

**“FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN – THE TRAVAILS AND TRIUMPHS OF FAITH”, PUBLIC LECTURE DELIVERED BY CHIEF WOLE OLANIPEKUN, CFR, SAN, LL.D, D.LITT, FCIArb., FNIALS,<sup>1\*</sup> AT THE VALEDICTORY SERVICE PUBLIC LECTURE, IN HONOUR OF HIS GRACE, THE MOST REVEREND DR. JOSEPH OLATUNJI AKINFENWA, DD., Ph.D, FICAT, AT TRENCHARD HALL, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, ON 20TH MAY, 2026**

## **1.0 PROLOGUE**

- 1.1 Nowadays, an evolving culture, a most welcome and commendable one indeed, is the celebration of accomplished leaders of thought and statesmen within the academia, judiciary, clergy, industry, etc., through public lectures on topical and contemporary issues whenever they are retiring or bowing out of service. Thus, it was not a surprise to me when, sometime in **January** this year, I received a telephone call from the **Honourable Justice H. M. Ogunwumiju, JSC, the Chancellor of the Diocese of Ibadan, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)**, passionately pleading that she needed a request from me and that she would not want me to decline her supplication, to wit, that she would want me to come and deliver a public lecture in honour of an iconic clergyman who has served in the Vineyard for decades, and would be retiring in **May 2026**, on the attainment of age **70 - The Most Reverend Dr. Joseph Olatunji Akinfenwa**.
- 1.2 While I unhesitatingly gave my nod to the request for several reasons, which I will unveil later in this lecture, a follow-up letter dated **4<sup>th</sup> February, 2026**, signed by **Ven. Oredein Opeoluwa A.**, for the **Organizing Committee**, was received in my office on **6<sup>th</sup> February, 2026**. In effect, I got a double-barrel invitation for this epochal event. But let me quickly add that neither of the two invitations, informal and formal, conscripted me to any particular topic, as I was given the freewill, or do I say latitude, to pick my own topic. While this might appear alluring, nevertheless, it was also an onerous task by itself, as it was not easy to zero in on a particular subject, considering the several competing themes that agitated my mind.

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- 1.3 However, after some soul-searching reflections, I came up with the idea of this topic, that is, “**From The Cross To The Crown – The Travails and Triumphs of Faith**”. Even at that, I still nursed a lot of agitations within me, bearing in mind the fact that the topic encapsulates the core denominators of our **faith** and covers a wide range of what we represent and stand for. Arising from this was the trepidation whether I would not be ‘**casting pebbles upon Everest**’, that is, whether I am a fit and proper person to pontificate on this theme to an audience which is majorly constituted by the clergy, having not been trained and certified as one of them at the Seminary, or having not been ordained or consecrated as a Bishop or Archbishop! It was in the course of this apprehension that I re-echoed the rhetorical question of the Israelites of old as to “**whether Saul is also among the Prophets?**”<sup>2</sup> Having said this, let me state humbly that **whether or not I am among the Bishops, Clergy or Prophets, I have been saddled with a responsibility and given an assignment**; therefore, I am under a duty, a bounden one for that matter, to foray into the topic, with a caveat that the audience should accept me as I am, not minding my seeming limitations.
- 1.4 Permit me, therefore, to stand as a matter of duty, affection and utmost reverence for **His Grace, The Most Rev’d Dr. J. O. Akinfenwa**, a quintessential **Clergy**, to deliver this august Valedictory Service Public Lecture. I do this, bearing in mind, the consortiums, the galaxy, and the distinguished cornucopia of erudite clergy here today, whose strap of theological profundity I am unfit to unloose, and whose intellectual giantry and versatility would enthrall any of the world’s most gifted minds.

## 2.0 DECRYPTING THE THEMATIC ANCHORS

- 2.1 The theme of this Public Lecture, “**From the Cross to the Crown – The Travails and Triumphs of Faith**,” is firmly anchored on certain key words that are far from casual embellishments. These words form the very architecture upon which the entire discourse stands, for **words** build **thoughts**, **thoughts** construct **concepts**, and **concepts** unveil the **truth**. Thus, to decrypt this theme is not to indulge in semantic ornamentation, but to excavate the deep spiritual, moral, and historical resonances woven into its anchor-terms: **Cross, Crown, Travails, Triumphs**, and **Faith**. In their sacred convergence lies the interpretive

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 10: 11, Holy Bible, (King James Version), first published in 1611

heart of this address, for together they map the believer's odyssey, from the heaviness of suffering to the radiance of glory, from the travailing **Cross** to the triumphant **Crown**.

