has led the churches to insist on what they (the liberalists) see as erroneous official positions on human sexuality, especially homosexuality in particular.

In asserting the revisionist philosophy, Standing (2004) has pointed out that liberals loathe the fundamentalists' over-reliance on the Bible. He states:

When believing in an infallible Bible is held to be essentially equal to belief in God (bibliolatry), any who refuse to 'believe' are representatives of 'Satan's lies', and must therefore be singled out for metaphorical extermination. It is the logic of the Shoah – annihilate the 'impurities' and we will live happily ever after. (p. 69).

Homosexuals even use the Bible against those who hold on to traditional teaching of sexual morality in the church, claiming that 'homophobia' (hatred or fear of homosexuals) is going against God's law of love for one's neighbours. The revisionists also accuse the church of the double standard of championing human rights in the world but denying them in the church.

Gay apologists argue that the prohibition of homosexuality, like circumcision and dietary practices, is similarly superseded for Christians as merely part of the Old Testament's ritual purity rules which should be deemed as morally irrelevant today. Lamenting on how liberalism has taken on a fundamentalism of its own in modern times, former Archbishop of Canterbury Runcie (cited by McGrath, 1994) states:

One of the greatest tragedies of our times is that in recent years, 'liberalism' has, in the view of many observers, degenerated from a commitment to openness and toleration into an intolerant and dogmatic world-view, which refuses to recognize the validity of any views save its own. (p. 111).

Corroborating Runcie's view, McGrath (1994) states that:

Liberalism is marked by its easy accommodation of contemporary Western culture and its thoughtless and uncritical abandonment of much that is seen to be of vital importance to the Christian religion. Conservatives charge it with playing to the secular gallery, and motivating an increasingly self-confident anti-bible, anti-Christian tendency in Western culture. (p. 115).

Thiselton (cited by Santer, 1982) has pointed out the presumed aim of liberal writers as critically examining the thought, language and actions of the church from without. In the Anglican context, he asserts that "liberalism has too often seemed intent on judging the church with reference to prevailing cultural norms". The resultant effect is the promotion of the dominant culture rather than its radical transformation. He concludes, "With the breakdown of what used to be referred to as the 'Judeo-Christian Consensus' in the United States and elsewhere, the church

has increasingly found itself in a culture which is antithetical to the Christian world-view” (pp. 20-21).

Germond (2004) states that the old orthodoxy saw no room for the expression of sexuality outside of heterosexual marriage. An extended citation from Solemnization of Matrimony from the Church of England Prayer Book of 1662, which held sway in many parts of the world until after the Second World War will well illustrate orthodox teaching. He refers to the Prayer Book’s stipulation on marriage as follows:

Is not by any to be enterprised, not taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men’s carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained. First, it was ordained for the procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his Holy name. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body. Thirdly, it was ordained for mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. (p. 59).

Simons (1997) states that according to the church’s teaching, homosexual acts were always regarded as unnatural behaviour, worthy of condemnation. The idea behind



this was that every human being was by nature heterosexual and that homosexual acts were therefore irrational and arbitrary. Until the end of the nineteenth century, people did not recognize the existence of homosexual human beings; that is to say, human beings whose erotic, psycho-physical orientation was towards members of the same sex. Over the last one hundred years, courageous men, despised and sometimes persecuted by society, fought for public recognition, eventually to be inscribed in law, that there existed a minority of men and women whose essential life-orientation was towards homosexual love. (p. 14). This was new in modern society. Biblical tradition did not recognize this. Summing up, Simons states that the biblical condemnations of homosexual acts retain their full validity when these acts are committed by heterosexual men, who always in search for greater pleasure engage in sexual experiments with other men. But they have very little to say to homosexual men who seek spiritual guidance – a call to repentance and amendment of life.

Hays (2003) is of the orthodox opinion that:

Far more emphatically than Scripture itself, the moral teaching tradition of the Christian church has for more than nineteen hundred years declared homosexual behavior to be contrary to the will of God. The mainstream of Christian ethical teaching has been relentlessly hostile to homosexual practice. Only within the past twenty years has any serious question been raised about the church's universal prohibition of such conduct. It is impossible to construct an argument for acceptance of homosexuality by

juxtaposing the authority of tradition and the authority of Scripture. The result of the juxtaposition is to strengthen the Bible's prohibitions. (p. 397).

Edwards (1994) echoing the traditional opinion states that in same-sexual relationships there is no possibility of conception because both of the partners are exclusively and permanently homosexual. The Roman Catholic Catechism teaches that Sacred Scripture always presents homosexual acts as 'acts of grave depravity' and that the Church's tradition 'has always taught that such acts are "intrinsically disordered"'. They are contrary to natural law, for they close the sexual act to the gift of life and do not proceed from an authentic effective and sexual complementarity. In no case can they be approved. (p. 357). J. C. Ekechukwu (personal communication, February 19, 2014) in upholding Anglican orthodox teaching on human sexuality states that same-sex marriage is a complete deviation from the standards of God and calls for the upholding of the truth of the Scriptures in order to put aside the inherent evil in homosexuality. Also reiterating the African cum Nigeria position on the contentious issue, O. Ajayi (personal communication, January 9, 2014) asserts that God made his standard on human sexuality very clear in the male/female demarcation, and anything contrary to this is an evil which calls for repentance for those involved in the unnatural acts. On the same premise, J. A. Omotoso (personal communication, February 19, 2014) affirms that gays and lesbians and all sexual offenders need to seek spiritual counseling for the amendment of their lives and to obtain God's forgiveness. In summing up K. C. Olemeforo (personal communication, February 20, 2014) strongly backs the opposition against the revisionists of sexual morality in the Anglican Church,

which if not done, would lead to a situation and time when sexual deviance like homosexual acts would generally cease to be taboos in our church and society.

#### **4.5 Lambeth Conference and the Debate on Homosexuality**

Every ten years, the Anglican Churches (Provinces) represented by their bishops meet at the Lambeth Conference (named after Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop's London residence). The Lambeth Conference is the most important instrument of unity between the different Provinces that make up the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury as the leader of the Anglican Church presides over the conference.

The idea of a Conference originated from some American and Canadian bishops who made it clear from the beginning that conference would be on a consultative basis, and its decisions not binding in the Communion. Iheagwam (2010) states that “while some bishops who supported the idea of such a meeting proposed a supreme Synod with legislative powers; others preferred a mere conference, to avoid subscribing to resolutions which might be binding on them” (p. 83). In essence, the Anglican Church was designed to be a confederation whose unity relies on voluntary contact between the provinces. Jacob (1997) states that prior to the first Lambeth Conference, the 1875 statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury shows this clearly as follows:

Each church is naturally guided in the interpretation of its formularies by its recognized authorities... No branch of a church should interfere with the

matters of any other... Each is considered qualified to regulate its own separate affairs, while all are united in the maintenance of one faith. (p. 238).

These words set the pace for a unique interplay of autonomy and collaboration which has continued to play out in an intriguing manner ever since in the Anglican Communion. In the current situation, the challenge is the relationship between the autonomy of the Anglican provinces and the general unity of the Anglican Communion. Parts of the church especially in Africa and Asia call for a centralized focus and authority to deal with the issue of same-sex unions, but not on other issues as the Provinces in the Western world point out. Generally when it comes to issues on the home front, church leaders tend to be 'protective', and invoke the issues of autonomy and context as bulwarks, but clamour for a centralized authority to deal with problems that do not particularly trouble their domains. This has characterized most of the debates in the Lambeth Conferences.

#### **4.5.1 The 1988 Lambeth Conference**

With regards to the contentious issue of the ordination of women, discussion on the forms of Anglican ordained ministry came up earlier on at the 1968 Lambeth Conference. Although there was no consensus opinion, the Conference rose with the presumption that there were no theological objections against women's ordination. In the years that followed the 1968 Lambeth Conference, the Churches in the United States, New Zealand and Canada started ordaining women without waiting for an agreement to be reached during the 1978 Conference.

Hastings (1991) states that despite the predictions that the ordination of women would tear the Anglican Communion apart, and even the 1988 Lambeth Conference apart, it quite failed to do so because there was no major Church within the Communion that was absolutely committed to not ordaining women. England still refused then to ordain women, but a large majority of its bishops were in favour and it remained up on the agenda of the Church of England. England did not ordain women immediately because in the context of the great growth of Anglicanism in Africa and Asia, and the life and death concerns the African bishops brought to the Conference, the issue was relativized as, at least in its urgency, a 'Northern' matter. The South (Africa and Asia) was certainly not uniformly against it, but was not wildly in favour either. (pp. 148-149).

The then Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, cited by Hastings (1991) commenting on the disruptive potentials of the issue of the ordination of women in his Opening Address states:

There are real and serious threats to our unity and communion and I do not underestimate them. Some of them are the result of Gospel insights; for example the proper dignity of women in a Christian society. We need to recognize that our unity is threatened over the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate in whatever we ultimately decide to do. There are dangers to our communion in this Lambeth Conference endorsing or failing to endorse such developments. And there equal dangers to communion by trying to avoid the issue together. (p. 152).

The Lambeth Conference Reports (1997) intimate that the 1988 Lambeth Conference came at a critical time for the coherence and unity of the Anglican Communion as a whole. Apart from the controversial issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood, the bishops found themselves facing the imminent possibility of one of the Provinces consecrating a woman to the episcopate, and were faced with the challenge of how to maintain the highest degree of communion with one another despite differences in principles and practice.

The debate at the Conference resulted in the resolution that each Province respects the decision and attitudes of other Provinces in the ordination and consecration of women without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the principles involved, but with the aim of maintaining the highest possible degree of communion with the Provinces which differ. One other resolution relating to the ordination of women is that bishops were urged to exercise courtesy and maintain communications with bishops who may differ, and with any woman bishop, ensuring an open dialogue in the Church to whatever extent communion is impaired. The resolutions recommended the appointment of a commission to among other things, examine inter-province relationships and monitor and encourage the processes of consultation and reconciliation in the case of any fallout in the anticipated disagreement. But before the resultant Eames Commission which met from 1988 to 1993 released the Eames Report in 1994, a woman, Penelope Jamieson has been elected and enthroned a bishop in the diocese of Dunedin in New Zealand in 1990.

The hotly debated issue of the ordination of women in the Anglican Church was clearly the high point of the 1988 Lambeth Conference and pointed once again to the fact that real problem of Anglicanism lies in the intractable relationship of the largely autonomous Provinces with one another. Paradoxically, the Anglican Communion has mechanisms for dealing with problems within a diocese and within a Province, but has virtually no effective solution for problems that crop up at the international level.

The 1988 Lambeth Conference in essence resolved that every province should be free to ordain women to all orders of the Church's ministry and this implied the appointment of women as bishops. This radical change in the Communion required careful pastoral management because of its sensitive nature. This eventually led to another new development – the appointment of itinerate bishops known as 'flying bishops', who are allowed to cross diocesan boundaries to minister to those clergy, laity and parishes that are opposed to women clergy. This, invariably, became a reference point and motivation for future inter-diocesan and inter-province acts of intervention, as a viable pastoral care alternative to dissatisfied groups or church members in times of major theological disagreement in the Anglican Communion. It is also easy to observe that the processes that led to the achievement of the ordination of women in the Anglican Church are closely related to the general progress and gains that feminism and the women's liberation movement have recorded in the wider society, especially in the Western world.

#### **4.5.2 The 1998 Lambeth Conference**

During the 1998 Lambeth Conference, although many other matters featured on the agenda, the issue of homosexuality appeared to have been the most important and most sensitive. Slocum (1999) points out that a feature of the debate which took many British and American participants by surprise, was the lively contribution made by African bishops who numbered 224, surpassing other continental groups (180 from North America and 140 from the United Kingdom). (p. 260). Mauney (cited by Slocum, 1999) states that the 1998 Lambeth Conference was for many American bishops a sobering encounter with the reality of modern Anglicanism.

He asserts:

This Lambeth Conference was far different in makeup from its predecessors. Half the conference was from what we used to call the Third World; fully one third of the gathering was African. The voices the Americans heard were not ones they were accustomed to hear. In the sexuality debate, for example, voices from Africa and Asia were forceful, occasionally strident, and judgmental, rooted in Biblicism that, to Western ears, sounded simplistic if not crude. Furthermore, these voices largely carried the day, leaving many Western bishops bewildered and hurting, wondering if the bonds of affection that have always characterized the Anglican Communion were strong enough to embrace them still. (pp. 260-261).

It has often been remarked that the 1998 Lambeth Conference marked a new era for the Anglican Communion for it was there that the bishops of the global south discovered the strength of their collective voice. The Western church leaders were



of the liberal view that the church's teachings on sexual morality should be adapted to fit the needs of a changing world. On the contrary, African and Asian prelates upheld the traditional teachings as eternal and thus relevant to every age. Many Western liberals were concerned by what they saw as a rather harsh Biblicist stance on the homosexual issue by the Africans. Duggan (cited by Ward, 2002) commenting on the intricacies of the debate states:

It was noticed that harshest attitudes towards homosexuality came from those bishops who represented the traditional CMS countries like Nigeria and Uganda, while the bishops of Southern Africa generally spoke with more liberal generosity...It was...as if the CMS had never passed on an appreciation of the complexity of Anglicanism. (p. 85).

Thus it is obvious that there is a strong connection between church tradition and a hard or soft line approach towards homosexuality. While Anglo-Catholics are likely to be more tolerant and sympathetic, evangelicals and the churches they planted are more orthodox. The Lambeth 1998 experience brought to the limelight the deep fault-lines running underneath the Anglican Communion which has quaked the church to its foundations. The fault-lines are obviously driven by differences in theology, culture and life experience. Whereas orthodoxy upholds the priority of the Scriptures in the theologization process, the liberal view gives more priority to the issue of human rights, culture and life experience.

The Lambeth Conference has a strictly consultative character, not infringing on provincial 'autonomy'. Hastings (1991) rightly submits that "total 'autonomy' or

the ‘independence’ of any part of the church is not very good ecclesiology” (p. 147). Anglicanism has a basic sense of the need for interdependence, but apparently does not know how to put its acts together beyond the claims of consultation and communion. Since Lambeth 1998, there has been a growing attention in the Anglican “north” to the ever increasing vitality within southern (especially African) Anglican provinces which has led to their open denunciations of the liberal excesses of the Western Churches.

Carrette and Keller (1999) point out the irony to the confrontation in the Anglican Communion as follows:

The Lambeth Conference is still held on the soil of the once-imperial homeland of the Anglican church, but the representative and voting power of the church now belongs to the majority of its members who come from what is called ‘the church of the south’ whose members reside south of the equator. While the Episcopal Church in the United States (i.e. the church of the North) represented the strongest appeal for the ordination of gay ministers, members from the church of the south organized themselves prior to the Conference in order to fight and successfully defeat the vote, viewing the ordination of gays as a symptom of the lax spirituality and liberal attitudes of the North. (p. 32).

For Sollis (2000):

The 1998 Conference was the first time that homosexuality was a matter of central debate and, by chance, the Conference coincided with the House of Lords debate on the lowering of the age of consent for gay men to 16, which many of the Church of England bishops had to leave the Conference to attend and vote. (p. 109).

Combe (cited by Sollis, 2000) represents the Lambeth Conference debate on homosexuality in terms of 'rights' and states:

The division of opinion is more geographical than theological with pressure for change coming from a small but vociferous body of bishops from the West, led by Bishop Jack Spong of Newark, New Jersey and Bishop Holloway of Edinburgh. This construction of the debate in terms of equal rights on the one hand and conservative southern (or Third World) bishops versus liberal Western bishops was the dominant attitude of most media representation of the debate. (p. 110).

Sollis (2000) further posits that:

The debate focused on the fundamental compatibility of a lesbian or gay sexual relationship with the Christian life; having presented the debate as a contest between conservatives and liberals, Africans and Westerners and supporters and opponents of same-sex marriage and ordination, the Western media pronounced the conservatives as victors. A few days later, 146 bishops signed a pastoral statement to lesbian and gay Christians apologizing

for any sense of rejection and pledging to continue to listen and reflect on the issue, among the signatories, two bishops from Central Africa, one from Brazil and six from South Africa, areas which were assumed to be hostile to liberalism. (p. 112).

Human sexuality has been a thorny issue within the Christian community. While the social climate on grassroots level might vary, the authority structures of institutionalized churches have demonstrated a high degree of unease in handling issues related to sex and sexuality. Among these issues, homosexuality has proven to be the most contentious. For instance, in the 1998 Lambeth Conference, there was a high degree of disagreement and contention among the bishops representing 80 million believers in the worldwide Anglican Communion. The scenario of hot contention is closely related to the assumption that the Bible serves as the most powerful and fundamental basis for the church's prohibition of the practice of homosexuality. The focus on biblical exegesis and other related issues (e.g. church tradition) was therefore inevitable.

Iheagwam (2010) states that:

During the 1998 Lambeth Conference, there was a palpable tension as the pro-homosexuality group, notably bishops from America, Canada and England went about lobbying for support while the anti-homosexuality group spearheaded by bishops from Africa, Asia and South America had their meetings to sharpen their strategies to counter the other group. (p. 90).

After the heated debate, Resolution 1.10 on Human Sexuality which summarizes the position of Lambeth Conference is stated as follows:

The Conference:

- (A) Commends to the church the subsection report on human sexuality.
- (B) In view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage.
- (C) Recognizes that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexuality orientation. Many of these are members of the church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God, and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ.
- (D) While rejecting homosexuality practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation, and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriages and any trivialization and commercialization of sex.
- (E) Cannot advise the legitimizing of blessing of same-sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same-gender unions.

- (F) Requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us.
- (G) Notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed on Resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process. (pp. 91-92).

With the foregoing resolutions, many bishops from the West who came to the Lambeth Conference to further the cause of the homosexuals in the church were disappointed and according to Iheagwam, left for their respective countries in frustration and anger before the Conference was officially declared closed.

Zeigler (2007) states that:

‘Listening’ was highlighted by Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference on Human Sexuality, with the statement, “We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ”. This commitment was reaffirmed by the Anglican Primates at their special meeting in October 2003. It was this exhortation to listen that prompted the 2005 Primates meeting and the Nottingham meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council to urge the appointment of a listening process

facilitator, Canon Philip Groves who began this ministry in January 2006. (p. 265).

Ziegler (2007) concludes that although successive resolutions of Anglican bodies have addressed the sexuality issue, it has been relatively recent that listening has been stressed as important to moving forward. Resolution 10 on Human Relationships and Sexuality at the 1978 Lambeth Conference encouraged dialogue with homosexual persons, but did not cite listening in particular. Resolution 64 of the 1988 Lambeth Conference on Human Rights for Those of Homosexual Orientation, mentioned study about homosexuality, but neither dialogue nor listening. (p. 264).

Thus the 1998 Lambeth Conference and its resolutions could be seen as not giving impetus to the unilateral actions of the Church in America and Canada. However, it is observable that while the revisionists invoked their autonomy rights in doing what they did, the orthodox branches of the church invoked the provisions of the Conference in their reactionary response. The ever brewing trouble created by the revisionists, and the state of broken communion led to significant portions of the Anglican Communion boycotting the Lambeth Conference of 2008, and gave birth to the GAFCON movement to be discussed in the fifth chapter of this work.

#### **4.6 The Development of Revisionism in the Western Churches**

The free online Dictionary defines 'revisionism' as advocacy of the revision of an accepted usually long-standing view, theory or doctrine, especially a revision of

historical events, doctrines or movements. In the context of this research, revisionism refers to the agitation in the Anglican Communion for the revision and modification of the teachings of the Church on the traditional non-acceptance of homosexuals in the life and ministry of the Church. The liberal theologians and their followers have been branded 'revisionists' by the orthodox Anglicans because they welcome variant homosexual lifestyles and work for every sexual orientation to be accepted in Anglicanism without discrimination.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the social taboo placed on homosexuality remained strongly in place in the Western societies and elsewhere, and even Hitler and his Nazi regime hated gays to the point of official extermination. Simons (1997) states:

When tens of thousands of homosexuals were put into concentration camps in Nazi Germany, both the church and the world did not cry out against this brutality. As the Christians remained silent in regard to the elimination of the Jews, so they uttered no word to protect homosexuals from a similar fate. Even after the war, those who had survived the camps and returned to their towns and villages continued to be regarded as criminals. In subsequent years the historians of the horrors of the Nazi regime rarely mentioned the massive crime against homosexuals. Why this indifference to murder? What is it in culture that has made people so hardhearted in the face of the suffering of certain groups? In this case, it is undoubtedly due to the church's teaching that homosexuality is a perversion, a sin against nature, a manifestation of evil, which the society assented to. Even though Jesus



recommends solidarity with the despised and the vulnerable, people then were ashamed to be seen in public as friends and supporters of gays and lesbians, and to defend their dignity and human rights. (pp. 140-141).

But things have drastically changed both in the church and in the larger society. The move to revise official church teaching on human sexuality evolved through a gradual process that was due to many factors.

Germond (2004) agreeably states that no one, not mystics, theologians nor prophets, can know with any degree of certainty the complex path that a particular Christian doctrine or ethic may take in the future. Even if one could probe within both church and society to their very depths, as well as survey their environments for every possible shift and change, one would be unable to chart the future course of both Christian faith and Christian practice. In a largely secularizing modern world, it appears that certainty in the present about either practice or belief does not and cannot ensure or guarantee the longevity of either. (p. 47).