### 3.0 THE CROSS: THE MEASURED WEIGHT AND BURDEN OF DIVINE MANDATE

- 3.1 **Merriam-Webster Dictionary** defines the **Cross** as “*a structure consisting of an upright with a transverse beam used especially by the ancient Romans for execution...an affliction that tries one's virtue, steadfastness, or patience...*”<sup>3</sup>

To my mind, a **Cross** stands as the primordial symbol of sacrifice, the weight under which every believer learns the lexicon of obedience, a consecrated yoke, often appearing as a debris of circumstance that presses upon the soul that stretches the fibres of human endurance.

- 3.2 Truth is, **Christ** did not merely carry *His Cross*, He *embraced* it, lifting it upon His shoulders with the assurance that He was/is lifting the entire sorrow of creation. The wood that grazed His torn skin was more than timber; it was the accumulated griefs of humanity, the distilled weight of every man's hidden agony. In that slow, staggering ascent to **Golgotha**, the **Cross** became the world's most solemn metaphor: that suffering is not an interruption of divine purpose but its crucible; that glory is never divorced from agony; that the path to the **Crown** invariably winds through the valley of travails. The **Holy Writ** affirms this when **Jesus Christ** commands, “*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*”<sup>4</sup> In this solemn charge, Christ summons not to ornament but to ordeal; inviting every believer to step into the sacred **paradox** where **pain** becomes **prophecy**, **scars** become **evidence**, and the **weight** of the **Cross** becomes the uterus of **Triumph**. The **Cross** becomes the believer's assigned burden. Thus, a cross is an unseen weighty burden that every God-ordained servant painfully bears with sobriety.

- 3.3 It can safely be submitted that the Cross finds no explicit or emphatic expression across the letters, chapters, and pages of the Old Testament, but it becomes a conspicuous symbol in the New Testament; a symbol which has

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<sup>3</sup> **Merriam-Webster**, 'Cross' Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary (2026)  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cross>, accessed 31st March, 2026.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; and Luke 9:23

now been intrinsically and extrinsically tied not only to Jesus Christ, but also to the Church and Christendom. In this wise, it is now an emblem of travails, redemption, healing, salvation, and restoration. Though not expressly so mentioned in the Old Testament, its resonance could be typologically presumed, discerned, and figured out in the expressive episodes recorded in the Book of Numbers, arising from where the Israelites complained against God and Moses as they journeyed from Mount Hor towards the Red Sea, murmuring against God and Moses, and expressing disdain and dissatisfaction about the manna provided by God. The Bible says : **“So the Lord sent venomous snakes among the people, and many Israelites were bitten and died.”**<sup>5</sup> Upon Moses’ interception, God again issued a supernatural injunction, directing that Moses: **“... Make a Bronze serpent and mount it on a rod/pole; when anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live”**.<sup>6</sup> Foreshadowing the redemption of the world, Jesus exclaimed: **“And as Moses lifted up the Snakes in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up”**<sup>7</sup>. This declaration, no doubt, reconciles the seeming gulf between the actual mention of the word Cross in the Old Testament, whereas in the New Testament it has become a symbolic emblem.

## **MARTYRDOM: THE WEIGHTIEST CROSS AND BURDEN OF FAITH**

- 3.4 In a stunning paradox, **Jesus Christ** invites His followers into a burden that is both weighty and gentle when he said: **“My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”**<sup>8</sup> By the same token, **Apostle Paul** described his apostolic mandate as a sacred encumbrance, saying, **“Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”**<sup>9</sup> In the context of our **faith** as Christians, jointly and or severally, irrespective of our callings, professions, vocations, expertise, etc., **Cross** is inseparable from the **persecution that underpins consecration**, for every genuine mandate attracts adversaries, every divine assignment summons oppositions, and every enthronement upon the watchtower of the Church awakens forces that resist the light. The early Church faced monumental persecutions and tribulations; the story has not changed till now.