Modern expectation of a church in the modern world is for the church to be pliable and to adjust to the ethico-moral dynamics of the society if it must remain relevant to the age, according to the society's perception of relevance. Casalis (cited by Germond, 2004) seems to give credence to this modern philosophy when he said that "the project of Christian theology is always inductive; it is episodic, contextual and specific to a particular historical milieu" (p. 48). This thought provides a strong motivation for modern revisionists of Christian theology who believe that any

theological discussion of human sexuality must be open to a broad recognition of the provisional nature of theology. Germond also points out that the secular approach that the production of Christian theology and practice is always a human process, which is always open to re-examination and re-evaluation has been largely influenced over the decades by Black Theologies, Liberation Theologies and Feminist Theologies. (p. 48).

Revisionism of traditional Christian sexual morality is the result of the assault of secular and post-modern forces on traditional sexual ethics which were largely derived from Judeo-Christian foundations. Traditional sexual morals have been embedded in centralized forms of social life where sexuality functioned as an integral part of the social order, fulfilling social obligations rather than satisfying the needs of individuals. Religion has ceased to be the moral centre of the social order in the Western society. Everywhere across the globe, the roles that religion plays in societies are in a constant state of change, and being challenged and modified by the complex web of social forces that shape our contemporary world.

The emphasis on the priority of the individual has facilitated what McGuire (1997) calls the emergence of “the discovery of self” or the emergence of the modern phenomenon of the unique individual within society. He further states that “This is a crucial development for the understanding of a globalized sexuality, for global sexuality is articulated on the premise of a discrete individual whose principal alliances are to the satisfaction of his or her own needs” (p. 250).

Giddens (1992) in complimenting the foregoing, states that the effect of the social forces has been the social and institutional narrowing of sex and sexuality down to expression of individual interests. Sex, historically centered in the family and in procreation, is increasingly being freed from both its familial and procreation purposes and functions more and more on the basis of the individualized freedom of the privatized world. He further asserts:

Sexuality today has been discovered, opened up and made accessible to the development of varying life-styles. It is something each of us ‘has’, or cultivates, no longer a natural condition, which an individual accepts as a preordained state of affairs. Somehow, in a manner that has to be investigated, sexuality functions as a malleable feature of self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms. (p. 15).

In tracing the history of the modern Christian construction of heterosexual normativity and homosexual perversion, Foucault (1978) dates the beginnings of this history precisely to the year 1870, to Westphal’s famous article on “contrary sexual sensation” that was rooted in the human body’s constitution. This led to the idea which dominated the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that homosexuality belonged to an intermediate or ‘third’ sex” (p. 43).

Greenberg (cited by Germond, 2004) notes that the two words that are central to contemporary constructions of sexuality, “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality” were introduced into the English language as adjectives in 1892. This development

was necessarily preceded by the shift from a one-sex view of the body to a two-sex view of the body. However, the fact that the two terms were a late nineteenth century development does not mean that there was no motion of same-gender sexual activity prior to this time. Homosexual activities have also been largely treated as a perversion by a greater part of cultures in the world. In the modern Western world, it has become the accepted wisdom in much of popular media that sex is not to be confined to marriage. Furthermore, the concept of what constitutes marriage and what constitutes a family, is a contested issue subject to various interpretations. Today in the Western world, family diversity is the norm, which also accommodates homosexual and lesbian families. Patterns that were formerly regarded as deviant and with time, as alternatives are now regarded by many as normal. (p. 48).

Those who champion the revising of the church's teaching on human sexuality in the Western world accuse the church of 'homophobia'—fear or hatred of homosexuals or same-gendered relationships, a fear which they attribute to an inflexible sense of gender identity and not on moral considerations, or conformity to Scripture. They consequently charge that 'homophobia' is a sin to be repented from by those upholding the orthodox teaching on human sexuality. One of such liberalists, Adams (2008) states as follows:

Homophobia is not...a private neurosis signaling defective sexual integration. Rather, homophobia is a psycho-spiritual instrument of taboo-enforcement. It has been schooled into us from earliest childhood as part of

our social formation, so that all of us are willy-nilly homophobic. We have all been taught and at deep levels we have learned that homosexual activity is socially traitorous. It symbolizes the shaking of social foundations. (p. 718).

Also, tracing the history of liberalism in the Anglican Church, Adams (2008) states that within the Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Church of England, conservatives and liberals hold contrasting and incompatible conscientious beliefs about sex and gender issues. The conservatives held a firm majority which allowed them to set institutional policies about sex and gender within the church until the mid-twentieth century when the tide began to turn. However, the snag is in the fact that even the conservatives were prepared to tolerate individual differences of opinion, by virtue of their being members of an increasingly secularized Western society, being satisfied that the church's orthodox policies were still largely in place then. (p. 726).

Adams (2008) commenting further on the role of the Episcopal Church in America to revisionism in the Anglican Church states that the passing of the Non-Discrimination Clause in 2003, Title III, Canon I, section 2:4 was a significant step forward. The clause reads:

No person shall be denied access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons. No right to licensing, ordination, or election is hereby established. (p. 728).

Implementing this rather ambiguous Canon, not only with the ordinations of LGBT deacons and priests, but with the 2003 General Convention consent to the election of Gene Robinson to the bishopric of New Hampshire was a further significant revisionist landmark that caused the rift in the Anglican Communion.

Slocum (1999) points out the liberalists' influence on one of the recent revisions of liturgical books in America in that the 1979 American Prayer Book embodied and promulgated new theological concepts that emboldened the liberalist campaign in the church. Through the wording of the ordinal, the Prayer Book made it clear that ordination was open to both sexes, an affront to those who were given permission not to accept the General Convention's approval of Women's ordination. The rite for the administration of all the sacraments also reflected theologies which in many cases were a departure from those of the 1928 Prayer Book, and among other innovations, allowed lay (both male and female) chalice bearers during Holy Communion. (p. 8).

Homosexual apologists argue that even if homosexuality is part of the whole catalogue of sins, it is not the only sin, and not even to be elevated to the level of a cardinal sin. For them, going by the same-sex philosophical argument, it is not fair to do anything overt or covert that singles out one ethical deviation as if it were the only sin, and they criticize the church as not being as aggressive about heterosexual sins as she seems to be about homosexuality. Homosexuals in the Anglican Church in defense of their sexual preference also question why Anglicans who have

consistently refused to centralize on other issues call for such authority on issues of sexuality, and insist that no one group has the authority to force out another group.

Wuthnow (cited by Kew and White, 1992) stresses that in the Western world, the church was struggling to come to terms with the radical patterns of personal behaviour. In the 1960s, a noted/marked sharp liberalization of attitudes took place on a wide variety of lifestyle issues ranging from divorce and premarital sexuality to political and economic orientations. A parallel degree of liberalization affected mainline religious traditions – Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. (p. 28).

Wuthnow further submits that a theological consensus was emerging from most seminaries that both encouraged and affirmed the actions taken in the social and political axis. Emphasis on issues of individual morality and family concerns were relegated to the background and an agenda was adopted that sought to confront social ills and systemic injustice. Seminaries started abandoning classic (traditional) curricula of theological education for less structured offerings shaped and largely influenced by the new methodologies being explored. In this period, the development of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) was encouraged by Episcopal seminaries, to enable seminarians better integrate theology and the life sciences. CPE seemed to encourage the assumption that the whole cross section of human problems could be solved by programmes, human movements, political action, and the remoulding of people's minds. All these provided the perfect environment for the ascendancy of more liberal agenda in the Episcopal Church after 1965 and

affected many Christian denominations. Liberals were often seen as the exciting visionaries of the church, and those on the more conservative side as slow-moving and out of touch with the events and presuppositions shaping the age, with their consciences dulled to the injustices of the society. The relaxing of sexual restraints and the ever growing divorce statistics produced a generation of shell-shocked children. Hence how to handle new family/relationship configurations and respond to the damage done by the break-up of old ones became a nagging anxiety for Christians of all denominations in the modern society. (p. 29).

He concludes that the stand of the conservatives who still constitute the majority, against the liberals' sexual agenda, especially in the legitimacy of homosexual acts and relationships within the church has remained a thorny issue. The revisionist agenda of the liberal but powerful minority has come to be the symbol of a theological decadence that has sold out to a hostile secular culture.

Goldingay (2011) posits that in public and mainline churches, support for homosexual agenda assumes that same-sex attraction is innate. Central to the argument for normalizing same-sex relationship within TEC and other Christian groups is the assumption that homosexual orientation or attraction to members of one's own gender is something fixed and innate. Gays and lesbians often report that from the earliest point of sexual interest and self-awareness, they find themselves attracted not to the opposite sex, but to their own, and the conclusion is drawn that the inclination must have been present from birth. The liberal argument



then goes on to treat such same-sex attraction as natural, i.e. occurring within the natural order, and that it thus should be considered part of the category of creation. Both the secular versions of celebrating diversity and “gay pride”, and the claim of homosexual Christians to be naturally the way they are (“God made me this way”) have unfortunately convinced many that a significant part of the population is simply born with a different set of sexual responses and inclinations which should be accepted as natural, normal variations, and for Christians, part of God’s creation. This view of the normality and naturalness of the same-sex attraction has rapidly secured wide acceptance in the Western world. As a recent example, Goldingay (2011) cites the recent project of two Roman Catholic moral theologians, Todd Salzman and Michael Lawler who argue for a “liberal view of sexuality that opposes their church’s official teaching” (p. 32).

Salzman and Lawler (2008) offer a striking good example of how people turn the ambiguity of scientific knowledge about homosexuality into an assumed consensus to justify their stand. They state:

There is growing agreement also in the scientific community that sexual orientation, heterosexual or homosexual, is an innate condition over which the person has no control and that she or he cannot change without psychological damage. In addition, because homosexual orientation is experienced as a given and not as something freely chosen, it cannot be considered unnatural, unreasonable and therefore immoral, for morality presumes the freedom to choose. (p. 65).

However, in spite of the logical confusion between orientation, behaviour and morality in this liberal view point, three fallacies needing correction still remain – that science points to sexual orientation as innate, that if homosexuality is “given”, it cannot be considered as “unnatural”. Furthermore, to imply that the same God who condemned homosexuality in the Scripture “gives” it to some people at their creation is a serious theological aberration used to launch and sustain the modern sexual aberration in the church and the society in general. If it is ‘given’ then it must have be given by God’s enemy who strives to interfere with and corrupt God’s creation, since God does not contradict himself.

Also Roberts (cited by Goldingay, 2011) points out that the liberal view of same-sex marriage requires eliminating procreation as an inherent meaning of sexual relations. This allows the liberals to argue that same-sex marriages can embody a kind of complementarity based on psychological or social fulfillment or incorporation of the “other” parallel to, or a valid variation of ordinary heterosexual male-female complementarity. Roberts concludes that through sexuality, modern Western culture (as seen in much of its literature, cinema, music, popular culture, consumerism and fascination with shallow celebrity) seeks a set of goods largely different from what Christian theology wants to affirm. Instead of a proper emphasis on faithfulness and mutual service as the context for affection, sexual pleasure, and family, the goods desired by our society are often gratification, self-expression, and novel experiences. The consumerist nature of our society affects sexuality by ‘commodifying’ and depersonalizing sexual experience. The

technological mentality leads us to treat sex and other areas of behaviour as devoid of inherent meaning, and thus allows us to give ourselves freedom to impose our own values and needs under the framework of a right to our chosen self-expression. These cultural attitudes are often heightened in North America (and Europe) where we find heavy emphasis on individualism and subjective autonomy. Understanding recent intellectual and cultural history is of great importance in realizing why traditional Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality has lost much of its persuasive power. (p. 41).

Treloar (2008) commenting on the rather sad role liberalists have played in the church, states that the Church of England's Wolfenden Report of 1957 recommended that "homosexual behavior between consenting adults in private be no longer a criminal offence." This report is credited with having a direct influence on the decriminalization of homosexuality in Great Britain and in forcing a reconsideration of the issue by other Christian churches. Yet, despite its liberally progressive line, that report still paradoxically speaks of homosexuality in terms of an illness with its own etiology, and of psychiatric and hormonal treatment. The Report trivializes same-sex sexuality as something that can be controlled, like coughing, and lapses into implicitly connecting homosexuality with pedophilia and promiscuity. (p. 50).

Hays (2003) has espoused that a large body of modern psychological and scientific studies demonstrate the widespread incidence of homosexual activities and some

theorists hold that homosexual orientation is innate (or formed at a very early age) and unchangeable. This opinion is espoused by most advocates of full acceptance of homosexuality in the church. If homosexual orientation is a genetically determined trait, so the argument goes, then any disapproval of it is a form of discrimination analogous to racism. Others, however, regard homosexual orientation as a form of development maladjustment or “symbolic confusion”. Some therapists claim significant clinical successes in helping homosexual persons develop a heterosexual orientation; others challenge such claims. The conventional view at present is that therapeutic intervention can only impose behaviour modification; it cannot effect change in a person’s underlying sexual orientation. (p. 397). Such contemporary secularist arguments have helped in convincing a significant population of people in the Western world into accepting homosexuality as way of life in the society and thereby fighting for its full endorsement in the church.

The global Anglican fora for the discussion of homosexual relationships were formally presented in the 1978 and 1988 Lambeth Conferences and the Meeting of Primates of the Anglican Communion in 1995. It is observed that with reference to Anglican teaching and tradition, the position of these bodies gradually moved from heterosexuality as the scriptural norm to a more nuanced and open position.

Simons (1997) in marking the official point of graduated departure from traditional teaching quotes the 1978 Lambeth Conference (Resolution 10) as follows:

While we affirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognize the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research. The church recognizing the need for pastoral concern for those who are homosexual encourages dialogue with them. (p. 133).

In opening the door of tolerance further, the 1988 Lambeth Conference (Resolution 64) reaffirmed the 1978 resolution and urged “such study and reflection to take account of biological, genetic and psychological research being undertaken by other agencies, and the socio-cultural factors that lead to the different attitudes in the provinces of our Communion” (p. 133). The Resolution concluded with a call on each province to reassess its pastoral care of persons of homosexual orientation.

Similarly, in the Pastoral letter issued by the Primates of Anglican Provinces in the Communion in March 1995, they took a soft-line approach to the problem of homosexuality in the church. Simons (1997) presents part of the letter *inter alia*:

Around the world, serious questions relating to human sexuality are being faced by the church. The traditional response to these questions is to affirm the moral precepts which have come down to us through the tradition of the church. Nevertheless, we are conscious that within the church itself there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition, but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character. The issues are deep and complex.

They do not always admit of easy, instant answers... We have to recognize that there are different understandings at present among Christians of equal commitment and faith. We invite every part of the church to face the questions about sexuality with honesty and integrity. (pp. 133-134).

In the foregoing resolutions and statements there is progressive but gradual concession perceivable, commensurate with the gains made by the gay movement as the years rolled by in the theology and life of the church. The level of groundbreaking tolerance increased with each succeeding resolution or statement, pointing to the relentless pressure of the homosexuals on the church polity.

Wirenius (2014) intimates that at its 2012 General Convention, the Episcopal Church adopted a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex couples entering into marriage, which could be used within dioceses whose bishops approve its use. In such local discernment, dioceses can look to a number of resources in addressing the theological issues surrounding recognition of same-sex marriage, including an important exchange fostered by the House of Bishops itself. (pp. 505-506).

With regard to homosexuality in the Anglican Church, a statement of the Bench of Bishops of the Church of Wales in 1988 (cited by Evans and Wright, 1991) further softens the ground for revisionist progress as follows:

We all need to be reminded of St. Paul's words: 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. Sexual morality is only one aspect of personal moral integrity; personal moral integrity is only part of a wider social moral

order on which depends the well-being of the world... 'All have sinned': none of us is without fault. It ill befits any person to condemn another, particularly when we don't have to walk in the other's shoes. Rather, the Gospel calls all to repentance, to support and up-build one another within the Body of Christ, and offers to each one of us forgiveness and healing according to our particular need. (p. 595).

Tracing the development of the moral fault in the foundation of the Episcopal Church, Kew and White (1997) reveal that:

Like many of these older denominations in North America (the Episcopal Church) allowed itself to become dominated by issue-driven thinkers and activists in the 1960s. While the weak social agenda of the immediate postwar period was rightly challenged during those years and to an extent this balance was being redressed, the changed emphasis flung open the doors of Episcopal and many other churches in a different way. Their priorities and denominational agendas were laid open to being reworked by a rapidly secularizing popular culture. (p. 19).

The foreseeable outcome was that instead of addressing the changing environment by exploring the ways that the essential elements of Christian teaching might be related and re-appropriated to the needs and aspirations of modern society, a significant number of church members allowed their faith to be "modernized". It appears presently that in the Western world, the church's commitment to historic

Christianity in some aspects of doctrine has all but collapsed. Kew and White (1997) conclude that in the light of these developments:

We are at the front end of a massive chapter change in history. The Industrial Age which profoundly shaped our church is passing and a new Information or Quantum Age is arriving. As this transition occurs, unexpected spiritual stirrings are surfacing. We have seen a rediscovery of the soul in the popular culture and a thirst for...recording the whole mental and theological environment...The challenge therefore is not so much secularization as spiritual pluralism and eclecticism, as people pick and mix a religious framework from any number of sources. (p. 20).

In the new age that modern society has found itself, there are an unprecedented cultural, social and spiritual shifts enhanced by the opportunities offered by the 'global village'. Those in the church who hold strong their traditional Christian values and norms are seen as clinging to an out-moded notion of modernity and are under pressure to embrace the strong current of unusual and varied theologies and practices.

The role of the civil authorities in the decriminalization of sodomy and homosexual relations in general influenced the progress of the homosexual pressure group in the church. Coleman (cited by Parsons, 1994) states that the Church of England Moral Welfare Council in 1953 prompted the Home Secretary to formally initiate an official enquiry into the issue of homosexuality, with the aim of reassessing the



law relating to it. When the enquiry was set in motion, the Church of England along with other churches submitted memoranda to the resulting Wolfenden Committee which concluded its work in 1957. Coleman further reveals:

The principal burden of the Church of England's evidence was that, although homosexual acts remained morally unacceptable in Christian terms, yet the law of the land should be reformed so that such acts were no longer criminal. The Church of England thus argued for the extension to homosexual acts of the distinction between 'sin' and 'crime' which was already applied, for example, in the matter of adultery. Other churches argued similarly for reform of the criminal law without conceding the moral legitimacy of homosexual activity. (p. 243).

This seemingly protagonist attitude of the Churches in England to issues of homosexuality is by all means indicative of the level of influence and pressure the homosexual cause had exerted on church leadership across the various denominations. This untoward attitude would have been unthinkable in the churches some decades back. Thus we see a gradual breakdown of the Church of England's official conservatism to a more general shift in attitudes to personal choices in sexuality.

Parsons (1994) points out that during the mid and late 1960s, the debates on human sexuality both Catholic and Protestant, were conducted in the context of a general morality in British society and a growing support for legislative changes. For instance, the 1968 controversy over the papal encyclical 'Humanae Vitae' and its

ban on artificial contraception made increasing numbers of individual Catholics refuse to accept the straightforward application of fixed rules to the regulation of this aspect of their sexuality. In practice, many clergy, in the privacy and pastoral context of the confessional and even more of the laity in the privacy of their own lives and relationships decided to defy the official teaching of their church in the light of their informed consciences. (p. 246). In essence, the poor response by some Catholics to the demands of the 'Humanae Vitae' encouraged homosexuals to continue the agitation for their rights in the society, and particularly in the church. It also swung the door of sexual permissiveness wider in Western societies.

Parsons further intimates that by the end of the 1960s, Christian attitudes to personal and sexual morality had become contested ground, not merely between Christians and the prevailing ethos of the sexual permissiveness, but also within the churches and between Christians who interpreted the implications of their faith and its inherited beliefs in markedly different ways. For the first group, the appropriate response was opposition to the permissive ethos and reassertion of the traditional Christian values and principles. For the other side of the polarity, the Christian tradition itself needed a reassessment of the values and rules for the development of a more flexible, innovative response to the various issues in personal sexual morality which the contemporary issues called for. (p. 247).

Parsons also points out that the expression of a more 'liberal' Christian approach to ethics and moral theology resulted in the formation of The Gay Christian

Movement (G.C.M) in 1975 to provide an ecumenical organization for homosexual Christians from various denominational backgrounds, and to replace a number of smaller groups and societies. According to Parsons (1994) a decade later (1985), the movement changed its name to the more inclusive Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (L.G.C.M). The stated aim of this movement is to provide a source of fellowship and mutual support for homosexual Christians and to continue pressing the case for their acceptance within the wider Christian community. The movement also combined campaigning for recognition and acceptance of the rights and sensibilities of gay Christians with affirmation of the goodness and 'God-giveness' of the sexualities involved, and the celebration of the positive contribution that it believed such Christians could make to the life of the churches as a whole.

In the British context, there was also a significant ambiguity in the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Officially there was little scope for Roman Catholic leaders in Britain to adopt anything but a strictly conservative policy. During the 1980s, Pope John Paul II and the Vatican had adopted an increasingly censorious tone and articulated an increasingly severe policy toward homosexual acts and homosexuals. In practice it was noted that the Roman Catholic Church in Britain was far from unanimous, let alone enthusiastic in its application of the official line from Rome. Although the British Catholic leadership did not openly challenge the official line or offer explicit support to gay and lesbian Catholics (largely in order to avoid outright confrontation with Rome), yet the bishops were at least until the

early 1990s, notably sluggish in their application of the Vatican's hard line and offered and allowed pastoral support of gay and lesbian Catholics in private.

Parsons (1994) concludes that other indications of the rampaging strides of the homosexual movement included the stifling of a fierce and spirited attempt by Tony Highton, an evangelical Anglican Clergyman in the debate of the Church of England General Synod in 1987. Highton, the founder of Action for Biblical Witness to Our Nation (ABWON) sought to secure a Synod reaffirmation of traditional Christian teaching which included that 'fornication, adultery and homosexual acts are sinful in all circumstances' – a most revealing linking of a rejection of homosexuality with rejection of anything other than married heterosexual intercourse. With all the lobbying that surrounded the debate, Highton's motion was not passed. (p. 251).