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<sup>5</sup> Numbers 21: 4-6

<sup>6</sup> Numbers 21: 6-9

<sup>7</sup> John 3:14-15

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 11:30

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:16

3.5 Let us pause here to peep into the Old Testament, particularly the biblical stories of **Abraham and Isaac; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; Daniel; Prophet Elijah** against **Ahab and Jezebel**. The essence of so doing is to bring to the fore that while men of **faith**, starting from the days of yore or creation of man, had always suffered and carried excruciating burdens for their **faith**, the fact remains that martyrdom, as we know it today, or in Christendom started from the embracement of the Christian **faith**, after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. As between **Abraham** and **Isaac**, **God** tested **Abraham's faith** by commanding him to sacrifice his only son, and **Abraham** obeyed. In his pure childish innocence, **Isaac** kept on asking his father where the lamb for the sacrifice was tied, and **Abraham** response to him, through **faith**, was that: **"The Lord will provide for the sacrifice"**.<sup>10</sup> While God provided a 'lamb' for the sacrifice he commanded Abraham to make in the Old Testament, and saved Isaac from being slain, that same God surrendered His only Son, Jesus, as the sacrificial 'Lamb', under the new dispensation! The biblical story of **Shadrach, Meshach** and **Abednego** is well known to any average Christian. In summary, King Nebuchadnezzar, decreed that the three Hebrew young men be cast into the burning fiery furnace because of their stern refusal to worship any other god than the true God. Miraculously, the Son of Man, who was later sacrificed for mankind in the New Testament was the one who rescued these three Hebrews and did not allow the fire to touch them. Even the heathen king recognized the presence of Jesus, as the Son of God who rescued the three folk as he exclaimed **"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God"**<sup>11</sup> For **Daniel**, he was also cast into the den of lions, but God sent his Angel to him to shut the lions' mouths, and could not hurt him by any means.<sup>12</sup> Prophet **Elijah** is often regarded as the greatest prophet in the Old Testament; but at a point in time, he became disillusioned, and prayed God to **"take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers..."**. However, God did not allow him to be 'martyred' in the hands of **Ahab** and **Jezebel**; rather, God transited him to Heaven through a **chariot of fire**.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 22:7-8

<sup>11</sup> Daniel 3:24-25

<sup>12</sup> Daniel 6: 22

<sup>13</sup> '2 King 2: 11

- 3.6 Juxtaposing the topic of this discourse with all the stories, narratives and happenings in the Old Testament, it can be safely submitted that Jesus, the Son of Man assisted, bailed out, curated and rescued the fathers or men of **faith**, starting from **Abraham**, to **Isaac**, to **Jacob**, running through **Moses**, to **Joshua**, oscillating to **Samuel** and the **Judges**, cascading to **David**, **Solomon** and the Prophets, ending in **Malachai**, without any one of them being martyred, as He stood in gap for them. Contrariwise, in the New Testament, Jesus himself carried and bore his own Cross; he was put under much tribulations and travails; he was insulted, humiliated, lied against, beaten, and finally nailed on the Cross, after which came His triumph, as He swallowed death in victory.<sup>14</sup> At **Eucharist**, we members of the **Anglican Communion**, usually confess the mystery of our **faith**, that is, "**Christ has died; Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.**"<sup>15</sup>
- 3.7 Martyrdom as we know or classify it today, started from immediately after the resurrection of Christ and His ascension to Heaven, when the disciples, inspired and strengthened by the Holy Spirit started preaching Christ who was dead, who had risen, and who would come again; presenting Him as the **author** and **finisher** of our **faith**,<sup>16</sup> without any timidity, shyness, reservation, restriction, restraint, limitation, barrier, impediment, cowardice, fear, and bias. Stunned by the boldness and temerity of the Apostles and disciples of old, who were determined to go through the crucibles and travails of the Cross, thoroughly being convinced that Christ was, and remains the way, the truth and the life<sup>17</sup>, the powers-that-be in those days, including the Jews themselves, started persecuting, victimizing, haunting and chasing them all over, leading to a host of them being killed and martyred. Connecting the theme of this lecture to some of the martyrs of old, permit us to identify a few of them.
- 3.8 **Stephen**,<sup>18</sup> **the first martyr**, stood as a quintessential sentinel of the Christian **faith**, refusing to deny the cross even as stones rained upon him; rather, the

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 15: 54

<sup>15</sup> Anglican Communion, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (Church House Publishing, 2000) Eucharistic Acclamation.