Lodge (cited by Parsons, 1994) lamenting the unstoppable momentum of the liberal hedonistic spirit in the Anglican Church and the unending controversies and debate that must follow it states:

There is however, no cause for progressives to gloat or for conservatives to sulk. Let copulation thrive, by all means; but man cannot live by orgasms alone, and he certainly cannot die by them, except, very occasionally, in the clinical sense. The good news about sexual satisfaction has little to offer those who are crippled, chronically sick, mad, ugly, impotent or old, which all of us will be in due course, unless we are dead already. Death, after all, is

the overwhelming question to which sex provides no answer, only an occasional brief respite from thinking about it. (pp. 262-263).

Goldingay (2011) commenting on the origins of the digression states that modern Western societies in North America and Europe are increasingly moving toward the acceptance of same-sex relationships. At first, people were challenged to accept lesbian and gay partnerships on a political and legal level. But recently and more problematically, Christians are being asked to accept a redefinition of the institution of marriage itself. No longer is marriage to be regarded essentially as a bond between one man and one woman but as a sexual relationship in which two men or two women may also be committed to each other. There is pressure for them to be recognized to have corresponding rights of support, parenting, adopting, inheriting, divorcing and the other privileges and obligations that spouses in marriage expect.

He further states that a remarkable shift in public opinion has occurred in the last thirty years or so in the aftermath of the so-called sexual revolution. Several European countries, including traditionally Catholic societies such as Spain as well as number of American states have either passed legislation to allow same-sex marriage or have had their courts rule that restricting marriage to heterosexuals is unjust. It is not surprising that many Christians who live in areas where these social developments have progressed farthest should attempt to harmonize the attitudes and practice of their churches with those principles of fairness, tolerance, and

compassion that are the supporting moral features of the acceptance of same-sex marriage. (pp. 1-2).

Highlighting the influence of other churches on the manifest progress of liberalism in America, Goldingay (2011) asserts that weaker and shrinking groups such as the Unitarians and United Church of Christ have taken a more liberal path on same-sex marriage. By the end of 2009 however the scene changed considerably with the passage by a two-thirds majority of voters at the meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, of a resolution allowing Lutheran clergy living in same-sex relationships to be ordained and minister in that denomination. It has to be admitted that this development among Lutherans, with whom the Episcopal Church has close ties, strengthens the credibility of the liberal direction in the Episcopal Church. (p. 3).

Goldingay (2011) concludes that ecumenical relations between Anglicans and other denominations are a very mixed bag. Some national churches in Europe (such as the Swedish Lutherans) have predictably reflected the prevailing acceptance of modern secular views on sexuality and marriage and have opted for a “gender-neutral” definition of marriage for church weddings. Although Presbyterians and Methodists have also been moving in a liberal direction, it is not clear whether they will be following the example of TEC (and alienating their conservative and evangelical constitutionaries) or perhaps being more cautious about accepting

same-sex marriage. (p. 2).

Hastings (1991) links the effects of the consecration of female bishops in some parts of the Anglican Church to the problem of disunity, which made coping with the immediate impairment of communion much more difficult. Shortly after Lambeth 1988, the diocese of Massachusetts elected Barbara Harris as a suffragan bishop. In 1990, the diocese of Dunedin in New Zealand elected Penelope Jamieson as its diocesan bishop. It was clear at Lambeth that such developments were likely to take place. It was also clear that many other people, including bishops and provinces would not be able to accept them. Male priests ordained by Barbara Harris or Penelope Jamieson will not be accepted as priests in many dioceses of the Communion, any more than would women priests. This is a considerable exacerbation of impairment of communion within the Communion. On traditional Anglican principles, the synodical authority of a province or a church may be autonomous but it is certainly not infallible. Thus the unilateral action of the provinces that allowed women as bishops enlarged the problems of the Anglican Communion and created a more divided house which also encouraged the homosexual pressure groups to press ahead. (p. 157).

#### **4.7 The Consecration of a Gay Bishop**

The revisionists had earlier succeeded in the ordination of homosexuals into the priesthood in some parts of the Anglican Church, both in America, England Canada, Australia and other places. The next step they took that constituted a

further impairment in the Anglican Communion was the election and consecration of a self-confessed gay priest as the bishop of New Hampshire in the Episcopal Church in America.

Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia chronicles Gene Robinson as the first priest in an openly gay relationship to be consecrated a bishop in a major Christian denomination believing in the historic episcopate. His sexual orientation was privately acknowledged in the 1970s when he was in the Seminary. He married Isabella McDaniel and the marriage which ended with a divorce lasted from 1972 – 1986. He subsequently chose a man, Mart Andrew as his partner in 1988 who he also divorced in 2004.

He was elected bishop in 2003. His election required only 39 clergy votes and 83 laity votes, but he polled 53 clergy votes and 96 laity votes to be elected. His election by the delegates of his New Hampshire Diocese required the ratification by the General Convention of the ECUSA, according to the Church's canons. The ratification vote became an issue of great controversy but he eventually pulled through by a 62 to 45 vote majority.

Wikipedia concludes that after his election, many theologically conservative Episcopalians in the US abandoned the Episcopal Church, formed the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and aligned themselves with bishops outside the ECUSA, a process called the Anglican realignment. The consecration of Gene





**Figure 4:** Gene Robinson, the first openly-gay priest elected and consecrated a bishop in the Episcopal Church in America in 2003.  
Source: Gillian Laub.

Robinson as a bishop was one singular act that caused the loudest uproar in the Anglican Church.

According to Grieb (2005) the Windsor Report specifically requests ECUSA of an account, based on the traditional sources of authority in Anglicanism, of its action in consecrating Bishop Gene Robinson and allowing some diocesan clergy to assist at same-sex blessings. This invitation models a willingness to consider a minority view within the Anglican Communion, one that has a difficult time getting a hearing for the last two or three decades. At the same time, it signals that ECUSA has not successfully provided such an account and that feelings on this issue are intense. The perception of North American arrogance is complicated by ECUSA's failure to consult widely enough and to signal clearly enough its nearly thirty years-long conversations predictably moving towards the actions it finally took. It is perhaps also the case that for some of that time, the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Anglican leaders found the issue so distasteful that serious discussion of it was not allowed. (p. 594).

In making an input, Presler (2007) agrees that the invitation to conversation was compelling. It was striking that the controversial actions of the 2003 General Convention had not been accompanied by an initiation or visits to Anglican provinces likely to be disturbed by the Convention's actions, not even by resolutions or public statements expressing concern about possible effects of Conventions actions. The Lambeth Commission had been deliberating but its report

was not due until October 2004, and voices of discord rather than reconciliation were dominating the news. It was possible that the lack of initiative from the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) in exploring conversations was already conveying, albeit erroneously the message “I have no need of you” that Paul cited to the Corinthians as an undesirable attitude among members of the body of Christ. (I Cor. 12:21). (p. 254).

Goldingay (2011) rightly notes that in recent years, the Anglican Communion has continually struggled with the issue of homosexuality in different contexts, including the Lambeth Conferences (at least since 1988), meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council, and Primates’ Meetings. The growing acceptance of homosexuality in the Western sections of the Communion created a context in North America in which the consecration in 2003 of Gene Robinson as the Bishop of New Hampshire in the U.S.A and the decision by the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada to bless same-sex unions seemed legitimate developments. But much of the rest of the Communion has not shared the conviction of the need to accept same-sex blessing or marriage. The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada find themselves torn between a sizeable liberal body in favour of accepting a revised view of sex and marriage, and large swaths of the Anglican Communion solidly opposed to it. It is very likely that if Canada and the U.S.A had not acted first, then certain similar events in Great Britain, Australia or New Zealand, for example would have sparked the debate and crisis. These three other revisionist enclaves would have done what the ECUSA did any way. (p. 2).

Goddard (2002) commenting on the build-up to Westminster Diocese's decision states:

As people gathered, the hot issue was undoubtedly the plan by New Westminster Diocese in Canada to approve a rite for the blessing of same-sex unions. Although care was taken to avoid this dominating, it did seem providential that the important issues this raises for the future of the Communion could be addressed by a global gathering of orthodox Anglicans. The visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury...provided further encouragement. He made it clear when speaking to consultants and later to the wider conference that he considered the issue 'a most serious one' and the New Westminster proposals as 'schismatic', dividing the Communion and ecumenically embarrassing. (p. 296).

Germond (2004) agrees that the controversy over the appointment of Gene Robinson, an openly gay person as Bishop of New Hampshire, in the Episcopal Church of the USA, serves only to highlight the divisiveness of issues of sexuality plaguing the Anglican Communion. Germond postulates that Robinson's consecration exposed a dramatic fault-line that runs through the worldwide Anglican Communion of seventy-five million people. Radically opposed positions that have been largely kept beneath the surface of the Anglican Church erupted dramatically into public consciousness. The Church teeters on the brink of a major schism or 'realignment' a gentler term that Rowan Williams prefers to use. Several parts of the Anglican Church condemned the consecration and have modified their

relationship with TEC or with the Diocese of New Hampshire of which Gene Robinson is now Bishop. In response, Stanley Ntangari spokesperson for the Ugandan Anglican Church, said that the Ugandan church, the second largest in Africa after Nigeria, would break Communion with the Diocese of New Hampshire, and refuse to recognize ‘that man’ as a bishop. (p. 50).

Hilborn (2003) highlights the new term ‘covenant’ put forward by the revisionists as a possible replacement for marriage, stating that whether in New Westminster Diocese’s adoption of a liturgy for the blessing of same-sex unions, in New Hampshire Diocese’s appointment of the declared, sexually active gay priest Gene Robinson to be its bishop, or in the Church of England’s ‘Jeffrey John Affair’, that arguably the most profound theological concept at issue has been the concept of ‘covenant’. The New Westminster service is cast explicitly as ‘A Rite for the celebration of Gay and Lesbian Covenants’, and features an exposition which relates its endorsement of homosexual partnerships to God’s covenants ‘with Israel’ and with followers of Jesus. Just as a covenant is ‘an ancient form of promise, a public declaration of commitment that binds people in enduring relationships’ and that forms the basis of ‘people’s liberation from slavery’ and discrimination, so the exposition affirms the propriety of the church enabling a ‘covenant’ between same-sex couples, who it implies, might themselves have experienced oppression and prejudice. In a similar vein, the election of Gene Robinson was widely justified in relation to a ‘Baptismal Covenant’ which defines

the Episcopal Church's ministerial appointments policy in avowedly inclusive, non-discriminatory terms. (p. 264).

Whichever way, the action of the two dioceses in ECUSA and Canada has not gone down well with the rest of the South-South Anglican Communion, no matter the attempted change of nomenclature. Jenkins (2004) states that the anger, dismay, and urgency that have characterized recent voices from outside ECUSA have much to do with a prior crisis in the Episcopal Church's presence in the wider Anglican Communion, as well as with pressing missional concerns for churches in the global south. Failure to recognize this has allowed the consecration of Gene Robinson and the issue of homosexuality generally, to raise central ecclesiological questions about the identity and mission of Anglican Churches. (p. 294). Accordingly, the unsolved problem of the taking of unilateral actions by sections of the Western church has metamorphosed into bigger problems.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA AND HER RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ABERRATIONS IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

The consecration of Gene Robinson was clearly the last straw that broke the camel's back as it hastened the cutting of the strings that held the Churches of the Anglican Communion together. It also signaled in strong terms the coming of the age of liberalism in the Anglican Church which has boldly challenged orthodox teaching on sexual morality. This consecration brought swift and varied reactions from Anglican leaders around the world and dire warnings that the future of the Anglican Church is in jeopardy. At the same time, it was evident that not everyone was prepared to rush into schism. In Africa, it was interpreted that within ECUSA, American Anglicans considered their culture-based agenda of far greater importance than obedience to the word of God, the integrity of Anglican world mission and the spiritual welfare and unity of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

H. O. Adams (personal communication, February 20, 2014) believes that the international uproar that greeted the news of Gene Robinson's consecration served naturally to heighten awareness of the agenda of the revisionists in the Anglican world. In total agreement, S. O. Oke ( personal communication, January 10, 2014) affirms that the act of theological digression helped every average Anglican member to sense that the Anglican Communion was heading for difficult times. This subsequently motivated him to start preparing his church members who travel

or migrate to the Western world on what to expect and how to react in their new places of abode.

Following the pro-homosexual actions, a state of impaired communion not only existed between ECUSA and other Provinces, but internally in ECUSA between non-consenting dioceses, groups and individual church leaders on the two sides of the divide within the USA. The strong negative response from churches in the Global South to the American and Canadian innovations on homosexuality was foreseeable and helped to tense up the Anglican Communion.

Goldingay (2011) opines that churches in the West have long considered themselves sensitive and responsive to issues of racism, injustice and poverty, and have taken pains over the years to operate as partners in mission with African, Asian and Latin American Churches to eradicate the evils associated with injustice, racism and poverty in the troubled spots of the world. Some liberals appear to have been deeply wounded because those in the Global South whom they have helped in matters of injustice and peace have not been able to accept North American positions on sexuality. (pp. 3-4).

It was clear from the onset of the revisionist actions that it was not going to be a one-good-turn-deserves-another affair, indicating that matters of Christian sexual morality are harder to bargain on, and not easily exchangeable in the diplomacy of ethics between different socio-cultural backgrounds in the Anglican Communion. Most of the statements and declarations by non-Western bishops and synods



announcing impaired or broken communion explicitly lay the blame for the division of the Communion at the feet of the American and Canadian Churches, as their revision of Christian sexual morality clearly violates the traditional biblical teaching on human sexuality as accepted by Anglicans.

### **5.1 The Windsor Report**

The production of the Windsor Report was one of the reactions of the Anglican Communion to the problem created by the unilateral actions taken in favour of homosexuals in Dioceses of New Hampshire and Westminster, and the generally liberal attitude of a greater percentage of Anglican Provinces in the Western world that have the potentials and tendency to take after the two erring dioceses.

The Windsor Report was produced by the Lambeth Commission appointed in October 2003 with the nineteen members drawn from across fourteen out of the Anglican Communion's thirty-eight provinces worldwide. The group consisted of both lay people and clergy. Mombo (2007) states that the Lambeth Commission met for a full year with three meetings, two in England and one in the United States. The resultant Windsor Report is divided into four sections: The biblical foundations of communion, the principles of communion, the future life of the Anglican Communion, and the maintenance of communion. (p. 70).

According to Walker (2007) the Windsor Report challenges the Anglican Communion, especially Anglicans in the African Provinces, to reflect critically on

the missional priorities of the church. It challenges Christians to re-think the hermeneutics of sin, salvation, and reconciliation. More importantly, it challenges the worldwide Communion to re-define its organic structure and ask itself whether it is to be a monolith or a confederation of diverse organizations. In essence, the Report describes the nature of the Communion, the bonds which hold it together and the ways much of the bonds have been severely tested and threatened by the current crisis (homosexuality). (p. 19). Wondra (2004) intimates that:

On October 18, 2004, the Anglican Communion released the Windsor Report of the Lambeth Commission on the Communion formed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in response to the situation that has developed in the Anglican Communion in the wake of decisions in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church, relative to homosexuality, and the decisions of a number of provinces to declare they are now or may soon be no longer in Communion with the Diocese of New Westminster or the Episcopal Church. The Lambeth Commission's charge was specifically not to consider issues of human sexuality as such, but rather to focus on how Anglican churches might maintain "the highest degree of communion possible" in what is a serious and widespread situation of conflict. (pp. 193-194).

The Windsor Report (2004) has numerous recommendations but the most outstanding ones are three invitations:

- (1) The Episcopal Church has been “invited” to make a statement of regret for the damage it has done to the Communion in consecrating Bishop Eugene Robinson.
- (2) The Diocese of New Westminster, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Episcopal Church have been “invited” to make a similar statement of regret for authorizing same-sex blessings.
- (3) Various conservative elements have been “invited” to make statements of regret for the damage they have done to the Communion by escalating rhetoric and by un-canonical crossing of diocesan boundaries. (p. 53).

In all three cases there is also an “invitation” to enter into a moratorium on all such future acts. The Report also notes that in any situation of conflict among human groups or organizations, there are approximately four options, in escalating degrees of seriousness: mediation and arbitration; removal of invitation to attend important meetings as participants; invitation to attend these same meetings as observers only; and finally revocation of membership. The conclusion of the section of the Windsor Report (2004) which deals with the care of dissenting groups, paragraph 157 states:

There remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together should the call to halt and find ways of continuing our present communion not be heeded, then we shall have to begin to learn to walk apart. We would much rather not speculate on actions that might need to be taken if, after acceptance by the Primates, our recommendations are not implemented. (p. 60).

The report acknowledges explicitly the intractable nature of the co-operation between the various churches in the Anglican Communion due to the prevailing tendency to unilateral instead of corporate action in the church.

Wondra (2004) intimates further that the Windsor Report also deals with tensions and the underlying questions of authority by giving clear priority to unity over diversity, to community over autonomy, and to the centralization of authority at the international level, as well as to various bishops and college of bishops. This preference for centralization and hierarchy is a response to what the Report judges to be an overemphasis on diversity, autonomy, and dispersal and localization of authority, especially in the U.S.A. (p. 195).

Among other proposals, the Windsor Report proposes that the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion give some measure of jurisdictional authority to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting and the Lambeth Conference, what the Report calls the "Instruments of Unity", and that this authority be given through all the provinces pledging themselves to a Communion-wide Anglican Covenant. The covenant would include an affirmation that all member provinces share a common theological and ecclesial identity and a common life of worship and service (Windsor Report Appendix B, Articles 1- 3). The covenant would also include a statement of what constitutes relationships of communion among Anglicans (Article 9), along with promises that member provinces will "uphold and act compatibly with the catholic

and apostolic faith, order and tradition, and moral values and vision of humanity received by and developed in fellowship of member churches. (Article 10).

Furthermore, the covenant would include limits on the autonomy of the member provinces, so that each province could freely decide what affects only itself, but would consent to follow certain practices when issues are matters of concern to the larger Communion, (Articles 18-27). Diversity would be affirmed, but “what touches all should be approved by all” (Article 20).

In addition, the Report supports the idea of a minimal canon law that would pertain throughout the Communion and the Report implies that some action should be taken when a province violates either the covenant or the findings of the Instrument of Unity. Presumably, the “invitations” to express regret and enter into a moratorium are an example of what such action might be.

Generally, the Windsor Report addresses the fact that binding decisions in the Anglican Communion are made and interpreted at the local (diocesan) and provincial (national or regional) level and there only. Decisions or views expressed at the international level have had only “moral authority”. Thus it is at best unclear how to negotiate conflicts that cross provincial lines. Douglas (2005) commenting on the place given to biblical authority points out that the Windsor Report’s discussion of the authority of the Bible is one of the most positive aspects of the Report and offers an important beginning point for Anglican self-understanding of

issues of authority and unity. The Report underscores Scripture “as the church’s supreme authority, and as such ought to be seen as a focus and means of unity” (p. 53). Its hermeneutical approach sees the Bible as a living document that informs and directs the life of the church. Such an approach requires that Scripture always be interpreted within the worshipping life of the church. As such, the Windsor Report is advocating an orthodox and classically Anglican understanding of the nature of biblical authority.

Zahl (2005) in assessing the overall impact of the Windsor Report produced by the Lambeth Commission is of the opinion that the Windsor Report is flawed fundamentally because it refused to take up the substantial issue that caused its coming into existence: the issue of homosexuality. The Report makes it clear in section A. 26 and in section B. 43 “We repeat that we have not been invited, and are not intending to comment or make recommendations on the theological and ethical matters concerning the practice of same-sex relations and the blessing or ordination or consecration of those who engage in them” (p. 567). The Report fails by conscious intent to fully discuss the issue that brought it to birth. The brief of the Commission was restricted to issues of process, and theologically speaking, to issues of “Communion” and therefore ecclesiology. This was too limited a brief and for this reason, the answers given by the Report are not enough.

Zahl (2005) further states that the reason for ducking the issue which is homosexuality, was probably that the Commission supposed the Anglican

Communion to be divided on the issue. One persistent worldly way to division is to avoid discussing what has caused the division. But that is a short term solution. The Commission never acknowledged the arguments for or against the divisive issue of homosexuality. (p. 568).

The Lambeth Commission effectively avoided the problem and concentrated on how to keep the Anglican Communion together in spite of any problem or disagreement. This amounts to a circumvention of the contentious issue of homosexuality in the church which cannot be wished away.

Charleston (2005) describes the effort of the Lambeth Commission that produced the Windsor Report and the discussion that have trailed the Report as “a process of seeking the high ground rather than seeking the common ground that forgiveness demands” (p. 587). The Windsor Report began when a group of people were afraid that their community would fall apart. (The members emphasized on the need and the things needed to be done to continue staying together and not much on the problem that threatened to break the communion). Further commenting on the reaction of the revisionists to the Windsor Report Charleston states that some sections of the TEC and proponents of actions taken in the Diocese of Westminster (Canada) argued that the recommendations of the Windsor Report have only moral authority. Within the framework of the Anglican Communion, to say that an urgent appeal from a significant majority of the Communion to one of its members “has only moral authority” is to deny the bonds of affection that we say we have for one

another. This does not mean that after intense study, fervent prayer, widespread consultation, and a clear restatement of commitment to the Anglican Communion, a diocese or province may not feel bound in conscience to take action contrary to the advice and counsel offered it. (p. 598). But this action should never be done lightly or in a dismissive way, so as to endanger the bonds of affection that are the most precious treasure of the Anglican Church's life together.