<sup>16</sup> Hebrew 12: 2

<sup>17</sup> John 14:6

<sup>18</sup> Acts 7:55-56; Stephen's death ignited a wave of persecution in Jerusalem. Acts records that immediately after his martyrdom, "*the church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution... all the believers, except the apostles, were scattered*" into Judea and Samaria.

Scriptures capture that he lifted his eyes towards the heavens and beheld the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, thus sealing his witness not with ink and paper, but with his own blood. His death became the first fiery seal upon the Church's scroll of tribulation.

- 3.9 Likewise, **Peter**, the apostolic **rock upon which Christ promised to build His Church**,<sup>19</sup> bore the cross of discipleship to its ultimate consummation. He, who once trembled before a servant-girl and denied Jesus Christ three times before the cock crowed, grew into a mighty oak of conviction, and became a Patriarch of unshaken fidelity to the Christian **faith**. It is submitted that his marathon homily on the Day of Pentecost coincided with the birth of the Church or vice versa. When the hour of his martyrdom came, he *refused* to dilute the message he preached and resisted the utmost urge to deny the **Master** he loved. Records hold that **Peter**, in profound humility, requested to be crucified **head-downwards**, deeming himself unworthy to die in the same posture as **Christ, his Master. His cross was, therefore, inverted yet exalted**. He became a symbol that **faithfulness sometimes demands death**, and that death itself becomes a pulpit from which the **Gospel** thunders most powerfully.<sup>20</sup>
- 3.10 **James, the son of Zebedee**, one of the innermost circle of Christ who also beheld the **Transfiguration**, equally drank the cup of martyrdom. The Scriptures record that **King Herod Agrippa “put James the brother of John to death with the sword”**, a beheading carried out in **Jerusalem** around **AD 44**, a stark reminder that proximity to Christ often meant proximity to the Cross.<sup>21</sup>
- 3.11 **Andrew**, the brother of **Peter** and the first to proclaim “**We have found the Messiah,**” was **crucified on an X-shaped Cross** in **Greece**, after being severely scourged. Records hold that he greeted the instrument of his execution with serenity, declaring, “**I have long desired and expected this happy hour.**” Bound rather than nailed to prolong his agony, he continued preaching to his executioners for two days until he slept in the Lord.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew 16:18, Jesus says to Peter: “*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail.*”

<sup>20</sup> John 21:18-19; Early Christian tradition unanimously holds that Peter was executed in Rome during Emperor Nero's brutal persecution following the Great Fire of AD 64.

<sup>21</sup> Acts 12:2

<sup>22</sup> GotQuestions Ministries, 'Does the Bible record the death of the apostles? How did each of the apostles die?' (GotQuestions.org, n.d.) <<https://www.gotquestions.org/apostles-die.html>> accessed **4 March 2026**