Bartel (2007) in summing up the work of the Lambeth Commission postulates that the Windsor Report passed moral judgment on the conduct of certain member churches of the Anglican Church, asked for public expressions of repentance and acts of self-restraint from those churches, and envisaged sanctions in the event of non-compliance, of unprecedented severity in the global level of the Communion. Two other measures – a decision by the 2003 General Convention of TEC in the USA to allow experimentation with public rites of blessing for same-sex unions, and resolution by the 2004 General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada affirming the integrity and sanctity of same-sex unions were similarly regarded as not only violating – indeed denying the bonds of affection and communion in the Anglican Church, (pp. 134, 141), but also as “action in breach of the legitimate application of the Christian faith” (p. 143).

It could be summarized that in the Windsor Report, the whole of the Communion is also called upon to refrain from the consecration of non-celibate homosexual bishops, the authorization of public blessings of homosexual unions and the like



“until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges. And if these recommendations are not heeded, the Windsor Report maintains that it might well be necessary to exclude the offending member churches from relevant representative bodies or meetings, to allow them to attend such meetings as observers, or even, albeit “as an absolute last resort,” to revoke their membership in the Communion. The recommendations of the Windsor Report provided a significant opportunity for reappraisal of the issues that brought about ‘brokenness of Communion’ and afforded the warring parties in the Communion the opportunity to make amends, having identified the same-sex protagonists in principle as the aggressors.

The Report maintains that any member church of the Anglican Communion that unilaterally takes actions in support of homosexual unions is in contempt of the bonds of affection in the Communion. This is based on the fact that the morality of homosexuality is not a matter of which any province can argue and decide on its own, going by the historic stance of the Anglican Church on the issue. The revisionists have apparently found it difficult to comply with the Windsor Report’s demand that member churches ought at least to consult with the wider Communion before acting on matters which are not regarded as ‘adiaphora’, i.e. matters which are open to autonomous interpretation and application in Anglicanism.

Generally, the contents of the Windsor Report are exhaustive in treating the issues that led to the Lambeth Commission that produced it. However, the problem which

precipitated the problem in the Anglican Communion which is over autonomy and the consequent taking of unilateral actions by its constituent Churches was not properly tackled. The diplomacy that was used to handle the erring sections of the Communion served to insinuate that the theologically conservative parts of the Anglican Church over-reacted in their response to the revisionist actions. For all its details, 'invitations,' well-worded recommendations, and the resources spent by the Lambeth Commission, the Windsor Report would obviously pass into the annals of Anglican Church history as one of the elaborate ecclesiastical documents that was never implemented, given the fact that there are no effective mechanisms of enforcement in the international administrative structure of the Anglican Communion.

## **5.2 Reactions from Other Provinces**

The unresolved problem of the unilateral actions by sections of the Western church metamorphosed into bigger problems which started by strong outbursts of indignation condemning the pro-same sex acts from various quarters of the Anglican Communion. Jenkins (2004) presents some reactions of non-Western Churches to the General Convention's consecration of Gene Robinson a bishop as follows:

(a) From the bishops of the Province of the Anglican Church in South East Asia:

Though knowing the gravity of the matter, (ECUSA) did not deem it necessary to seriously seek and consult the wider body of the communion...

We surmise that ECUSA was fully conscious that their act could in all

probability result in severely impairing and causing irreparable damage in communion... This act cannot but be seen as arrogant, with total disregard and contempt for the sacramental unity of the Communion. (p. 296).

(b) From Bishop Mouneer Anis of Egypt:

We had not expected this to be done to us by brothers and sisters who are in communion with us. We had expected that they would think of us before taking such a grave step. It showed great disrespect to the majority of the members of the Anglican Communion and the church worldwide. In fact, the decision shows disregard for the value of being in communion. (p. 296).

(c) From Bernard Malango, Primate of the Province of Central Africa:

The decision of the General Convention has brought darkness, disappointment, sadness and grief... This is a clearly planned schism by ECUSA ... Their decision has shattered the Anglican Communion. Deep pain has been inflicted upon us all. We are now experiencing overwhelming sense of loss of direction of the Anglican Communion. (p. 297).

(d) From Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo, Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Uganda after referring to the "family membership of the Anglican Communion", laments;"in embracing the practice of homosexuality (ECUSA) has ... thus seceded from the rest of the Anglican Communion...We grieve because we remember the pain that has come from similar imperial actions in the past" (p. 297).

Jenkins (2004) concludes that there was an ecclesial failure already greatly exacerbated by Gene Robinson's consecration, in that ECUSA, as a church body has not sustained incarnate missiological concern for real and rooted difference in the ecclesial life and pastoral care among Anglican Provinces. That may sound arather ordinary vice, but when it is serial and long-standing, and punctuated by polarizing events in what appears a trend of abandonment or disregard, then such inattention can make for a Communion-wide environment of distrust, suspicion, fear, and alienation. (p. 298).

Referring to the response from the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa Bishops' Conference, Mombo (2007) states that the bishops added to their strong and resolute disapproval of revisionism in their meeting in October 28, 2004 as follows:

We call upon the ECUSA and the Anglican church of Canada to take seriously the need for "repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ", and move beyond informed expression of regret to a genuine change of heart and mind. Failure to do so would indicate that they have chosen to "walk alone" and follow another religion. We note with approval the moratorium on further elections and consecrations of candidates living in same-sex union. We reject the moral equivalence drawn between those who have initiated the crisis and those of us in the Global South who have responded to cries of help from beleaguered friends. To call us to

express regret and reassert our commitment to the Communion is offensive in the light of our earlier statements. (p. 71).

The Primates in stating the position of the council rightly rejected the double standards of one of the recommendations of the Windsor Report calling on provinces that it presumed to have over reacted to the acts of revisionism to express regret and re-assurance of their commitment to the unity of the Anglican Communion.

The most prominent part of the response of some aggrieved Anglican Primates was in the area of consecration of bishops who would give pastoral oversight to anti-homosexual congregations in America and Canada. Such Churches and their priests who refused to accept the revisionist compromises in favour of the homosexuals were black-listed and persecuted by the Episcopal Church and the Church of Canada and they wished and sought for foreign pastoral oversight elsewhere from the Anglican Communion instead of decamping to other Christian denominations. On this premise, Paulson (2007) reports that the Archbishop of Kenya, Benjamin Nzimbi consecrated two American priests as Bishops in the Cathedral at Nairobi on 29 August 2007. They are:

1. Bishop William L. Murdoch of Massachusetts
2. Bishop Bill G. Atwood of Texas, according to Nzimbi, "To serve as missionaries to a nation that is losing the Christian faith it once exported to Africa."

Baguma (2007) also reports a similar incidence in Uganda. Archbishop Henry Orombi who succeeded Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo as the Primate of Uganda, the second largest Province in Africa after Nigeria, consecrated John Guernsey of Virginia (a former missionary in Uganda) at St. James Cathedral Mbarara on September, 2007, to lead the 33 parishes in the U.S that recognized the authority of the Church of Uganda. He was assisted in the consecration by conservative bishops from Canada, Argentina, Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria, and priests from the U.S. The report quotes the Archbishop announcing that thenceforth, no diocese in Uganda would accept money or gifts from American Charities belonging to the U.S. Episcopal Church. The Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni also donated two million Ugandan shillings to Bishop Guernsey for his mission in America.

The Province of South East Asia which is a union of Anglican Churches in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos and Nepal, led by Archbishop Moses Tay also condemned the revisionist moves in the U.S and Canada. Virtue (2003) reports that this was done through a unanimous decision at an Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Provincial Synod held in Sabah, Malaysia on 20th November, 2003. The decision titled "Breaking of Communion with the Episcopal Church of the United States of America Consequent on the purported consecration of a gay bishop" is scripted inter alia:

The Synod of the Province of the Anglican Communion of South East Asia ('the Province') unanimously reject the purported consecration of Dr. V. Gene Robinson ('Robinson') on 2 November, 2003 by the Episcopal Church

in the United States of America ('ECUSA') in New Hampshire, as a bishop in the Anglican Communion. The Province views the purported consecration as a flagrant disregard of the fundamental teachings of the Bible and the long-established doctrines of the Church. As Dr. V. Gene Robinson is a homosexual who had divorced his wife and has for the last 13 years been living with a male partner, the Province cannot and do not recognize his consecration and ministry in the Anglican Church... In view of ECUSA's action in proceeding with the consecration despite the warnings and plea of a large majority of Anglican Church world-wide, the Province regrets that communion with ECUSA as well as those who voted for the consecration and those who participated in the consecration service is now broken. This means that the Province no longer treats those in ECUSA who carried out and supported the act of consecration as brothers and sisters in Christ until and unless they repent of their action and return to embrace Bible truths.

Similarly, in its statement challenging the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada, the Provincial Synod of South East Asia states:

We affirm and endorse the statement of Breaking of Communion issued by the House of Bishops of this Province to the Diocese of New Westminster Canada... In consequence of its authorization of public rites for the blessing of same-sex unions and the implementation of the same, effective 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

Thus, the leadership of the Anglican churches in South East Asia clearly demonstrated its unquestionable inclination to conservative Anglicanism as strongly opposed to the acceptance of homosexuals in the church's ministry.

The Archbishop of the Province of Central Africa (Zambia, Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe) the Most Rev. Bernard A. Malango went further in voicing his condemnation of the acceptance of sexual aberrations in the churches in America and Canada. Virtue (2003) also quotes a letter he wrote in protest to Bishop Frank Griswold the presiding Bishop of ECUSA presented in part as follows:

I cannot begin to tell you the depth of grief and of betrayal your actions have caused. All of us were conscious of a great move of the Holy Spirit in the Primates' Meeting at Lambeth Palace. What seemed an impossible situation became filled with hope as all of us including you agreed on the Pastoral Letter. It was unbelievable to me to receive reports that you walked out of the meeting and told people you did not agree with the statement... The false "gospel" you are promoting by your actions is not saving anyone, but it is an illusion. Calling "sin" "righteousness" does not make it so. It is leading people away from Christ... In charity and heartbreak, I call on you to repent. Until that time, you have broken our fellowship... You should resign and let someone else lead; someone who shares the faith of the communion – the faith of the church catholic.

Archbishop Malango in demonstrating the seriousness of his resolve, and that of his Province, challenged Griswold to resign, and copied the foregoing letter to Rowan Williams the then Archbishop of Canterbury, who could not do anything



about the situation because the British Parliament and the Church of England were largely in support of accepting same-sex unions, homosexual practices that have taken deep roots in the British society for a long time.

### **5.3 New Missions Created**

Part of the reaction that resulted from the acts of revisionism in the Anglican Communion was the formation of missions by orthodox sections of the Anglican Church in the liberal areas where homosexual acts have been accepted. The aim was to cater for orthodox Anglicans who were disappointed with the new trends of events in the revisionist sections of the Anglican Communion. The new missions that were formed was a defiance of the long established recognition of provincial territoriality in the Anglican Church, which hitherto did not allow interference in the ecclesiastical domain of another province, but which the disagreement in the Communion has engendered. These missions include:

#### **5.3.1 The Anglican Mission in America (AMiA)**

In highlighting the response of the rest of the Anglican World to the revisionist actions of the Episcopal Church in the U.S and the Anglican Church in Canada, the most prominent and far-reaching one after that of the Church of Nigeria was the action taken by the Province of Rwanda.

AMiA was formed in response to the theological liberalism of the Western Churches and its origin was from a home-grown protest against the progress made by the homosexuals in the church. Also known as the Anglican Mission (AM), its

original members criticized numerous actions, policies and doctrinal deviations of ECUSA as being in conflict with the traditional Christian understanding of the Bible.

The online world Heritage Encyclopedia traces the origin of the AM to the First Promise Movement in 1997 when 30 priests led by Chuck Murphy released a document called the 'First Promise' which declared the authority of the Episcopal Church to be 'fundamentally impaired' because it no longer upheld the truth of the Gospel. The following year (1998), St. Andrew's Church, Little Rock Arkansas became one of the first North American churches to revolt and come under the oversight of the Global South Provinces. The continuing controversy in the Anglican Communion led to more intervention from foreign Anglican Primates in Churches in America and Canada which the two liberalist Churches view as violating traditional principles of territoriality.

Archbishop Kolini, the Primate of Rwanda along with Archbishop Tay of South East Asia jointly consecrated Chuck Murphy and John Rodgers to operate as conservative bishops in America at St. Andrew's Cathedral Singapore on 29 January, 2000, in furtherance of the intervention to pastor orthodox Anglicans in North America. Thus AMiA was formally founded in 2000 with the headquarters in South Carolina under the oversight of the Church of Rwanda. Boysel (2007) states that many people in welcoming foreign oversight presumed that it offered a means by which one could maintain being Anglican without being connected to the

sick, dying and apostate Episcopal Church, seeing the AMiA as a lifeboat for Anglicans in a rough and inhospitable sea of apostasy. Boysel further states:

What grew out of the relationship between Rwanda and AMiA was a blessing on both sides of the Atlantic, an awareness of a unique missional vocation in the AMiA. Many people willingly sacrificed personal comforts for the sake of the mission. We saw ourselves as missionaries in our own culture in a way that mirrored what one would think of in cross-cultural missions. We were a mission.

The AMiA as a missionary organization has church planting as its major goal and at the height of its influence in 2013, planted a total of 268 churches. Presently, it has ceased to be under the Province of Rwanda but still remains a missionary organization operating in the US and Canada for conservative Anglicans, but independent of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. Having broken with Rwanda, it is currently seeking for foreign oversight from another Anglican Province after a temporary affiliation with the Province of Congo.

It is worthy of note that AMiA which is the second most successful Afro-American Anglican Mission after that of CANA by the Church of Nigeria was founded even before the consecration of the homosexual Gene Robinson in 2003, which started the actual schism in Anglican Communion. In inaugurating AMiA, the Church of Rwanda took a pioneering bold step in sponsoring a mission that would form a significant motivation for other theologically conservative Provinces to overstep

the boundaries of territoriality, in the effort to help bible-believing Anglicans in America and Canada to keep and maintain their faith.

### **5.3.2 The Anglican Mission in England (AMiE)**

The formation of the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) was one of the results of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (G.F.C.A) which came into being after the GAFCON I meeting in Jerusalem in 2008. The formation of AMiE was necessitated by the need for those who are genuinely in need of effective orthodox oversight within the Church of England, in the wake of the sweeping concessions made to homosexuals in the Church and in England's civil laws. The mission which was formally launched on 24 June, 2011 seeks to encourage church planting and all forms of Christian witness in accordance with the Jerusalem statement of GAFCON I.

Bray (2011) states that the launch of the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) is one of the latest developments in the on-going split between the liberals in the developed world and everyone else in the Anglican Communion. Until about 2007, it seemed that the liberal wave was unstoppable. The American Episcopal Church (TEC) has set a strong revisionist pace which the churches in Canada and New Zealand were not far behind in following. According to Bray, the case of the Church of Australia was more complicated, largely due to the unyielding orthodox opposition of the Diocese of Sydney. However, various loopholes in church law were being exploited to allow the church head down the liberal road, leaving the

few conservative dioceses more or less isolated. In the Church of England, the situation was less straightforward, but there was little doubt as to which way the wind was blowing. The willingness of the House of Bishops to tolerate civil partnerships even among the clergy without testing the opinion of the General Synod, made it clear to all the direction England was heading to.

With this prevailing liberal circumstance, those who have re-affirmed their loyalty to orthodox Anglicanism were left with no viable options than to create parallel structures to cater for those left stranded by intolerant liberalism in the English church. The clergy in England who have fallen out with the national church in one way or another appealed to the wider GAFCON community to come over and help them. These clergy with the support of some retired conservative and missionary bishops, and the sympathy of many Anglicans who resented the liberal recklessness of the Church of England set up the AMiE to cater for their needs.

In line with the GAFCON principle, AMiE members are determined to remain loyal Anglicans but do not tolerate bishops who try to discipline their clergy for nothing more than their determination to defend orthodoxy. Bray (2011) concludes by asserting that:

Church leaders who castigate the antics of conservative clergy but do nothing to remedy the defects that have caused their protests must realize that they are the ones who have done more than anyone else to bring AMiE into being.

Sizer (2011) states that AMiE was established as a society within the Church of England dedicated to re-conversion of England and to biblical church planting. AMiE has been encouraged in pursuing this vision by the GAFCON Primates who said in a Communiqué from Nairobi in 2011, “We remain convinced that from within the Provinces which we represent there are creative ways by which we can support those who have been alienated so that they can remain within the Anglican family.”

Raven (cited by Sizer, 2011) in reference to the vision of AMiE states:

The AMiE is not only committed to adventurous church planting and the re-conversion of England, but is also prepared to provide alternative episcopal oversight in cases where it is clear that diocesan bishops are failing in their canonical duty to uphold sound teaching. Their key institutional innovation is a panel of bishops formed by Bishops Michael Nazir-Ali, John Ball, Collin Bazley, Wallace Benn and John Ellison, which enjoys the support and encouragement of the GAFCON Primates’ Council.

In pursuing the maintenance of Christian orthodox teaching in England, AMiE employs the influence and services of famed retired conservative bishops as listed by Raven in furthering its mission in England, which aims at establishing Anglican congregations in England which by the virtue of their orthodox leaning are not under the Church of England. In this, they are greatly motivated by the invaluable solidarity from the GAFCON primates.

According to Sizer, the desire of those who identify with AMiE is to have an effective structure which enables them to remain in the Church of England and work as closely as possible with its institutions. Churches or individuals join or affiliate themselves with the AMiE for a variety of reasons. Some may be churches in impaired communion with their diocesan bishop which require oversight, while others may be in good relation with their bishop but wish to identify with and support the missionary initiative of AMiE.

Gledhill (2015) states that the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (G.F.C.A) the originator and chief sponsor of AMiE, though deeply engrossed in evangelism is recognized only as a Charity in England. In its quest for the advancement of the orthodox Anglican Christian faith, it raises a lot of money and employs staff to preach a conservative gospel to an increasingly secular England and other parts of the world.

With reference to the situation in England, Peter Jenson, former Archbishop of Sydney and General Secretary of GFCA cited by Gledhill (2015) states:

We are poised for a considerable leap forward. We have a vision... In my own lifetime, we have seen the death of Christian Britain. The assumption people made that they were Christians is now broken. That is a huge shift in the last 50 years. Working out how best to relate to a culture that has gone so strongly anti-Christian is putting a strain on all the churches including the

Church of England. It is the stresses and strains of living in this brave new world which creates division and disagreement between us.

In the early stages of the divide, before the formation of AMiE in England, conservative English ordinands went to Global South countries like Kenya in search of a bishop who would ordain them. The mission received further impetus as it progressed with the prominent place given to it in the agenda of GAFCON II in Kenya in 2013. Article 5 of the Nairobi Commitment issued after the conference reads:

We commit ourselves to the support and defense of those who in standing for apostolic truth are marginalized or excluded from formal communion with other Anglicans in their Dioceses. We have therefore recognized the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) as an expression of authentic Anglicanism as both for those within and outside the Church of England, and welcomed their intention to appoint a General Secretary of AMiE. (p. 3).

### **5.3.3 The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**

The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) is a body that came into being as a result of the liberal actions endorsed by the revisionists in the Episcopal Church U.S.A and the Church of Canada. In the context of the widening theological gap occasioned by the disagreement on revision of sexual morality in the Anglican Communion, the existing geography-based organizational model of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church in Canada became problematic for orthodox Anglicans in those areas. Invariably, conservative parishes, clergy and dioceses



that upheld biblical authority and historic Anglican practice became isolated within the existing structures.

The next outcome was that distressed churches and entire dioceses began to disaffiliate from the established Provinces in North America and seek episcopal oversight and spiritual care from Anglican Provinces and leaders in other parts of the world. Beginning as far 2000 with the Province of Rwanda, other conservative Anglican leaders have responded by accepting orthodox Anglican parishes and dioceses in North America into their care.

The Jerusalem Declaration of GAFCON I laid the basic framework for the intervention of orthodox Provinces in liberal areas by recognizing the desirability of territorial jurisdiction for Provinces and Dioceses in the Anglican Communion, but “except in those areas where Church leaders are denying the orthodox faith or are preventing its spread” (p. 13). In stating the delegates’ over-whelming endorsement of the counter-measures already initiated by the GAFCON Primates, the declaration continues *inter alia*:

We thank God for the courageous actions of those Primates and Provinces who have offered orthodox oversight to churches under false leadership, especially in North and South America. The actions of these Primates have been a positive response to pastoral necessities and mission opportunities. We believe that such actions will be necessary and we support them in offering help around the world... In particular, we believe the time is now ripe for the formation of a Province in North America for the federation

currently known as Common Cause Partnership to be recognized by the Primates' Council. (p. 13).

In response to the action of the liberals regarding acceptance of homosexuality in the Church in the U.S. and Canada and prior to the formation of ACNA, there were a number of breakaway churches. Some parishes migrated from one jurisdiction to another and flying bishops seemed to be the order of the day in many places. Tracing the origin of ACNA, Goodstein (2008) states that in the years following the consecration of Gene Robinson, bishops representing about 14 dioceses in the Episcopal Church (TEC) joined meetings to explore the formation of a new Anglican entity in North America. Goodstein further elaborates:

In the last few years, Episcopalians who wanted to leave the Church but remain in the Anglican Communion put themselves under the authority of bishops in Africa and Latin America. A new American Province would give them a homegrown alternative. It would also result in two competing Provinces on the same soil, each claiming the mantle of historical Anglican Christianity. The conservatives have named theirs the Anglican Church in North America. For the first time, a Province would be defined not by geography, but by theological orientation.

Goodstein lists the pioneer constituent Episcopal Dioceses that formed ACNA as Fort Wort, Quincy, Illinois and San Joaquin, representing 4 out of the 110 Dioceses in the Episcopal Church, along with other conservative umbrella groups and dozens of individual Parishes in the United States and Canada.

According to Google.com, ACNA which was initiated at the request of the GAFCON meeting in Jerusalem in June 2008 was inaugurated on April 16, 2009 under the leadership of the Most Rev. Robert Duncan, following the stream-lining of the organizational structure, proposed Constitution and the proposed Canons. Wikipedia States that ACNA unites 112,000 Anglicans in nearly 1,000 congregations across the United States, Canada and Mexico into a single Church and was recognized as the 39<sup>th</sup> Province of the global Anglican Communion by the Primates of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.

The ACNA has emerged as the most outstanding rival Anglican body in the United States and Canada and according to Davis (2014) “being such as a new organization, it can be rather safely said that the huge majority of members are active - not lapsed; as is common in TEC, as belonging to ACNA is a decision one must make willfully at this stage”. Davis further intimates that ACNA has tremendous favour and co-operation with conservative Provinces in the Anglican Communion like Nigeria, Uganda, South Sudan and the Archdiocese of Sydney, all of which have called on the Archbishop of Canterbury to recognize ACNA as the official communicant body in the U.S. and Canada, over the more liberal Churches of the USA and Canada. Davis (2014) States that Archbishop Foley Beach was investitured as the Primate of ACNA on October 9, 2014, to succeed Robert Duncan who retired from office in 2014, in a colourful ceremony held in the Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia. ACNA wholeheartedly embraces the Jerusalem Declaration and fully participated in the GAFCON II meeting in Nairobi

in 2013, and currently participates in other meetings of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, representing the conservative side of the divide in modern Anglicanism.

The formation of ACNA and other orthodox missions in the liberal enclaves did not come without serious challenges. The conservative groups who try to take their Church properties with them face lawsuits from TEC which sues breakaway parishes and dioceses in several states in America to retain such property. However, in spite of this and other premeditated acts of intimidation and persecution, the orthodox groups established for the propagation of traditional Anglican teaching like AMiA, CANA, AMiE and ACNA have been making tremendous progress in the revisionist enclaves of USA, Canada, England and other places in the Western Anglican world.

The disagreement over issues concerning sexual morality in the Anglican Church has created new scenarios which were hitherto unobtainable in Anglicanism. It is now possible for a Province to be fully Anglican without being accepted in the Anglican Communion, like ACNA which is counted as the 39<sup>th</sup> Province by GAFCON Primates but not recognized as such by the rest of the Communion. It is now also possible for a Church to be completely Anglican in heritage and origin and not be in communion with the See of Canterbury, like the GAFCON Provinces led by the Church of Nigeria.

#### **5.4 The Response of the Church of Nigeria**

The Anglican Church in Nigeria is by far the fastest growing Province in the Anglican Communion. The Province was formerly under the Province of West Africa until 24th February, 1979 when the then sixteen Anglican dioceses were constituted into a separate Province with Archbishop Timothy Olufosoye as its first Primate. Since 1979, the Province has grown to its present one hundred and sixty one dioceses grouped under fourteen ecclesiastical provinces, with an estimated membership of about eighteen million people. With this population, the Church of Nigeria is the second largest province after the Church of England. The Province of Nigeria by this fact is clearly destined to lead African Anglicanism and the rest of the other Provinces that uphold orthodox teachings on sexual morality.

It must be stated that the upheaval caused by radical liberalism which shook the Anglican Communion to its foundations did not come as a surprise. The reaction and response that followed from various quarters of the worldwide Communion in attempting to retain the basis of the Communion's unity should also be regarded as natural and inevitable, as action elicits reaction. Apart from the issues of human sexuality, revisionists who are products of radical liberalism have occasionally rocked the church polity in questioning the reliability of some doctrinal concepts of the church. Petre (cited by Germond, 2004) notes that in the 1980s, the Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins caused a scandal when he denied the bodily resurrection of Jesus, a cardinal Christian belief. In the fallout, a poll was taken of the United Kingdom's thirty one Diocesan bishops and two-thirds of them were of the opinion

that it was not necessary to accept the divinity of Christ to be a Christian, and one-third denied a belief in the physical resurrection. That heresies occasionally emanate from the highly secularized Western Christianity is a matter that should be regarded as inevitable. (p. 65). The fact that these acts of deviation from orthodox Anglican doctrine did not generate a threat of massive schism in the Communion clearly points to the fact that matters of sexuality are more delicate and sensitive, and have more potentials for controversy and schism in the church, as seen in the present state of the Anglican Church.

One of the strongest factors powering the dramatic growth of Anglicanism in Nigeria and the rest of Africa is obviously faithfulness and loyalty to orthodox biblical faith. In Nigeria as a country facing a serious inter-faith conflict with Islam, and a raging competition between Christian denominations, any church that wants to survive must be absolutely clear about its teaching. This is made more compelling considering that fundamentalist Muslims regard Christianity as being part of the moral decay of the Western world, and any sign of doctrinal unsteadiness invariably leads to loss of members, who could migrate to other denominations and even sects in a bid to avoid being identified with a heretical church.

Nigeria's potentials for leadership in the fight against revisionism could be traced back to the last Lambeth Conference her bishops attended in 1998. With the rapid growth of Anglicanism in Africa and Nigeria in particular, Lambeth Conference

1998 marked a significant increase in the number of participating bishops from sub-Saharan Africa. The highlight of the homosexuality debate during the Conference which was stalemated was symbolized in the attempted ‘casting out’ of homosexuality from the General Secretary of the Lesbian Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) by Bishop Chukwuma of Enugu Diocese in Nigeria.

Stuart (1999) described the confrontation graphically as “two Christians, one attempting to cast out homosexuality, the other homophobia, while others look on in embarrassment” (p. 9). Stuart concludes that the deadlock does not reflect equal power relations, but is in itself a good example of the shifting dynamics of power as African voices have never been too strong and emphatic against the West. (p. 10).

Also analyzing the tensions and conflicts of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, Carrette and Keller (1999) state that Rev. Richard Keller faced an unwanted exorcism from Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma and that the ugly incident not only exposed the distance between the Church of the South (Africa, South America, Asia and East Asia) and the North, but also brought to a head a whole series of complex power relations in which religious lives are inescapably involved. In this single encounter, issues of race, gender, colonial history and sexual practice fused together in a difficult power struggle. (p. 21).

Bishop Chukwuma's effrontery was a foretaste of the zeal with which Nigerian Anglicanism would face a post-modern Western Christianity, tolerant with gay Christian activism in subsequent times. Bishop Chukwuma's action also symbolizes the general attitude of the vast majority of Nigerian Anglicans who believe that the body of a homosexual has been possessed by an alien spirit not from God, and which needs to be cast out as befits evil spirits. On this premise, P. Usifoh (personal communication, February 20, 2014) refers to homosexuality and lesbianism as abominations emanating "from the pit of hell" which the Church under no circumstances can tolerate. Similarly, C. Ogbonna (personal communication, February 19, 2014) supports the opinion that the scope of the present problem of homosexuality in Christendom is an issue that requires a divine intervention. This, according to him, is because of the huge potentials at the disposal of the highly-placed groups and individuals championing the cause of sexual perversions both within the church and in larger society. In his own contribution, E. R. Komolafe (personal communication, February 19, 2014) asserts that homosexuality is a degree of madness and demonic possession, an illness of which only God can heal and rectify. E. A. Osuagwu (personal communication, February 20, 2014) also agrees that homosexuals are not normal human beings and need help in organizing their lives, stating the total abnormality in a man sexually loving another man or a woman doing the same thing.

When the Diocese of Westminster in Canada approved same-sex marriage rites (liturgy) for wedding of homosexuals in the church, followed by the General Convention's approval of the election of Gene Robinson, an openly gay man as the



bishop of New Hampshire Diocese in America, the Church of Nigeria was among the first Provinces in the Anglican Communion to sever relations and declare a state of broken communion with the erring Churches. She then followed by these other responses:

#### **5.4.1 The Amendment of the Constitution and Canons**

The crisis in the Anglican Communion affected the Church of Nigeria in terms of the reshaping of its legal foundations. The Province of Nigeria under the leadership of Archbishop Peter Akinola reacted in opposition to the new theology of the Western Churches in very decisive and unequivocal terms. The fault lines that ran through the Anglican Communion were driven mainly by differences in theological interpretation, though the revisionist Western churches also emphasized the relatively insignificant differences in culture and life experience.

One of the most immediate and outstanding responses of the Church of Nigeria to the extremities of the liberalists in America and Canada was the amendment of its Constitution to remove any reference to the See of Canterbury – an association historically integral to Anglican identity. The present definition of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in the Constitution, Chapter 1 Cap. 3, section 1 reads:

The Church of Nigeria shall be in full communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament, and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church as the Lord has commanded in His Holy word and as the

same are received as taught in the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal of 1662 and in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. (p. 2).

The master-stroke here is the removal of the phrase “in communion with Provinces in Communion with the See of Canterbury”. This self-redefinition by the Church succeeded in setting the church free from colonial structures. This is a significant countermeasure in the context of the willful theological aberrations embarked upon by some Churches in the Western Church. In reaffirming the Constitution’s amendment, Akinola (cited by Amagada, 2010) states that the American Church had failed to act on repeated pleadings from the Church’s 38 Primates to halt their agenda. He concludes, “All we are saying is, do not celebrate what the Bible says is wrong... The Church in the West cannot pull us by the nose. If you are going to interpret the Bible in your own way, good luck to you. But without us” (p. 43).

According to Dimobika (2014) the obvious reluctance of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the ineffectiveness of other Instruments of Unity to enforce discipline on those who had rejected the mind of the Communion prompted the Church of Nigeria to change her constitution during the General Synod at Onitsha. This constitutional change protects the Church of Nigeria from being led in error. (p. 52).

#### **5.4.2 The Amendment of the Ordinal**

Part of the response to the revisionism of the Western Churches was the need to revise the vision of the Church of Nigeria to meet the new challenges of the time. The incumbent Primate, Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh on assumption of office in March 2010, set up ten Discussion Groups each with its own assignment, to brainstorm and determine on each set of topics, where the Church of Nigeria is now, where it wants to be in the future and how to get there. This was during the Standing Committee Meeting held in Lagos in September 2010.

The Draft of the Revised Vision of the Church of Nigeria (2010) presents the Group Three Report which deliberated on the continued response to the revisionist agenda suggested a recommendation of a necessary adjustment to be made in the ordinal of the Church of Nigeria. The recommendation is to the effect that every bishop, priest and church official should be made to subscribe to an oath of the acceptance of the biblical standards of human sexuality as is currently being done in respect of membership of secret cults.

The Jerusalem Declaration of GAFCON I of 2008 had reaffirmed the orthodox Anglican stand on the “whos” and “hows” of ordination in Anglicanism. Clause 7 reads: We recognize that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip the people God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders. GAFCON I made this declaration as an apologetic in defense of the Church’s age-

long practice of allowing only men in heterosexual marriage relationship into its ordained ministry.

In the Constitution and Canons of the Church of Nigeria 2002 (As Amended), Canon xvii stipulates the declarations and oaths to be subscribed to by candidates for the ordained ministry in the Church. Accordingly, Cap 2 states:

The following Declarations shall be made and subscribed before the Primate, or some person duly appointed by him, by all Bishops-Elect of the Church of Nigeria and before the Bishop by persons to be admitted to Holy Orders, and by all Priests in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). (p. 66).

The 17th Canon then goes on to list the following:

- (i) Declaration of Belief: This deals with the candidate's affirmation of belief in the truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures, acceptance of the Catholic Creeds and the historic formularies of the church and the administration of the Holy Sacraments and the liturgies of the Church.
- (ii) The Declaration of Submission to Synod: This is the expression of consent to be bound by the regulations of the Church and its canons, and assent to already existing and future regulations to be made which have lawful effect.
- (iii) The Oath of Canonical Obedience: This is a proclamation of willingness to obey the Primate/Bishop and his successors in all things lawful and honest.
- (iv) The Oath of Submission: This refers to the candidate's expression of willingness to accept and submit to any disciplinary action of the Church on him in the event of his misbehaviour.

(v) Oath of Allegiance to Christ (Cap. 4): This was not originally in the provisions of the 1662 Ordinal. It was added by the Church of Nigeria to guard against ordained people or candidates for ordination being members of secret societies or cults, a practice which became rampant in the times past. This oath also makes provision for public denunciation of membership of secret societies/cults if the ordination candidate used to be involved but had amended his life through repentance, and disengaged from such groups.

Following the disastrous effects of the unilateral actions of the Western Church on the unity of the Anglican Communion, which also led to impairment of Communion, many parts of the worldwide communion reacted in response to the provocation. The Church of Nigeria which spearheaded the firm and strong opposition to the revisionists invoked the provisions of Canon 2 of its Constitution which gives it power, to order its discipline as to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines which are contrary to God's word, as understood and interpreted in the formularies.

The Church of Nigeria consequently proposed and agreed to add the sixth oath to its ordinal, to act as a bulwark against the possible infiltration of homosexuals or their sympathizers into the rank and file of its ordained workers and officers. The new Oath called the 'Oath of Allegiance to God' was formulated and unanimously approved during the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee Meeting at Owerri in

March 2011. The Oath culled from the Church of Nigeria's Order of Consecration of Very Rev. Titus Olayinka (2013) is scripted as follows:

I ..... declare before God and His Church that I have never been a homosexual/bi-sexual, and I vow that I will not indulge in any practice of homosexuality/bi-sexuality: and that if after this oath I am involved, found to be, or profess to be a homosexual/bi-sexual against the teachings of the Holy Scriptures as contained in the Bible, I bring upon myself the full wrath of God and subject myself willingly to Canonical discipline as enshrined in the Constitution of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). So help me God. Amen. (p. 18).

The addition of this oath and its formal subscription by ordination/consecration candidates, Canons-designate and Archdeacons-elect at collation services took immediate effect after its approval, and has since become the norm in the ordinal of the Anglican Church in Nigeria.

Some dioceses in Nigeria, in pursuance of the stated goal of keeping out sexual deviants from their hierarchy also administer this oath to would-be lay officers and other lay workers at their formal points of entry and assumption of office, as suggested by the initial Group 3 Report of the Draft Revised Vision of the Church of Nigeria. A.O. Nkwoka (personal communication, January 9, 2014) exemplifying the compliance to the goal of keeping out homosexuals from the workers in his diocese intimates that though he does not formally require applicants for church work in his diocese to state their sexual orientation, a proven case of a church agent

(catechist) who was found guilty of homosexual practice by the diocesan ecclesiastical court was summarily dismissed. Another respondent, T. Abere (personal communication, January 9, 2014) requires a declaration of sexual orientation as a pre-condition for employment of both male and female workers in his diocese, believing that church leaders in Nigeria should demonstrate a strong resolve to implement what the Bible teaches about sexual morality and ensure discipline and sanity in the church.

Though there may be isolated cases of homosexuality in Nigeria, in essence, no known or self-confessed homosexual/bisexual or transgender person is allowed to hold any office or share in any ministry in the Anglican Church in Nigeria presently. D. Yisa (personal communication, February 19, 2014) affirming the Biblical stand against homosexuality and the need to deny sexual perverts a place in the Anglican Church ministry in Nigeria states that there has been no negative reaction to the recent addition of the oath of sexual compliance in ordinal of the Church. In a similar submission, M. O. Fape (personal communication, January 10, 2014) posits that the new oath has been generally welcomed and accepted in his diocese as in other parts of the Church of Nigeria. This new oath constitutes one of the most outstanding responses by the Church of Nigeria to the wave of sexual aberrations gaining ground in significant sections of worldwide Anglicanism.

### **5.4.3 The All African Bishops' Conference**

The unfolding disaffection in the Anglican Communion made it imperative for like-minded sections of the Church to forge closer relationships to pursue their stated common goals. The Province of Nigeria accordingly mobilized other conservative Provinces in the Communion to actualize their vision. Riding on the tide of theological confusion created by the manifest acts of deviation from parts of the Church in USA and Canada in 2003, Nigeria's Primate Peter Akinola who was the Chairman of the Conference of Anglican Provinces in Africa summoned a meeting of all the Anglican bishops in Africa for the first time in the history of the Anglican Communion.

Iheagwam (cited by Okoye, 2010) states that this maiden conference was held in Lagos from 26<sup>th</sup> October – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004 with the theme, “Africa Comes of Age: An Anglican Self-Evaluation”. This conference took place soon after the release of the Windsor Report and it provided the needed platform for participants to restate their disapproval of the ordination and consecration of people in same-sex relationship. Iheagwam, further commenting on the issue, refers to the Primate's keynote address as follows:

The time has come for us to look at these problems and address them from our well-informed native understanding rather than Western-imposed and alien misinterpretation. Africa has lost so much and we cannot in this century afford the luxury of allowing anyone or any situation to take us into further controversy which has become the favorite preoccupation of some of



our brothers within the Church in other parts of the world. (p. 94).

In total support of the stand of the Anglican Church in Nigeria regarding revisionism, the then President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, in his address to the conference also cited by Iheagwam states:

Since the world has sadly become a market place of shifting values and ideas, this conference has enormous responsibility to provide courageous and godly leadership in matters of faith and conduct. We expect you to be clear, authoritative and spiritual to the great moral issues facing humanity. You must work without any adulteration whatsoever. It is in the light of this that I wholeheartedly salute the wisdom, courage and resilience of African bishops within the Anglican Communion for standing so firmly against attempts to undermine our faith... At times like this, humanity needs men like you... Let your voice be heard within Africa and beyond. (pp. 95-96).

This continued undaunted support from the civil authorities in Nigeria recently climaxed in the criminalization of homosexuality in the country. Daily Post online (2015) reports that in January 2015, following the extensive debate and passing of the Executive Bill 2006 by the National Assembly, President Goodluck Jonathan signed the law banning same-sex marriages and shows of same-sex public affection. The new law introduced a 14-year prison sentence for people who are convicted of entering into same-sex marriage or civil union. Under the law, it is also an offence to administer witness or help at a same-sex marriage ceremony.

The law also forbids people from running gay clubs, societies, processions or meetings in Nigeria, and the punishment for such acts is ten years in prison. The law also states that such marriages or civil unions from outside the country will be void inside the country.

F. T. J. Ereteru (personal communication, February 20, 2014) in commending Nigeria government's encouraging contribution, notes that sexual deviance of all kinds, particularly same-sex relationships have been an age-long problem, and the modern trend whereby a sexually-deviant minority is shouting so loud and making governments across the world to legitimize the abnormal is a thing of grave concern.

This significant first Conference of Anglican bishops hosted by Nigeria helped to encourage orthodox Anglicans in Provinces of the Anglican Communion where the revisionists have taken a strong foothold. The role of the Province of Nigeria in hosting the conference was outstanding in other ways. Amagada (2010) states that the Church of Nigeria sponsored many African bishops who hitherto depended on Western foreign aid for any such international involvement. (p. 19).

In the light of the foregoing, Iheagwam states the goodwill message sent in by the Rev. Canon Ellis Brust on behalf of the American Anglican Council as follows:

You have thrown us a lifeline to rescue us from a sinking ship. God has anointed the Anglican Church in Africa for such a time as this. I am thankful



**Figure 5:** Nigerian homosexuals in Diaspora demonstrate against the anti-same sex laws passed by the National Assembly.  
Source: Videopress.com.

for our partnership in the Gospel from the first day till now. God bless you and God bless the African Anglican Bishops' Conference. (p. 96).

A similar conciliatory and apologetic reaction also came from Bishop Bob Duncan representing the Anglican Communion Network (ACN). The message reads:

I know it is hard for you in Africa to understand that a Primate would not speak for all his people. I tell you clearly that the Primate in the United States and the Primate in Canada do not speak for all their people. I came also to ask your forgiveness for the trouble we in the West have caused you. I have come to ask your forgiveness for our complicity, the complicity of the orthodox in the West's unfaithfulness. For too long we were far too silent, made too many compromises. I have also come to ask your forgiveness for the evils of our culture exported to you daily electronically... I have to thank God that Africa has finally come of age – and with that coming of age there is a new and better future ahead for Anglicanism... An extraordinary new day is dawning for all. (p. 97).

Summing up on the outcome of this maiden meeting, Iheagwam (2010) highlights the statement issued at the end of the Conference which states in part:

We believe that the Windsor Report correctly points out that the Episcopal Church USA and the Diocese of New Westminster have pushed the Anglican Communion to a breaking point. The Report rightly states that they

did not listen to the clear voice of the Communion, rejected the counsel of the four Instruments of Unity and ignored the plea of the Primates of the Global South in their statements issued on October 16th and November 2nd 2003. (p. 99).

Other highlights of the Communiqué include:

1. A call on the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada to take seriously the need for repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation enjoined by Christ as recommended by the Windsor Report.
2. A call for a moratorium on the election and consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in same gender union and the use of rites for the blessing of same-sex unions.
3. An approval of the recognition that extraordinary episcopal care is needed for congregations alienated from their diocesan bishops and an affirmation of the fact that Delegated Episcopal Oversight (DEPO) is effective for those who demand and receive it, under the circumstances of the theological divide. (pp. 99-101).

The maiden Conference of all African Anglican Bishops formed a good starting and rallying point for much of the reactionary activities that were to challenge the extremism of the Western sections of the church from Africa. In view of the resounding success of the conference due to the Church of Nigeria's pioneering efforts, J. Rex-Chikezie (personal communication, February 21, 2014) congratulates the Anglican Church in Nigeria for standing her grounds in the

condemnation of same-sex marriage and the spectacular achievement of getting other Provinces in Africa and beyond to share her zeal in opposing the revisionists.