- 3.12 **Bartholomew (Nathanael)**, remembered for his guileless heart, carried the **Gospel** into **Armenia**. There, the fury of opposition rose against him, and he was **flayed alive before being beheaded** - one of the most brutal martyrdoms in apostolic history. His flesh was torn from him as testimony that the **faith** he professed was no borrowed conviction but a truth worth dying for, and his blood became the seed of a Christian lineage that still reveres him to this day.<sup>23</sup>
- 3.13 **Thomas**, whose journey was from doubt to devotion has steadied generations, preached the Gospel in **India**, and ministered among the communities of **Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu**, and in the region of **Mylapore**, where his preaching provoked fierce opposition. His earthly ministry culminated in **death by the thrust of a spear**, pierced by those to whom he had proclaimed the risen Christ. In the very land where he sowed the seeds of what would become the **ancient Mar Thoma (Thomas Christian) tradition**, he sealed his witness with his own blood, dying around **AD 72** at **St. Thomas Mount**.<sup>24</sup>
- 3.14 **Matthew**, the former tax collector turned evangelist, was martyred in **Ethiopia**. Record holds that he was **stabbed to death by sword** while celebrating worship and slain at the altar for the **faith** he encountered at a tax booth. His death stands as a solemn testament that the Gospel he proclaimed was not an inherited recital, but a conviction sealed in blood.<sup>25</sup>
- 3.15 **James the Just**, the brother of the Lord and pillar of the **Jerusalem Church**, stands among the earliest martyrs. According to the earliest Christian historical witnesses, he was **thrown from the pinnacle of the Temple**, and when he survived the fall, he was **beaten to death with a fuller's club**, dying with prayers on his lips; interceding, even in his final breath, for the very people who struck him down.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Saint Bartholomew' (*Britannica*, 2026)

<<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Bartholomew>> accessed **4 March 2026**.

<sup>24</sup> *Wikipedia*, 'Thomas the Apostle' (*Wikipedia*, 2026) <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_the\\_Apostle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_the_Apostle)> accessed **4 March 2026**. (Particularly the account noting his missionary work in India and death by being pierced with spears at Mylapore.)

<sup>25</sup> *Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church*, 'How the Apostles Died' (*Saginaw St. Matthew's*, n.d.)

<<https://www.saginawstmatthews.org/how-the-apostles-died>> accessed **4 March 2026**.

<sup>26</sup> **Eusebius of Caesarea**, *Ecclesiastical History* (Book II, Chapter 23), as preserved in

*Bible Hub*, 'The Martyrdom of James, who was Called the Brother of the Lord'

<[https://biblehub.com/library/pamphilus/church\\_history/chapter\\_xxiii\\_the\\_martyrdom\\_of\\_james.htm](https://biblehub.com/library/pamphilus/church_history/chapter_xxiii_the_martyrdom_of_james.htm)>

- 3.16 **Matthias**, chosen to replace Judas, also bore witness unto death. Records recount that he was **stoned and then beheaded**, murdered because he refused to renounce the Gospel he had embraced.<sup>27</sup> His martyrdom stands as a solemn reminder that the apostolic call was sealed, nay, not by comfort, but by costly fidelity.
- 3.17 **Simon the Zealot**, aflame with apostolic zeal, carried the Gospel into the eastern reaches of the ancient world, where early records hold that he preached alongside **Jude** in **Persia**. He met a savage end, **martyred by being sawn in half**, dying with the same intensity of conviction that once animated his fierce political passions, the same fervour with which he once sought political liberation, now transformed into a passion for the liberation of souls.<sup>28</sup>
- 3.18 **Jude (Thaddaeus)**, the **faithful** companion of **Simon the Zealot** in mission, likewise sealed his testimony with blood. He was martyred in **Persia**, where he was struck down by arrows as he proclaimed the **Gospel** among hostile tribes, refusing to recant even in the shadow of death. His martyrdom stands as a testament to a **faith** that neither violence nor vengeance could silence.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.19 **Philip**, who espoused the **Gospel** to the **Ethiopian Eunuch**, met his earthly end in **Hierapolis**, in the ancient region of **Phrygia**, where he was **crucified or hanged by iron hooks**, suffering with unwavering resolve and refusing to recant even in the face of death. His martyrdom at Hierapolis became so widely revered that a fifth-century **martyrium** was later built on the site, confirming the depth of his early veneration among the Christian **faithful**.<sup>30</sup>

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accessed 4 March 2026; *Biblical Archaeology Society Library*, Amanda Kolson Hurley, 'The Last Days of James' <<https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/sidebar/the-last-days-of-james/>> accessed 4 March 2026.

<sup>27</sup> *GotQuestions Ministries*, 'Does the Bible record the death of the apostles? How did each of the apostles die?' (GotQuestions.org, n.d.) <<https://www.gotquestions.org/apostles-die.html>> accessed **4th March, 2026**.