#### **5.4.4 The Boycott of 2008 Lambeth Conference**

The Communion-wide furor that greeted the ECUSA's election and consecration of Gene Robinson as a bishop led to many Provinces choosing the only instrument of discipline available to them which is chiefly the declaration of a broken Communion. According to a CAPA Statement (2006) in February 2004, thirteen Global South Primates comprising eight from Africa and led by Archbishop Akinola of Nigeria in their meeting in Kigali denounced the actions of the Episcopal Church as a "direct repudiation of the clear teachings of the Holy Scriptures, historic faith and order of the Church" (p. 2).

The Statement also expressed regret that the Church of England is also contributing to the crisis with the English House of Bishops' passive reaction to the government's passing of the Civil Partnership Act in favour of same-sex marriages. This clearly casts doubt as to whether the mother Church of the Communion is committed to upholding the historic Christian norm. It also noted that the clergy in the Church of England are obliged legally and without canonical protection to recognize the immoral unions of active homosexual Church members and may soon be forced by law to bless homosexual "marriages". The Statement emphasized that since the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Primate of All England

has failed to oppose this compromising position, he cannot speak clearly to and for the whole Communion. It then concludes:

In the light of the above, we have concluded that we must receive assurances from the Primates and the Archbishop of Canterbury that this crisis will be resolved before a Lambeth Conference is convened. There is no point, in our view, in meeting and meeting and not resolving the fundamental crisis of Anglican identity. We will definitely not attend any Lambeth Conference to which the violators of the Lambeth Resolution are also invited as participants and observers. (p. 4).

The Kigali Conference Statement also emphasized the huge cost of participation in the Lambeth Conference which amounts to African Churches diverting funds for much needed work of evangelization and charity to a 3-week meeting which has no authority and which is blatantly ignored by “autonomous” member Churches. It also noted that in some cases when poorer Provinces are “assisted” to attend by donors from the West, it had been a deliberate agenda of buying silence from the Churches. After the Kigali Conference of African Provinces, the Church of Nigeria subsequently set up a review committee of seven bishops to recommend the Church’s response to Lambeth Conference 2008. The Committee noted that the call to repentance by the erring Churches has not been heeded. Though the fact remains that the Episcopal Church and the Church of Canada provide strong financial backing for the Communion, yet this is not sufficient for the Communion to sacrifice authentic faith on the altar of money. It upheld the Kigali Conference Statement’s call for economic empowerment of the component churches in Africa

and the need for unity among the leaders. Having reviewed the statement, the Committee affirmed that it was in consonance with the Church of Nigeria's decision to boycott Lambeth Conference 2008 as earlier resolved at the Church's General Synod held at Onitsha in September, 2005.

Akinola (cited by Amagada, 2010) asserts that the decennial Lambeth Conference for all Anglican bishops is actually "Our conference", but that what the Church of Nigeria and many other Provinces in Africa are saying is that for as many as 800 bishops all over the world to gather and agree on certain things and for some to say "Well it doesn't matter. We can continue things in our way" is not laudable. In addressing other considerations, he sums up as follows:

Then think of the financial implication... the risks involved. For 120 bishops from Nigeria to travel to England, consider the financial implications. It will not cost any diocese in the country less than ₦1million – for the delegates and other expenses. We are talking about ₦120 million and we are going to spend three weeks there. And then on return, there is nothing to show for it, that is what we are arguing against... We are part and parcel of Lambeth Conference, but we are challenging the authorities that before we come, we have to be sure we are not coming for another jamboree. (pp. 34-35).

Apart from the obvious reluctance of Nigerian Anglican bishops to attend the 2008 Lambeth Conference, one of the preconditions to be met for their attendance was that the Archbishop of Canterbury would have to also invite the English-born



Bishop Martyn Minns, consecrated by the Church of Nigeria to serve as a missionary bishop to the conservatives in the U.S.A. This, the Archbishop of Canterbury was not ready to do, having not recognized Minns as a bishop in the Anglican Communion in the first place.

Nazir-Ali (2013) commenting on the boycott states that the Archbishop of Canterbury was unable to gather all the bishops for the 2008 Lambeth Conference since more than a third refused to come. This was because those bishops who consecrated a person in same-sex relationship had also been invited without being required to express regret or repentance for their actions. He goes on to highlight other meetings being boycotted as follows:

A similar number of Primates now refused to attend Primates' meetings for similar reasons, thus making it impossible for such meetings to be held. Again, for principled reasons, a number of Primates, bishops and lay people have resigned from the Anglican Consultative Council and the Joint Standing Committee of the ACC and the Primates' Meeting. (p. 21).

The fact that more than one-third of all the Anglican bishops worldwide boycotted the Lambeth Conference of 2008 shows the seriousness of the rift in the 'broken' Communion. Of a much more striking significance is that out of the about 270 bishops who kept away from the Conference, the Church of Nigeria contributed 120, nearly half of the total, thus bearing out her commitment in the stand-off with the revisionist Western Church. The Church of Nigeria clearly provided the

initiative and the motivation that led to the successful boycott of the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

#### **5.4.5 The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)**

The close bonding of the orthodox sections of the Church inevitably resulted to the formation of new bodies and meetings to check-mate the action of the revisionists.

The necessity of the formation of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) was resultant from the fact that none of the so-called Instruments of Communion developed to sustain and promote the unity of the Anglican Communion seemed to be effective in curbing revisionist excesses.

Anglicans in every Province who wish to uphold the authority of the Bible and the historic faith of the church down the ages had to find ways of associating and moving forward in the context of a confused world-wide Communion. More so, as nature abhors a vacuum, the effectively planned boycott of the 2008 Lambeth Conference by conservative Anglican leadership made it expedient for a new forum of fellowship to be created for the like-minded theologically orthodox branch of the Church. The need for an alternative meeting became pressing. Nazir-Ali (2013) states in regard to groups that were either started or strengthened as a result:

Movements such as the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) and the more diverse Global South, along with Catholic - Anglican Organizations like Forward in Faith, have come into existence to ensure that

the traditional understandings of Anglicanism are not simply extinguished under revisionist pressure. (pp. 21-22).

Another factor that precipitated the birth of GAFCON was the outcome of the Global South Steering Committee meeting in London, July 16-18, 2007. The meeting issued a statement denouncing the revisionist actions of the Episcopal Church in America and the Anglican Church in Canada. The meeting also noted the building pressure for a separate meeting of orthodox Anglicans, and Article 11 states:

We have received requests from around the Communion to call a gathering of Anglican Communion leaders. We expect to call a Fourth Global South Encounter to bring faithful Anglican leaders across the Communion to renew our focus on the apostolic faith and our common mission. (p. 3).

The committee criticized the handling of the homosexuality problem in not restoring the torn fabrics of the Anglican Communion. The Lambeth Conference, it noted, has failed as an instrument of unity and communion. The polarization surrounding the forthcoming Lambeth meeting has been exacerbated in that some bishops would be reluctant to participate because a number of their own bishops had been arbitrarily excluded while those whose actions precipitated the current crisis received invitation to the Conference. Earlier on, during an Episcopal Synod of the Church of Nigeria held at All Saints' Church Abuja from 27 – 28 June, 2006, the House of Bishops agreed to a proposal that an alternative to Lambeth

Conference 2008 be put in place if eventually there was no repentance and restoration of unity in the Communion.

Following wider consultations with Church leaders of the conservative Global South under the Church of Nigeria's determined leadership, the name, the dates and the venue of the Conference were agreed on and scheduled, and the stakeholder Provinces started preparations to be part of the conference, to run nearly parallel with the Lambeth Conference 2008, since there were no signs of repentance by the revisionists and the restoration of unity was not forthcoming.

The GAFCON gathering actually took place a month before the Lambeth Conference of 2008. Commenting on the significance of the formation of GAFCON, Okoye (2009) states that "it is the fulfillment of the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church that inspired our church leaders to fight against the satanic agenda of the revisionists" (p. 31).

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) was held in Jerusalem from 22 – 29 June 2008 under the leadership of the Most Rev. Dr. Peter Akinola, Primate of the Church of Nigeria, and it proved to be a most formidable movement against the forces of pollution of Anglican orthodoxy. Akinola (cited by Okoye, 2009) in his opening address presented on 22nd June, 2008 to GAFCON participants in Jerusalem titled "GAFCON – A RESCUE MISSION", expresses the motive and mission of GAFCON as follows:



**Figure 6:** Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria delivering the Opening Address during the GAFCON I Meeting in Jerusalem on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2008.  
Source: GAFCON Archives.



**Figure 7:** Orthodox Anglican Bishops that attended the first Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem, 22 – 29 June, 2008.  
Source: GAFCON Archives.

Our beloved Anglican Communion must be rescued from the manipulation of those who have denied the gospel and its power to transform and to save; those who have departed from the Scripture and the faith ‘once and for all delivered to the saints’, from those who are proclaiming a new gospel which is really no gospel at all (Gal. 1). In the wisdom and strength God supplies we must rescue what is left of the Church from error of the apostates. (pp. 31-32).

The GAFCON website states that GAFCON I in Jerusalem was attended by 1,148 lay and clergy participants including 291 bishops. 300 delegates from Nigeria attended, including more than 150 bishops. This clearly means that the Province of Nigeria provided more than one-quarter of the total number of delegates, and the bishops from Nigeria formed more than 50 percent of the number of bishops in attendance.

Fagbemi (2015) rightly states that the Church of Nigeria now plays a strong leadership role within the Anglican Communion and especially the GAFCON, which is a statement not only to its phenomenal growth but also to its evangelical heritage. He concludes accordingly:

The formation of GAFCON and its (The Church of Nigeria’s) involvement in it was characteristically informed by its understanding and interpretation of Scripture that sits comfortably within the evangelical tradition and the traditional orthodox Anglican view of sexual and social ethics. (p. 2).

Nebo (2008) reiterates that the Global Anglican Future Conference served to preserve and promote the truth and power of the gospel of salvation against the

disturbing effects of the revisionists in the Western churches, who promote a variety of sexual preferences and immoral behaviour as a universal human right.

Dimobika (2014) states that:

GAFCON succeeded in bringing many Anglicans across the globe into a personal and pastoral relationship in a fellowship which is faithful to Anglican teaching, more representative of the demographic distribution of global Anglicanism and stronger as an instrument of effective mission and ministry. (p. 147).

The Jerusalem GAFCON meeting established and instituted the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GFCA) with the aim of furthering the mission of conservative Anglican mission work. This group is composed of individuals who are united in the communion of one spirit, committed to work and pray together in the common mission of the church. It also includes Provinces, dioceses, churches, missionary jurisdictions, and para-church organizations which have the common goal of helping to reform, heal and revitalize the Anglican Communion. The highpoint of the GAFCON meeting was the release of the 14-point Jerusalem Declaration dated 29 June 2008, being the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. The GAFCON website presents the Declaration with the following preamble: In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit: We the participants of the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the Kingdom is the good news of salvation,



liberation and transformation for all. In the light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

Other aspects of the Declaration deal with issues like the reaffirmation of historical creeds, liturgical heritage, the three-fold ministry, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the belief in the second coming of Jesus, etc. However, four of the declarations directly deal with the issues that have caused schism in the Anglican Communion. These are:

Clause 8: We acknowledge God's creation of humankind 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.

Clause 11: We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognize the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.

Clause 12: We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.

Clause 13: We reject the authority of those Churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.

The Jerusalem Declaration is now universally known as the basis of fellowship of orthodox Anglicanism typified by the GAFCON movement, as it restates and summarizes the core Christian beliefs and landmark Anglican traditions for which the Church has been known.

#### **5.4. 6 GAFCON II**

After a five-year gap, the second GAFCON meeting was organized and held in Nairobi Kenya from 21-26 October, 2013. According to the Nairobi Communiqué (2013) the participants affirmed that the GAFCON members have become an important and effective instrument of Communion during a period in which “other instruments of Communion have failed both to uphold gospel priorities in the Church and to heal the divisions among us” (p. 1).

In the Communiqué, the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration were described as having committed the GAFCON members to biblical faithfulness, and have provided the framework for renewed Anglican orthodoxy to which members from



**Figure 8:** Participating Bishops in the GAFCON II Meeting in Nairobi 2013.  
Source: GAFCON Archives.

all the different traditions – Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics and Charismatics are committed. GAFCON II then outlined the priorities which it will pursue as hinted in the Jerusalem Declaration which include:

1. Evangelizing the West and bringing the gospel to unreached peoples.
2. Supporting genuine gospel initiatives, recognizing that there are times when the maintenance of structures can constrain the gospel.
3. Guarding the gospel – by continuing publicly to expose any false gospel that is not consistent with apostolic teaching.

The Conference had earlier noted that the GFCA formed in GAFCON I has been instrumental in the emergence of the new Province of the Anglican Church in North America (A.C.N.A), giving formal recognition to its orders and welcoming it as a full partner Province, with its Archbishop Bob Duncan having a seat on the Primates' Council.

In the Communiqué's preamble which stated the attendance to GAFCON II, a striking increase in the roll call was noted – 1,358 delegates, including 331 bishops representing tens of millions of faithful Anglicans worldwide. Though the leadership of GAFCON this time was given to the Most Rev. Eliud Wabukala the Primate of Kenya, Nigeria's Archbishop Nicholas Okoh became the Vice-Chairman. This leadership adjustment did not in any way diminish Nigeria's imposing influence on the GAFCON movement in that more than 160 bishops (more than half of all the GAFCON II bishops) attended from Nigeria, within the

total number of 450 clerical and lay delegates from the province of Nigeria – the highest attendance from any Province. The theological significance of the documents and the declarations of the two GAFCON meetings can never be over emphasized in the history of the Anglican Church. K. K. Jatau (personal communication, February 20, 2014) affirms that though it is unfortunate that unwholesome developments have led to the formation of a parallel body to the Lambeth Conference, the GAFCON movement has actually helped in strengthening biblical sexual morality among orthodox Anglicans worldwide, especially in the Church of Nigeria and the rest of Africa.

#### **5.4.7 The Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON)**

Following the take-over from Archbishop Peter Akinola in March 2010, the new Primate of the Church of Nigeria the Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh undertook a revision of the Vision of the Church and from that pedestal, launched his own programs and mission undertakings. One of the most outstanding new mission initiatives is the starting of the Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) which took off in November 2011. The Conference is not tailored for Anglicans or Nigerians alone, but reaches out to the wider world.

The aim of the Conference according to the new Primate is for the people of God to come together to meet God and one another. In his Welcome Address, Okoh (2011) states *inter alia*:

There are boundless opportunities when we encounter God; prayers are answered, forgiveness takes place, reconciliation becomes real, conversion



**Figure 9:** Primate Nicholas Okoh of Nigeria delivering his Opening Address at the first Divine Commonwealth Conference (DIVCCON) Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2011.

Source: [www.Divccon.org](http://www.Divccon.org).

takes place, deliverance from enslavement to aberrations takes place... Moreover, by coming together from different dioceses, provinces and countries, the church will be edified... We gather to encourage one another to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:23), to stand and defend the faith of our fathers, “which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). In other words, we gather to reaffirm our faith in the Jerusalem Declaration (1-14) and to denounce “the other gospel” (p. 2).

The Primate’s motivation for this new initiative is to prepare Christians, especially Anglicans to be fully equipped to confront contemporary challenges to their faith. The Primate notes that all around the world, there is an observed steadily rising tidal wave of “anti-Christian, anti-orthodox sentiments from within and without the church, from people of other faiths, secularists, relativists, revisionists, liberals, etc. The high popularity and the mass attendance to the DIVCCON is a pointer to its effectiveness as another forum for revival of Anglican orthodox evangelical movement. The DIVCCON is a weeklong gathering attended by not less than five thousand participants annually since 2011, drawn from all parts of the orthodox Anglican Communion, with non-Anglicans also in attendance.

Sugden (2011) states that eleven high profile delegates from the Church of England attended the first DIVCCON in 2011 at Abuja. Some of these include Bishop John Ellison former Bishop of Paraguay and Chair of the panel of Bishops of the

Anglican Mission in England, Canon Andy Lines – the General Secretary of Crosslinks Mission Society and Rev. Robert de Berry – Chair of the Barnabas Fund. Conservatives from ACNA in the USA and other parts of the Anglican Communion have continued to attend the successive DIVCCON gatherings, including Michael Nazir-Ali former bishop of Rochester, bishop of Raiwind in Pakistan and General Secretary of CMS, and bishops and delegates from East Africa, including Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje of Rwanda.

In keeping with the vision of the incumbent Primate who has the total support of the Bishops of the Church of Nigeria, apparent in the annual mass mobilization of ordained and lay delegates from all the dioceses to the conference, the DIVCCON talks, seminars and teachings are being tailored to meet the ethico-moral needs of all strata of membership of the Anglican Church with regards to the proper Christian response to the challenges of living in an increasingly secularized world, according to orthodox biblical ethics.

As part of the response by the Church of Nigeria to the upsurge of revisionism in the Anglican Communion, DIVCCON has really been making a strong impact on the revival of Anglican orthodox ecclesiology. Also, the venue of the annual DIVCCON gathering, the imposing National Christian Centre, Abuja in a remarkable way, highlights Nigeria's enviable leadership role in orthodox Anglicanism, both in Africa and in the rest of the Global South Provinces.



#### **5.4.8 The Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA)**

The Church of Nigeria's response to the acts of doctrinal deviation by sections of the Western Churches brought into being new missionary ventures that helped to reshape the pastoral relationship within the Anglican Communion. Reaction to the extremities of the revisionists in the West has never been limited to non-Western sections of the Anglican Church. Lewis (1999) reports that several splinter groups were formed over the years, protesting the departure from orthodoxy on the part of the Episcopal Church. Among these were the Southern Episcopal Church, the Anglican Orthodox Church, and the American Episcopal Church. Organizations such as the Fellowship of Concerned Church-men and the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer were also formed in the USA. (p. 18).

Even before the bubble finally burst on the Anglican Communion regarding disagreement in matters of human sexuality, Kew and White (1997) had stated the potential reasons for dissent by some members of the Episcopal Church in America, leading to their leaving the Church. Some of these include:

1. Dislike of the positions taken by the Church leaders, whether they are too "conservative" or too "liberal".
2. Dislike of specific views on sexuality: either the Episcopal Church is sexually too inclusive, prepared to accept and ordain non-celibate homosexuals too readily, or it is utterly homophobic, with gay and lesbian people persecuted and denied full participation.

3. The Episcopal Church has drifted away from its theological moorings. It no longer takes scripture or its apostolic traditions seriously, and is reluctant to reflect theologically before it acts or speaks. (p. 151).

Following what may be called an implosion due to the internal tension in the Episcopal Church in America, Kew and White conclude that a cross section of the laity, bishops, priests and deacons who consider themselves part of the theological “orthodox” wings of the Church met in Northbrook Illinois, to form the American Anglican Council. For these people, who feel that their biblical and catholic sensibilities have been compromised within the Episcopal Church, it is an attempt to find new ways to be the “Church”.

Elsewhere in Great Britain, a similar strain on relationships between liberals and conservatives was playing out as in the United States of America and Canada. Adams (2008) states that the Church of England created the loophole in the Anglican polity when it passed the Act of Synod in 1993 endorsing “flying bishops”. This is a plan which allowed sex-and-gender conservative parishes to refuse to welcome geographical diocesans who ordained women, and to request the Episcopal office of another bishop with ‘clean hands’. Candidates for ordination are also allowed to request a ‘clean hands’ flying bishop to ordain them.

Adams also points to the fact that this model has been adapted and applied in the Episcopal Church, with its institution of the Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO). This is the concept of individual congregations or dioceses not

being bound to their duly elected geographical diocesans or Presiding Bishop. (p. 723). This provision already in place proved a launching-pad for the intervention of bishops and Primates of other Provinces in the U.S.A as well, at the height of the schism generated over the sharp disagreement in sexual morality.

According to Dimobika (2014) one of the points of the Communiqué after the Global South Anglican Primates Meeting in Kigali September 2006 under the leadership of Nigeria's Archbishop Peter Akinola was a reaction that would later result to the creation of a convocation of Churches in the U.S.A. The Primates state:

The ECUSA appears to have no intention of changing direction and once again embracing the faith once delivered... We are now convinced that the time has now come to take initial steps towards the formation of what will be recognized as a separate ecclesiastical structure of the Anglican Communion in the USA... We believe that we would be failing our apostolic witness if we do not make this provision for those who hold firm to a commitment to historic Anglican faith. (pp. 53-54).

Following the unrelenting agenda of the Western Churches on the issue of homosexuals in the Church, African and other Primates in the Global South took the initiative of consecrating some orthodox Anglican clergymen as bishops to give Episcopal direction to conservative Anglicans in America. Iheagwam (cited by Okoye, 2010) chronicles the significant consecrations as follows:

1. On January 29, 2000 Archbishop Moses Tay of South East Asia and Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini Primate of Rwanda consecrated two conservative Episcopal Church USA priests – Rev'd Charles Murphy III and the Very Rev'd Dr. John Rodgers bishops in St. Andrew's Cathedral Church Singapore. Their consecration was intended to “bring episcopal care and comfort to clergy and congregations trying to maintain historic faith in the face of increasingly hostile conditions in ECUSA.” Archbishop Kolini also started the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA) which was sponsored locally in America by the Rwanda Episcopal Church. Though the then Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. George Carey declared the consecrations irresponsible and irregular, and contrary to Anglican rules and practice, they still held.
2. Bishops Bill Atwood and William Murdoch were consecrated to oversee some former ECUSA congregations under the supervision of the Anglican Provinces of Kenya and Uganda.

Many Nigerians in the USA also found it increasingly difficult to identify with Anglican communities, and thus were tempted to worship in other denominations after the deviations by the Episcopal Church and the Westminster Diocese in Canada. The reaction from the Church of Nigeria precipitated the formation of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA). The Standing Committee of the Church of Nigeria recognizing this urgent need to cater for Nigerian Anglicans in America initiated a process for the provision of pastoral care through the

formation of a Convocation within the USA.

Church of Nigeria Today Newsletter (2006) states that what started as an outreach to provide a safe harbour for Nigerians soon became overwhelmed with requests for participation from other people, thus fast-tracking the formation of CANA. Announcing the formation of the Convocation in April 2005, Archbishop Akinola wrote “our intention is not to challenge or intervene in the Churches of ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada but rather to provide a safe harbour for those who can no longer find their spiritual home in those Churches.” In September 2005 at the 8th General Synod of the Church of Nigeria at Onitsha, the necessary constitutional changes were made to permit the formal establishment of the Convocation in the USA and by November, the necessary legal framework to establish CANA as a recognized Anglican Church structure in the USA was completed and CANA was inaugurated. In the same vein, the Church of Nigeria entered into a covenant agreement with the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Anglican Province of America, Churches that have also separated from ECUSA on doctrinal issues and their bishops were very supportive of the Nigerian initiative. (p. 7). Akinola (2007) giving an update on the progress of CANA during the Standing Committee Meeting of the Church of Nigeria in Oshogbo intimated the delegates as follows:

1. After the Church of Nigeria declared itself in broken communion with ECUSA, a number of Nigerian Anglican Congregations were evicted and clergy fired.

2. A growing number of non-Nigerian congregations and clergy asked to be included and so CANA had to become Convocation of Anglicans in North America instead of the originally intended Convocation of Anglican Nigerians in America.
3. The Episcopal Church's House of Bishops and the Executive Committee under the leadership of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori (a woman) rejected requests from the Global South Primates on the implementation of the proposed Pastoral Scheme and continued to support punitive legal actions against its own clergy and congregations who embrace orthodox Christian teaching.
4. That ignoring hostile actions and legal threats, CANA membership has grown to include almost 60 congregations and approximately 100 clergy—with another 25 in the process for ordination. More congregations are in the process regarding registration with CANA. Geographical distribution is widespread in the USA, with CANA congregations in eighteen different states from California to Connecticut and from Wyoming to Florida: fifteen congregations and eighteen clergy are expatriate Nigerians.

The tremendous growth of CANA made the need to have a US-based bishop very pressing, as ECUSA remained unwilling either to change course or refrain from persecuting orthodox Anglicans. This necessitated the election of Bishop Martyn Minns as the first Bishop of CANA. According to Today Newsletter (2006) Minns, an English-born clergyman of Truro Fairfax, Virginia in the USA was on Sunday 20th August 2006 consecrated as a bishop in the first ever consecration of bishops

in the recently dedicated National Christian Centre Abuja. The significance of Minns' consecration dwarfed that of the other three candidates – a white American made bishop by the Church of Nigeria to supervise the missionary initiative in America. (p. 2).

Amagada (2010) reports that after the consecration of Bishop Martyn Minns in Nigeria, ECUSA's leadership made frantic efforts to abort his installation as a bishop in the USA. Firstly, ECUSA persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury to urge Archbishop Akinola who was already in the US then to cancel the installation. This was declined. Amagada states further:

Days before the installation, Episcopal Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori urged the Nigerian leader not to visit the United States...that it would violate Anglican tradition, that national Church leaders...only minister to churches within their own Provinces... Akinola responded by saying that "the usual protocol and permission are no longer applicable" because of ... the unbiblical agenda of the United States Church. (p. 38).

As the Anglican Communion's spiritual leader Rowan Williams does not have a direct authority to stop Akinola or to force a compromise, Bishop Minns was duly installed to lead CANA as directed from the Church of Nigeria. The CANA initiative has recorded a resounding success, as it has presently developed into three dioceses – CANA East, headed by Bishop Julian Dobbs, CANA West headed by Bishop Felix Orji and The Missionary Diocese of the Trinity (M.D.T) headed by

Bishop Amos Fagbamiye.

Church Year Calendar (2015) states that CANA West Diocese and the Missionary Diocese of the Trinity (M.D.T) have a total of 61 Parishes between them, spread across more than 11 states in the US with 5 of these in Canada. They also have a total of 94 clergymen mostly expatriate priests from Nigeria. These two dioceses in America have an organized annual synod and established administrative structures typical of any local Anglican diocesan setting in the Church of Nigeria, with virtually all clergy and other officials being Nigerians. A similar measure to that of CANA is being pursued in the United Kingdom to cater for ‘stranded’ Nigerian Anglicans there. Not as expansive as CANA, the Church of Nigeria Mission in the United Kingdom is still at the level of a Chaplaincy.

The new Primate Okoh (2010) in his Opening Address to the Church’s Standing Committee in Lagos states:

We intend to reach a decision on the spiritual plight of Nigerian Anglicans in the United Kingdom. As you know, they find it difficult to feel at home in most Church of England congregations in the neighborhood. We need to fashion out something which will have a Nigerian flavour and content, and which will be acceptable to the authorities in the Church of England. (p. 8).

The Church of Nigeria has a clergyman in charge of the United Kingdom Chaplaincy –Ven. Dr. Joseph Ajaefobi, and the processes of buying a house to



serve as the Chaplaincy headquarters are presently nearing completion. This Chaplaincy is also reaching out to Nigerian Anglicans in other parts of Europe in conjunction with the Church of Nigeria Missionary Society (C.N.M.S).

#### **5.4.9 Moves for Greater Economic Self-reliance**

The logistics needed to confront the deviant Churches of the Western world include well-grounded and sustainable means of financial resources, which the erring Anglican Churches in the West are in no short supply of. The need for Anglican Provinces in Africa and the rest of the Global South to become more self-reliant became pressing in the context of the schism in the Communion. In this regard, the first resolution of the African Anglican Bishops' Conference held in Nigeria in 2004 emphasized the need for the Church in Africa to become self-reliant just as it has become self-governing and self-propagating; through economic self-empowerment. This called for a new orientation and attitude to investment and economic activities. The Statement of Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (2006) endorsed the call for self-reliance *inter alia*:

We the members of CAPA must take forward this Resolution with a unity and seriousness of purpose. Otherwise we shall be continually tempted by those outside our borders who dangle money in return for silence on controversial issues, such as has occurred recently in several of our Provinces... It is the Christ of Scripture who compels us to care for the poor and afflicted. But we must take the initiative in these areas and not accept the patronizing of those who are rich in endowments but who are not rich toward

God... It is time for the stronger among us to empathize with and come to the help of the weaker, and not always be looking overseas for help. (p. 5).

The truth of this statement is a widely recognized one because from the colonial missionary days, the Churches in Africa have been very dependent on foreign aid for any meaningful mission work. This relationship naturally, has never been seen in the light of equal partnership in mission, but rather on a giver-receiver footing, with the giver's superiority-complex looming large over the relationship horizon.

It is worthy of note that in 2004, the CAPA bishops also pledged to henceforth reject all donations from pro-gay American dioceses. Jenkins (2004) referring to what he calls "sexual neo-colonialism" laments ECUSA's lack of respect for the ecclesiastical values and cultural situations in the Global South when it is only concerned about America's outreach at the expense of Anglican world mission (p. 306). Jenkins further citing the reaction of the Church of Nigeria to this cultural imperialism, quotes Archbishop Akinola's response to the Diocese of Westminster's approval of same-sex rite of union thus:

Many of us from the two-thirds world feel that the global north still seeks to retain its disproportionate power and influence in our Church just as in the world. It is significant that those dioceses most tempted to indulge themselves with unilateral actions, taken without consulting the wider Communion, seem so often to be among those materially most advantaged,

and to be in the global north. Should this not occasion reflection? Do we not see here... a new imperialism? (pp. 306-307).

The giver-receiver relationship has over the years, engendered in Africa an attitude that has killed much of the self-initiatives of the Church. The action of the revisionists paradoxically made Anglican Provinces in Africa to wake up and begin to tap deeper into their potentials and explore available viable alternatives to enhance their economic welfare. In the Church of Nigeria, Archbishop Akinola's primacy envisioned a turn-around for the Church in this area. Akinola (cited by Amagada, 2010) in pursuing this goal states:

The Church shall set up a theological/spirituality committee to work out general guidelines for teaching on those areas where the church is lacking (Bible study, praying, fasting, and tithing)... African dioceses need the help of the Church of Nigeria. It is our responsibility to look after them in every way possible we can. It is pertinent to observe that the way and manner some of our leaders go about begging for foreign aid is disgraceful. The method used in collecting some of the money to help "the poor in badly impoverished African Churches" is ungodly. Therefore, the Church of Nigeria will work out a program for self-reliance. The Church shall as a matter of urgency take its rightful place in the ecumenical community, both in and outside Nigeria to promote God's work. (p. 21).

Accordingly, the Church of Nigeria has pursued this objective effectively in the following major aspects:

A. One Billion Naira Endowment Fund:

The Church embarked on raising one billion naira within Nigeria, from individual Anglicans and organizations in the Church. This noble objective has been achieved, resulting in an increase of the national Church budget from sixteen million naira in 2002 to thirty million naira in 2009. This Endowment Fund success also drastically reduced the contribution of dioceses to the national Church thereby allowing them more funds for their own development. The success of the Endowment Fund invariably resulted in more funds being available for other investments.

#### B. Economic Empowerment Seminar:

The Church of Nigeria organized two well packaged economic empowerment seminars in 2005 and 2009 at Lagos and Lokoja respectively. These were for both selected clergy and lay officers of the Anglican dioceses in Nigeria. The aim was to help church leaders diversify their economic bases, and for dioceses to become less dependent on assessments and levies from churches. Resultant from these seminars, many dioceses now have investments to help boost their financial wherewithal and finance their stated missions and projects.

#### C. Church of Nigeria Towers:

Following the need for the actualization of self-reliance, the Church of Nigeria acquired a site at the Central Business District of Abuja and is presently constructing a multi-billion naira 21-storey building to be known as the Church of Nigeria Towers. The site of the project falls within the commercial

nerve centre of Abuja and would definitely boost the Church's income when completed.

#### D. Crowther Radio and ACNN Cable Network:

The Church established the Crowther Radio as an investment in the broadcast industry. The radio outfit is being managed by Multimesh Communications on a management contract of more than seven million naira per annum. Similarly, the Church of Nigeria has successfully launched a satellite television channel in late 2013, known as the Anglican Communion Nigeria Network (A.C.N.N). The dual-purpose objective is to give an electronic voice to the Church's orthodox Anglicanism through international broadcasting, and also to make more funds available in the church coffers through the commercialization of the broadcast channel. So far, the objectives are being met.

#### E. Graduate School of Theology:

Consequent on the pursuance of self-reliance in the church, the establishment of a Graduate School was recommended, approved and put in place in 2009 at Abeokuta. The Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary was established for advanced training of clergy and laity and has four centres which include:

1. Centre for Advanced Theological Studies
2. Centre for Language and Communication Studies
3. Centre for Anglican Communion Studies
4. Centre for Mission Studies

The Crowther Graduate Seminary named after the pioneer Nigerian Anglican bishop, Samuel Ajayi Crowther had the Bishop Theologian of the Church of

Nigeria, the Rt. Rev. Prof. Dapo Asaju as its first Vice-Chancellor. The creation of the office of the 'Bishop Theologian' is also part of re-emphasizing the need for proper harnessing and co-ordination of the theologizing processes to keep away heresy from the Church of Nigeria.

According to the Church Year Calendar (2015) Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary has 12 professors, both lay and ordained in the teaching staff, along with many other experienced academics drawn from all over the Church of Nigeria. Though the establishment of the Seminary has also helped to boost the Church's economy, the most important gain is that it has helped to drastically cut down on the number of Nigerian Anglicans going for higher theological studies abroad. This has invariably reduced the risk of the corruption of the orthodox traditions of the Church through contact with Western educational institutions, in the majority of which liberal revisionism has taken deep roots and developed strong branches. It has also afforded products of the numerous theological institutions in the Church of Nigeria a quicker and less-expensive access to higher studies in the church's most cherished conservative theological traditions.

In commending the stated goals of the founding of the Crowther Graduate School, M. Mzomah (personal communication, February 20, 2014) notes the utility value of the institution. This is in the aspect of retraining of the products of Anglican theological seminaries in Nigeria to meet the new unfolding spiritual and moral challenges of priesthood and church leadership in modern society. The



**Figure 10:** Top - The administrative building of Crowther Graduate Seminary, Abeokuta.

Others - Passing-out and Graduation Thanksgiving ceremonies of the Institution.

Source: Crowther Graduate Seminary.

achievement of this aim is to help in keeping the Anglican Church in Nigeria within its orthodox biblical tradition.

The Church of Nigeria has also recently established a Ph.D. scholarship scheme which has started sponsoring qualified members of the Church through higher degree courses in their chosen Universities in Nigeria. This man-power development stride is part of the stated means to achieve self-reliance and it is yielding much fruit for the present progress and the future development of the Church.

#### **5.4.10 Revision of the Catechism**

In the concerted effort to bolster the spiritual lives of Anglicans in Nigeria and avoid a possible slacking of doctrinal compliance to the orthodox teachings of the Church, the phenomenon of which breeds deviation, heresy and revisionism, the Church of Nigeria undertook a revision of her catechism. It was identified that lack of strong well-outlined Catechisms in the Church or the neglect and non-teaching of the available ones are part of the loophole that motivates liberalism which engenders revisionism in Anglican Christian circles. Amagada (2010) states that the production of a new Catechism was top on the agenda of Archbishop Peter Akinola. He expatiates:

Under his chairmanship of the Global South Anglican partnership since 2002, the Global South-South Encounter was held in 25-31 October 2005 in Egypt and the Anglican Catechism Project – the drafting/production of a



Common Catechism in outline for the entire Anglican Communion was initiated and sponsored and produced. (p. 19).

Part of the response of the Church of Nigeria to the tide of revisionism from the Western Churches is the recommendation for a reformed and revised catechism for the Anglican Church in Nigeria to address the current controversial issues and meet the needs of the children and the younger generations. This idea was further developed by the Group Six of the Draft of the Revised Vision of the Church of Nigeria (2010) which was charged with theological and doctrine issues.

During the Church of Nigeria Standing Committee Meeting in Abuja in March 2010, the Theological Resource Group Report on the Anglican Catechism detailed the Group's effort to acquaint the dioceses with the Anglican Catechism in Outline as has been put forward by the Global South Task Force on Theological Formation and Education.

The Group sent the document to the dioceses and their feedback has been considered in a seminar, and the following recommendations were arrived at:

1. There is an urgent need to have a document that will direct the Church's teaching to ensure the nurturing of Anglicans from birth to maturity.
2. Such exercise should draw from all existing relevant documents to formulate a Catechism.

3. The new Catechism should not subsume key theological challenging issues under broad categories; rather crucial issues shall be highlighted and dealt with directly.
4. The new Catechism should come in two forms – shorter for baptism and confirmation etc. and a more comprehensive one covering all major doctrinal and theological positions of the Church.
5. Revisionist tendencies in the West and other issues of faith which have engaged our Church should also be addressed.
6. Challenges confronting our members especially the youth should be dealt with appropriately. These include peer pressure, upright living in a corrupt environment, sexual harassment, pornography, marital problems, infertility, cultism, etc.
7. The Catechism should be a good model for the entire orthodox Anglican family, tailored after the Church's peculiar doctrines and structured along the lines recommended by the Global South.
8. The exercise should not be rushed and must allow enough time for testing to make for the emergence of a document that will stand the test of time.

The members of the Church of Nigeria Theological Resource Group are presently still working on the new Catechism and their draft production still being expected.

In appraising the move initiated by the Church of Nigeria to update its Catechism, D.F.A. Obiosa (personal communication, February 21, 2014) notes that though the traditional Catechism ingrained in the Anglican doctrinal teaching system is strong and detailed enough, going by the seriousness and urgency of the revisionist

challenge, the need to revise and adequately teach it in the Anglican churches has become more imperative. In appreciating this particular response from the Anglican Church in Nigeria, E.C. Oguelina (personal communication, February 19, 2014) opines that more purposeful and well-coordinated teaching should be given to Anglican Church members to reinforce their grasp of Christian ethics as they relate to sexual morality.

In essence the revisionists' agenda which caused a big upheaval in the Anglican Communion has proved to be a strong wake-up call to the Church of Nigeria and a sort of blessing in disguise. The resultant schism has identified Nigerian Anglicanism as the strongest in Africa and in the rest of the Global South, which is made up of 20 out of the 39 Provinces of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

#### **5.4.11 Centralized Production of Devotional Materials**

Part of the wide-ranging reforms that formed the Church of Nigeria's response to the liberalist upheaval in worldwide Anglicanism is the centralization of the production of some devotional materials for Anglicans in Nigeria. Prior to this period under review, individual ecclesiastical Provinces and dioceses have been producing bible-study and Sunday School materials as they deemed fit for their teaching needs.

Taking cognizance of the fact that the fruits of revisionism gradually took time to mature through a passive attitude to bible study, misinterpretation and unnecessary

re-interpretation of bible passages in the Western Churches, the Church of Nigeria leadership took appropriate measures to forestall a repeat of history in its ecclesiastical domain, and also plug any loopholes already obtainable within it.

Consequently the Group 9 Report of the Revised Vision Drafting Committee (2010) charged with Liturgical, Prayer and Spirituality matters made the following, among other recommendations:

1. The Church of Nigeria should improve its method of conducting Bible Study by ensuring the following:
  - (a) There should be thorough Bible Study preparatory classes in the Churches.
  - (b) Sufficient time should be allocated to Bible Study. A minimum of one hour is recommended.
  - (c) Bible Study should be sufficiently participatory.
  - (d) Clergy should endeavor to mobilize and train lay members of the Church as Bible Study teachers. (p. 1).
2. There is need for the national church to have a Department of Christian Education that will cater for training and development of manuals for use in Sunday Schools/Children's Church, by the Youth and Women's work.
3. The Spirituality Committee should develop and produce Sunday school manuals for age groups and daily devotionals for family altar use by members in Anglican Churches nationwide.

To date, these recommendations have been largely implemented, with the central production of the 'Daily Fountain' Bible reading aid, the production of serial Sunday School Guides and the successful review and production of the

Church of Nigeria Book of Common Prayer and the reprinting of the Church Hymnal which are being widely used by Anglicans in Nigeria.

The Liturgy, Prayer and Spirituality Committee which is part of the Mission and Evangelism Directorate has been responsible for the preparation and publication of the Bible Study Outline for use every week of the year throughout Anglican Churches in Nigeria, addressing vital areas of the Church's theology, life and work. This new motivation metamorphosed into the present national Church policy which made the Bible Study session compulsory every Sunday in all the Anglican Churches in Nigeria. Regarding the desirability of increased study of the Bible in Nigerian Anglicanism, S.N.C. Daniel (personal communication, February 19, 2014) believes that the compulsory weekly Bible study being enforced by the Church of Nigeria will go a long way to improve the spiritual lives of Anglicans in Nigeria and make them less susceptible to sexual aberrations. Another stakeholder, B. Tonack (personal communication, February 20, 2014) in agreement with the foregoing states that lack of good and coordinated Christian teaching and Bible presentation provides a gateway for the infiltration of wrong doctrines and practices relating to Christian morality. In the same vein, J. O. Akinola (personal communication, January 10, 2014) while appreciating the Church of Nigeria's policy of the teaching of moral instruction in schools, recommends the strict enforcement and sustenance of the practice as a strong measure to guide the upcoming generations away from sexual aberrations. Lending credence to the foregoing opinion, A. J. Bankole (personal communication, February 19, 2014) urges the church to go the extra mile in assisting the youth to understand clearly,

through teaching, what is expected of them in the area of Christian sexual morality. This would discourage them from emulating the so-called celebrities and other 'role models', the majority of whose moral lives are questionable.

In assessing the efforts of the Church of Nigeria, J. Umeh (personal communication, February 19, 2014) notes that the Church has not relented in the crusade against sexual perversion, being in communion with diverse sets of people, and she recommends in strong terms that the crusade against sexual aberrations should cut across other Christian denominations for a united response from Nigeria. Another respondent, C. A. Samuelson (personal communication, February 19, 2014) counsels that instead of complaining about the excesses of the Western branch of the Anglican Church regarding sexual aberrations, the Church of Nigeria and other theologically orthodox branches of the Church should concentrate more on teaching what the Bible stipulates on sexual morality which would yield more lasting positive results than making rules against homosexuals in the Church. In summing up, C. A. Okoye (personal communication, February 20, 2014) commends the centralization of the production of Sunday School teaching materials in the Church of Nigeria and the new practice of having separate services for the youth alone in some dioceses in Nigeria. According to her, these new developments would help in reaching out more effectively to the young members of the Church, with the aim of inculcating sound ethical values into them for the future growth of the Church.

#### **5.4.12 Differing Opinion and Dissent**

Having stated the details of the response of the Church of Nigeria, the Nigerian Anglican Church leadership acknowledges that all human beings fall short of God's call to holiness, but dares not compromise the clear teaching of the Bible on faithfulness within a heterosexual marriage (holy matrimony), and chastity outside of it, and strongly opposes the elevation and celebration of the sin of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle in the Church.