<sup>28</sup> St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, '**St. Simon the Apostle**' (ap.church, n.d.) <<https://www.ap.church/saints/st-simon-the-apostle>> accessed **4th March, 2026**; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, '**Saint Simon the Apostle**' (Britannica, 2026) <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Simon-the-Apostle>> accessed **4th March, 2026**

<sup>29</sup> *GotQuestions Ministries*, '**Does the Bible record the death of the apostles? How did each of the apostles die?**' (GotQuestions.org, n.d.) <<https://www.gotquestions.org/apostles-die.html>> accessed **4th March, 2026**.

<sup>30</sup> *Groklopedia*, '**The Martyrdom of Saint Philip**' <[https://groklopedia.com/page/the\\_martyrdom\\_of\\_saint\\_philip](https://groklopedia.com/page/the_martyrdom_of_saint_philip)> accessed **4th March, 2026**.

3.20 Even **Apostle Paul**, the persecutor turned preacher, the theologian of grace, sealed his apostleship with his own blood as well. Under **Nero's** tyranny, he was **beheaded** by the **sword** in **Rome**, fulfilling his own prophecy: ***"I am already being poured out as a drink offering."***<sup>31</sup> Paul stated unequivocally to all who cared to listen that **he was not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ**.<sup>32</sup> He was very audacious, assiduous, deliberate, determined, intentional, courageous, persevering, unwavering and unperturbed. He was proudly awaiting the day of his offering, as eloquently stated by him that ***"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."***<sup>33</sup> The summary of this flawless prose by the foremost Apostle underpins the theme of this lecture— **"From the Cross to the Crown..."** – the travails we pass through as Christians, and the eternal bliss and triumph that await us hereafter.

3.21 Mention must be made of **Apostle John the Beloved**, who, though not eventually persecuted and killed like the several other Apostles, nevertheless, bore the burden of the **faith** under ferocious pressures. Traditions recall an attempted execution in **boiling oil** from which he was **miraculously preserved**. Thereafter, he was banished to the **Island of Patmos**, ***"for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus"***, where he received the visions of the Apocalypse, captured in **"The Book of Revelation"**.

## 4.0 THE TRAVAILS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

4.1 The story of the early Church is a narrative forged in the crucible of persecution, theological maturation, intellectual rigor, and canonical consolidation.<sup>34</sup> Its beginnings were marked not by institutional comfort but by existential confrontation, as the first Christian community, emerging from the

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<sup>31</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, ***Ecclesiastical History***, Book II, Chapter 25, as preserved in Bible Hub: **'The Persecution under Nero in which Paul and Peter were Honored at Rome with Martyrdom'**  
<[https://biblehub.com/library/pamphilus/church\\_history/chapter\\_xxv\\_the\\_persecution\\_under\\_nero.htm](https://biblehub.com/library/pamphilus/church_history/chapter_xxv_the_persecution_under_nero.htm)>  
accessed **4 March 2026**.

<sup>32</sup> Roman 1:16

<sup>33</sup> 2 Timothy 4:6-8

<sup>34</sup> See generally Eusebius of Caesarea, ***Ecclesiastical History*** (Andrew Louth ed, G A Williamson tr, Penguin Classics 2019); Henry Chadwick, ***The Early Church*** (rev edn, Penguin Books 2001);

ministry, death, and resurrection of **Jesus Christ**, found itself immediately embroiled in hostility from its religious contemporaries. **Jewish** authorities such as the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees**, who had earlier agitated for the crucifixion of **Christ**, turned their prosecutorial zeal towards His followers, initiating a season of repression that became the first chapter of Christian witness. This adversity, rather than extinguish the nascent movement, galvanized a community whose resolve was animated by the **Holy Spirit** and whose identity was anchored in fidelity to the teachings of **Christ**.<sup>35</sup>

4.2 As Christianity expanded beyond **Jerusalem** into the **Gentile** world, **Roman** imperial opposition succeeded Jewish hostility. Misunderstood and misrepresented, Christians were often scapegoated for political and or social reasons. The infamous persecution under **Emperor Nero**, who orchestrated the burning of **Rome** and blamed it upon **Christians**, resulted in the martyrdom of countless believers, including **Apostles Peter** and **Paul**.<sup>36</sup> Subsequent **Emperors: Domitian, Trajan, and Diocletian**; similarly viewed **Christian** refusal to worship the **Emperor** or participate in pagan rites as **sedition**.<sup>37</sup> These persecutions precipitated waves of forced migration, dispersing believers across continents and unintentionally accelerating the geographic spread of the gospel. In this context, **Tertullian's** immortal assertion; "*sanguis martyrum semen ecclesiae*" translated as, "**the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church**";<sup>38</sup> ceased to be rhetoric, and it became historical description, as **martyrdom** became the soil upon which Christian expansion was cultivated.