It is granted that the problem of homosexuality as a sexual aberration is a worldwide concern. No society is devoid of sexual perversion, as not everyone keeps to all the sexual norms stipulated by religion and culture in society. The official stand of the Church of Nigeria is so clearly stated against homosexual unions and related practices, and in line with biblical teaching, but does not presuppose that there are no homosexuals and their sympathizers in the Nigerian society and in the Anglican Church in Nigeria. The fact remains that occasionally, cases of homosexual offence involving Anglican clergy and other cadre of church workers and lay members come to limelight. However, the number of culprits involved are very few and the occurrences are far spaced out in frequency. Besides, in keeping with the official policy, those indicted of the offence and proven guilty are summarily dismissed from church work, among other disciplinary measures. In this regard, Nigeria's anti-gay laws are of immense assistance to the Church in the enforcement of the Church's canonical discipline.



**Figure 11:** Nigerian lesbians in Diaspora affirming their homosexual identity and condemning anti-gay laws in Nigeria.  
Source: Frederick Nwabufo.





**Figure 12:** Nigerian Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) members in Diaspora demonstrating against homophobia in Nigeria and anti-gay laws.

Source: Wordpress.com.

In as much as all the bishops of the Anglican Church in Nigeria firmly identify with and uphold the anti-gay policy of the Church, there is an exception in the person of the former Archbishop of Kaduna, Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon. The bishop resigned from the episcopate in Nigeria to take up office as the General Secretary of the Anglican Consultative Council (A.C.C) in April, 2015. Davies (2016) presents Dr. Idowu-Fearon's differing stance as berating the Church of Nigeria's position on homosexuality, in which he affirms that homosexuals are everywhere, even in his diocese (Kaduna), and that Africans needed to learn that a variety of views are held.

The former archbishop asserts that he never subscribed to the principles behind GAFCON, and believes that Nigeria's effectiveness in the Anglican Communion is "in remaining and participating in all that is going on." According to him, "GAFCON was not a move of the Holy Spirit because it is divisive." Davies (2016) also quotes Dr. Idowu-Fearon as saying that the struggle for the legal, social, spiritual and physical safety of gay and lesbian members is an issue that the Nigerian Church has to face, given the Anglican Communion's unambiguous denunciation of homophobia at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, and at multiple Primates' Meeting since then. Clearly in defiance of the Church of Nigeria's role against homosexuality in the Anglican Communion, he is of the opinion that the Nigerian Church should rather take the lead in confronting homophobia, against the backdrop of the criminalization of homosexual acts in the civil laws of Nigeria. In stating his dissatisfaction with the stand of the Church of Nigeria and the rest of the

Anglican Churches in Africa, he insinuates that the Church lacks effective leadership; that church leaders exercise absolute authority and give no room for consultation, and these result to people being afraid to speak out for fear of being marginalized. This implies that homosexuals and their sympathizers in the churches are not allowed to express their opinions.

Some aspects of this difference in opinion are far from the truth. No one denies that in modern times, homosexuals and other sexual perverts exist in every society and church. The legislative processes of decision making and policy formulation of the Anglican Church in Nigeria are largely democratic, as provided for in the Constitution and Canons of the Church, which are patterned in the basic legal framework of the world-wide Anglican Communion. Bishops and other clerical and lay members of the legislative bodies – the General Synod and the Standing Committee are duly elected representatives from various ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses, and they reflect the views of their respective areas in all decisions of the Church. The fact that homosexuality is alien to Nigerian cultures reflects strongly both in the uncompromising stand of the Anglican Church in Nigeria against homosexuality, and the anti-gay laws that were passed by an overwhelming majority in the country's upper and lower houses of the national legislature. The age-long taboo placed on homosexual acts in the religious and cultural orientations of Nigerian peoples, and the consequent stigma and discrimination against homosexuals are the factors that keep homosexuals from openly identifying themselves and speaking out, both in the church and in the larger society in

Nigeria. Therefore, this scenario is definitely not peculiar to the Anglican Church. The leadership of the Anglican Church in Nigeria has actually lived up to expectation in the roles it has played against the rising culture of homosexuality in the Anglican Communion, given the Church's theologically orthodox origins, and the cultural setting in which Anglicanism exists in Nigeria.



**Figure 13:** Lay and Clergy delegates to the GAFCON meeting in Jerusalem in June 2008.

Source: GAFCON Archives.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Summary

As stated in this study, one of the main features of Anglicanism is the Reformation inheritance of national or provincial autonomy. The fact remains that Anglican tradition is opposed to centralism and thus encourages the thriving of both variety and dissension. This means that nothing should be done at the higher level than is absolutely necessary. However, following the disturbing effects of the present disagreement in the Anglican Communion, one would have wished for the development of more solid structures of centralism for closer unity and coherence.

A conflict can be destructive as well as being creative occasionally. In the course of discerning and applying the lessons of history, it behooves any organization or group to manage and redeem conflicts that are unavoidable. This is more so because the cross which is at the centre of Christianity is not necessarily a symbol of calmness but of a tussle between good and evil in every successive generation.

The present polarized state of the Anglican Communion raises a lot of concern and anxiety about the damage which liberal approach to theology could cause to any Christian denomination. Liberalism rests on assumptions grounded in and propelled by the dynamics of Western enlightenment and culture. The resultant revisionism of scripture is regarded as if on true and valid premises, and attempts are made from the platform of Western cultural imperialism to impose it on others as if it must have a universal validity and acceptance.

The liberalists dangle the carrot of human rights inside the church and use the enormous appeal generated by the issues of rights to get many unwary Christians to buy their secular theology and reject traditional norms of human sexuality. In the process, the fact that human relationship with God is not based on rights but on grace and obedience is overlooked, and also that total obedience to God yields the ideal society that forms part of God's kingdom on earth, to be subsumed into the heavenly kingdom at the end of time, according to Christian teaching.

The disagreement which led to a division in the Anglican Communion is in many respects a blessing to the Province of Nigeria. The resultant disruption of Anglican unity served as a wake-up call to the 'sleeping giant' in that it provoked and subsequently showcased the potentials of Nigerian Anglicanism as the leading force in Africa and the Global South Provinces. The theological waywardness of the Anglican Churches in America, Canada and Europe which marked their lowest point so far in their revisionist foray into sexual morality, served to further 'anathematize' homosexuality among the majority of Nigerian and African Anglicans. Paradoxically, it also served to revive, and to some extent, 'fanaticize' orthodox Anglicanism in Nigeria and in the rest of the theologically conservative parts of the Anglican Communion.

In leading the 'counter-offensive' against the revisionist onslaught, the Church of Nigeria had to strive to achieve economic self-sufficiency and to firmly secure its constitutional and theological moorings in its own native shores, among the other

logistics required in the conduct of the intra-communion belligerence. The schism helped Nigeria and the rest of the Global South Provinces to finally shake off the last shackles of colonial cultural and doctrinal imperialism, motivating the Provinces involved to be much more self-governing, self-propagating and self-sustaining.

It made the Church of Nigeria's leadership more daring and courageous, to openly and firmly disagree with and challenge ideas and actions that are not in tandem with the traditional teaching of Anglicanism, emanating from the Western section of the church that used to call the shots in Anglican ecclesial polity.

In the course of the theological tussle, the Church of Nigeria was positioned as the role-model and the rallying point of conservative Anglicanism in modern times. Amagada (2010) rightly posits that the high value of Archbishop Peter Akinola's leadership of the church during the troubled times did not readily achieve global significance until when in 2006, the Time Magazine – an international media outfit of world repute listed the Archbishop as one of the world's most influential personalities. (p. 20). This is a feat which very few Nigerians in all walks of life have achieved.

One can see in the whole episode a very prominent pattern of church history repeating itself. In the course of confronting heresy from sections of the Anglican Church, a customized counter-reformation, the results of which surpassed



expectations was successfully executed by and in the reactionary sections of the Communion. Though the major storm is over, the ripples are yet to subside in the rest of the Anglican world.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The Christian gospel is one of the few ideological constructs able to make sense of all human experience. However in the same vein, it ironically tends to provide a milieu in which new and strange experiences and theories can be explored, interpreted and projected by inquisitive dissenters. For example, as divisive as the debate over human sexuality has been in the Anglican Church, it has also helped to impose a new perspective and focus on the interplay of revealed faith, traditional teachings and emerging religious and cultural pluralism in our modern world which cannot be ignored.

It is apparent that the problem of sexual aberrations is not peculiar to the Anglican Church. From Anglican Communion's experience discussed in this work, it is obvious that how Christian denominations approach and handle both serious and peripheral moral questions in the present relativistic society will obviously shape the Christianity of the future generations. To regard and formally recognize and accept the so called loving, committed same-sex relationships as equal to similar heterosexual relationship due to secular pressure on the Church is one of the worst heresies of the modern times in Christendom. Revising what God gave to the Church without God's approval amounts to a rebellion against his kingdom and a

rejection of his sovereignty over the created order. The Anglican Church should not abandon its support for the traditional pattern of family life to accept other definitions and patterns of families being projected to accommodate homosexual unions. In an age that worships self-gratification, and in a church where deviants often preach a false Jesus who understands and tolerates every one's orientations and desires, loyal Christians who toe the path of obedience have a herculean task to perform in defending the traditional teachings of the church and living out the teachings.

False teachers are known to distort biblical truth in an effort to make people accept their licentious lifestyles. The inability to understand or change deviant behaviour is never a reason to condone such behaviour. Whereas the gospel of Jesus has a transforming power able to change those who accept it, it is advisable for true believers to cease fellowshiping with professing believers whose exhibited lifestyle are unashamedly and unremorsefully unchristian.

The age-long biblical stand against homosexuality is well anchored by the narrative of the sudden and catastrophic destruction of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by God in the Book of Genesis chapter 19. The clearly stated cause of the disaster was the sin of sodomy which was like a sub-culture in the two defunct societies. Modern liberal biblical scholarship has succeeded largely in watering down the seriousness of the sexual aberrations inherent in homosexual unions and

acts, and this unworthy effort has badly affected Anglicanism in modern times, especially due to its incoherent, de-centralized administrative structure.

Acknowledging the fact that doctrines and traditions of the Christian religion develop and grow in the tension between traditional theological inheritance and the dynamics of socio-cultural pressure, an integrated approach requires both that Christianity stands firmly and clearly for its historic convictions, while offering love and ready assistance to penitent deviants who recognize the need for amendment of life and re-integration in the body of Christ. Those secular Christians' who insist on celebrating the sin of homosexuality as their right, even in the church should be stoutly resisted in order to secure and safeguard the values of the family institution which ensure the continued existence of the society. The Anglican Church in Nigeria has actually excelled in its resolute and well-calculated response to the revisionist challenge in the Anglican Communion.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are put forward in view of the lessons learnt from Church of Nigeria's experience and response:

1. Different Christian denominations should strengthen their theological education, and the curriculum-content constantly regulated and monitored to curtail the infiltration of liberal revisionist theology in African Christianity.
2. The highest grade of theological educators should be employed and motivated to run theological education. Frustrated and half-baked clerics and lay people should not be allowed to teach in our seminaries since such

people are more likely to accept liberal thoughts or the external financial inducement to make compromises.

3. Thorough screening at the points of entry should be embarked upon by church authorities to deny homosexuals and their sympathizers a foothold in our churches, while concerted efforts should be made to identify and flush out unrepentant homosexuals already embedded in the churches.
4. Investments geared towards achieving economic self-reliance should be pursued by churches that have not done so or done enough in this regard. This is to enable orthodox African Christians to dictate and dance to our own tunes by having the capacity to select and pay the piper of our choice.
5. African Christian missionaries are now needed in Western Christianity more than ever to try to stem the tide of 'secular Christianity' sweeping across the West. Denominations that have the wherewithal should consider re-evangelizing the erring white people whose post-modernism has become a threat to the Christian faith.
6. For those undertaking overseas philosophical/theological education, care should be taken against selecting institutions where liberalism holds sway.
7. We should strive to enrich our own seminaries and theological colleges to offer more higher degree courses. The colonial mentality induced, and inferiority complex-laden assumption that the farther away we study from our country, the better, should be discarded. Besides, there is no proof that people educated overseas are more brilliant than those who studied in Nigeria.

8. The need for more committed Christians to be involved in politics can never be over-emphasized, as Christian legislators can guard against passing laws in favour of sexual aberrations in the civil laws of our country.
9. Stronger legislation should be made against pornography by our national and states' Assemblies. This is because of the potentials that pornography has to promote and encourage all types of sexual orientations and sex acts in the lives of its consumers, and its capacity to win more sympathizers to homosexuality in our society.
10. Overseas scholarship and student exchange offers, as tempting and promising as they may be, should not be accepted without reservations by Christian Churches in Nigeria and Africa in general. This is because some of the programmes come with strings attached, as a means of planting the seeds of doctrinal liberalism in our churches in the long run.
11. The Christian denominations should step up teachings, seminars, bible study, revivals etc. for the youth, with the aim of inculcating Christian and African cultural values of sexual morality into the upcoming generations, and also as a counter-measure against the sexual aberrations that are readily available to them and other subscribers on the internet.
12. The churches and individuals who still believe biblical teachings on human sexuality should continue to insist on the age-long moral fact that there is actually no 'safe sex' outside marriage between a man and a woman. This is because sexual aberrations are to be zealously and decisively opposed. Passive response has been proven to indirectly encourage the resilience of

the strong lure of sexual perversions which thrives on the natural human tendency to experimentation, variety and sensual gratification.

13. Christian denominations should accept only those repentant homosexuals who want the help of the church to change their deviant lifestyle. This is in the context of pastoral care and counseling. Unrepentant homosexuals should not be allowed in the churches to forestall their corrupting influence among Christians.
14. For the Anglican Church to regain its organic unity as a world-wide Communion, there is need for the revisionists to recant and retract their 'modern' but erroneous teachings about homosexuality, as this is the main issue that caused the schism in the Church. If their 'new' interpretation has not been objected to, there is the natural tendency for them to venture into other revisions of Scripture that may further water down biblical Christianity and the cherished values of Anglican moral theology.

#### **6.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

Due to the increasing secularization of modern society, the menace of sexual aberrations challenging established norms in the cultural, religious and moral spheres of human life presents a grave concern. The continuing threat to morality which sexual aberrations pose needs to be constantly monitored and evaluated through research by social scientists. This work has deliberately focused on the Anglican Communion's experience, with special emphasis on the Church of Nigeria's response to sexual aberrations in the Church. Further research can also be

made on the impact of the influence of homosexuals on other mainline Christian denominations that have a global spread, from the Nigerian perspective.

Homosexual unions and practices though presently out-lawed in Nigeria, are being legalized by an increasing number of developed countries. International relations in the context of the 'global village' cannot but suffer more friction in the inevitable clash of cultural and ethico-moral interests in respect of the usually strong disagreement on issues surrounding homosexuality, more so, as they are brought to bear on the constantly volatile nature of international politics. Researchers who have interest can task themselves in this regard.

Some of Nigeria's print and electronic media houses reported the attempted establishment of a church for homosexuals in Lagos some years ago. This was prior to the official criminalization of homosexual unions and gatherings in the country. Google.com also has the names and pictures of four Nigerian transgendered persons who changed their sex through surgery - three men turned into women and one woman turned into a man, all living in the Western world for fear of harassment in the Nigerian society. The progress of the gradual in-road being made by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) movement in our society is worthy of research. Any person or group that is interested in researching can take up any of these fore going topics, and other related topics on sexual morality in modern society.

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APPENDIX 1



**NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA**

P.M.B. 5025, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**OFFICE OF THE HEAD**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN RELATIONS**



15<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is intended to introduce my supervisee, **NNADI, STEPHEN C.**, Ph.D. research student with Registration Number 2008097005F from the Department of Religion and Human Relations, Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. His research topic is entitled: **ANGLICANISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF SEXUAL ABERRATIONS: THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA**. The research is purely an academic exercise and your anonymity is guaranteed.

We solicit your sincere co-operation.

Remain blessed.

Rev. Fr. Prof. A.B.C. Chiegboka  
08181767000

## APPENDIX 2

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were used in the research that constituted the primary sources of information:

1. Would you affirm that the orthodox Anglican teaching on human sexuality is wholly scriptural?
2. Are there reports about incidences of homosexuality in your locality or church?
3. Has there been any tried cases of homosexual or bisexual acts against any cadre of worker in your diocese?
4. If yes, what disciplinary action or actions were taken against the person found guilty?
5. Do you require a declaration of sexual orientation as a pre-condition for the recruitment of male and female workers in your diocese?
6. Has there been any coordinated effort in your diocese to guide the youth away from internet pornography?
7. Is the practice of teaching Moral Instruction in schools being adequately undertaken and monitored in your diocese?
8. Do you envisage that the revisionist behaviour of the Western Churches will necessitate a review of the catechism in the Church of Nigeria?
9. Has there been any reaction to the recent addition of an oath of sexual compliance against homosexuality and bisexuality in the ordinal of the Church of Nigeria in your diocese?
10. Do you agree that the ordination of women in some parts of the Anglican Communion is a concession to the women's liberation movement which in turn motivates the lesbian/gay rights movement?
11. Do you believe that Christian churches in Nigeria helped to influence the National Assembly to pass laws against homosexuality in Nigeria?
12. In your opinion, has the GAFCON movement helped the cause of orthodox Anglicanism?
13. What other problems bordering on marriage and human sexuality are prevalent in your locality?
14. Do you know of any self-confessed gay, lesbian or bisexual members in the churches in your diocese?
15. Do you foresee a situation when sexual deviance like homosexuality and bisexuality would cease to be taboos in the church or in the wider Nigerian society?
16. Do churches in your diocese run a sustained pattern of pre marriage and post marriage counseling for intending couples?

### APPENDIX 3

#### LIST OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

S/N	NAME	PLACE	DATE	AGE	OCCUPATION
1	Rt. Rev. Dr. S.C. Ezeofor	Agbarha-Otor	10/01/2014	47 yrs.	Bishop
2	Rt. Rev. David K. Bello	Agbarha-Otor	09/01 2014	60yrs	Bishop
3	Mrs. Josephine Umeh	Ibadan	19/02/2014	47yrs	School Teacher
4	Rev. Canon BulusTonack	Ibadan	20/02/2014	51yrs	Clergyman
5	Mrs. P. Usifoh	Ibadan	20/02/2014	39yrs	Civil Servant
6	Ven. Kefas K. Jatau	Ibadan	20/02/2014	60yrs	Clergyman
7	Rt. Rev. G. Okoroafor	Agbarha-Otor	09/02/2014	55yrs	Bishop
8	Barr. E.C. Oguelina	Ibadan	19/02/2014	58yrs	Lawyer
9	H. W. Juliet Rex- Chikezie	Ibadan	21/02/2014	64yrs	Chief Magistrate
10	Rt. Rev. Prof. Anthony Nkwoka	Agbarha-Otor	09/01/2014	69yrs	Bishop
11	Rt. Rev. D.F.A. Obiosa	Ibadan	21/02/2014	51yrs	Bishop
12	Rev. Chinedu Ogbonna	Ibadan	19/02/2014	38yrs	Clergyman
13	Very Rev. E. R. Komolafe	Ibadan	19/02/2014	63yrs	Clergyman
14	Rev. Daniel S. Yisa	Ibadan	19/02/2014	42yrs	Clergyman
15	Mrs. Saratu N.C. Daniel	Ibadan	20/02/2014	48yrs	Clergy wife
16	Barr. Muyiwa Sobo	Ibadan	20/02/2014	56yrs	Lawyer
17	Very Rev. Dr. P. E. Nmah	Awka	10/10/2016	54yrs	Lecturer
18	Rt. Rev. Dr. Michael Fape	Agbarha-Otor	10/01/2014	55yrs	Bishop
19	Ven. Friday T.J. Eretoru	Ibadan	20/20/2014	50yrs	Clergyman
20	Barr. A. B. Olabisi	Ibadan	19/02/2014	61yrs	Lawyer
21	Rt. Rev. Tubokosemie Abere	Agbarha-Otor	09/01/2014	64yrs	Bishop
22	Mrs. Harriet A. Oguike	Ibadan	20/02/2014	64yrs	Retired Teacher
23	Dr. Mrs. A. Afiesimama	Ibadan	20/02/2014	52yrs	Senior Lecturer

24	Rt. Rev. Daniel N. Olinya	Agbarha-Otor	09/01/2014	47yrs	Bishop
25	Hon. Johnson A. Bankole	Ibadan	19/02/2014	71yrs	Politician
26	Sir K. C. Olemeforo	Ibadan	20/02/2014	54yrs	Lawyer
27	Rev. Peter Chinyemugo	Ibadan	19/02/2014	40yrs	Clergyman
28	Mrs. C. O. Okoye	Ibadan	20/02/2014	48yrs	Civil Servant
29	Ven. Jonathan C. Ekechukwu	Ibadan	19/02/2014	50yrs	Clergyman
30	Rev. Canon Chike Samuelson	Ibadan	19/02/2014	57yrs	Clergyman
31	Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu	Agbarha-Otor	08/01/2014	56yrs	Bishop
32	Sir M. Mzomah	Ibadan	20/02/2014	57yrs	Lawyer
33	Rev. Canon John A. Omotoso	Ibadan	19/02/2014	44yrs	Clergyman
34	Ven. E. T. C. Ifediora	Ibadan	19/02/2014	46yrs	Clergyman
35	Ven. H. O. Adams	Ibadan	20/02/2014	57yrs	Clergyman
36	Mrs. J. B. Omole	Ibadan	19/02/2014	49yrs	Clergy wife
37	Rt. Rev. J. O. Akinola	Agbarha-Otor	10/01/2014	68yrs	Bishop
38	Mrs. Eileen A. Osuagwu	Ibadan	20/02/2014	43yrs	Civil Servant
39	Rt. Rev. Olumuyiwa Ajayi	Agbarha-Otor	09/01/2014	46yrs	Bishop
40	Rt. Rev. S. O. Oke	Agbarha-Otor	10/01/2014	67yrs	Bishop