4.3 The sustained pressure of persecution produced another monumental development: the rise of Christian apologetics. As believers faced accusations ranging from political disloyalty to theological absurdity, a cadre of brilliant scholars rose to defend and articulate the **faith**. Many of the most formidable apologists emerged from Africa, whose intellectual contributions

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<sup>35</sup> J N D Kelly, **Early Christian Doctrines** (5th edn, A&C Black 2000); Jaroslav Pelikan, **The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol 1 – The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)** (University of Chicago Press 1971); Bruce M Metzger, **The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance** (Oxford University Press 1987)

<sup>36</sup> See *Tacitus, Annals* (A J Woodman tr, Hackett Publishing 2004) Bk 15, chs 38–44; *Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History* (Andrew Louth ed, G A Williamson tr, Penguin Classics 2019) Bk 2, chs 25–26

<sup>37</sup> *Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History* (Andrew Louth ed, G A Williamson tr, Penguin Classics 2019) Bk 3, chs 17, 19–20 (on Domitian, Trajan, and early imperial persecutions);

<sup>38</sup> **Early Christian Doctrines** (5th edn, A&C Black 2000) 1–10; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* (c AD 197) ch 50 (the maxim "*sanguis martyrum semen ecclesiae*")

became indispensable to the global church. Figures such as **Tertullian**, father of Latin theology; **Cyprian of Carthage**, martyr-bishop of ecclesial unity;<sup>39</sup> **Origen**, the prodigious exegete of Alexandria; **Athanasius**, the unyielding defender of **Nicene orthodoxy**;<sup>40</sup> and **Augustine of Hippo**, whose theological imagination continues to shape global Christianity.<sup>41</sup> Their contributions reveal that Africa was not a late recipient of the gospel but one of its **first universities**, one of its earliest sanctuaries of doctrinal refinement, and one of its deepest wells of orthodoxy. Thus, **Christianity**, born in the hills of **Judea**, named in **Antioch**, nourished by the courage of early believers, and intellectually fortified on African soil, stands as a global, spirit-breathed heritage whose origins are as divine as they are historical, and whose continuity has been **faithfully** preserved from **Jerusalem** to the world, across centuries of enduring witness. In light of this, Africa was not a peripheral node but a principal engine of early Christian thought, a cradle in which doctrinal clarity and theological profundity were cultivated.<sup>42</sup>

4.4 A decisive turning point arrived in the **4th Century** through **Emperor Constantine's** conversion.<sup>43</sup> After reportedly witnessing a revelatory sign before the Battle of the **Milvian Bridge**, he emerged victorious and immediately adopted policies favorable to **Christianity**. The **Edict of Milan** transformed the **faith** from *religio illicita* into *religio licita*,<sup>44</sup> granting Christians legal recognition, restitution of confiscated properties, exemption from certain taxes, and official protection. **Sunday** was established as a rest day across the empire, and the **Church** entered into a new era of **State Partnership**. What persecution could not destroy, political acceptance now repositioned at the center of imperial consciousness.

4.5 However, the legitimacy accorded the Church brought new internal storms. Freedom from external hostility exposed latent theological tensions, giving rise

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<sup>39</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*; Origen, **Contra Celsum** (Henry Chadwick tr, Cambridge University Press 1953);

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius, **On the Incarnation** (John Behr ed, St Vladimir's Seminary Press 2011)

<sup>41</sup> Augustine of Hippo, **Confessions** (Henry Chadwick tr, Oxford University Press 1991) and **City of God** (R W Dyson ed, Cambridge University Press 1998).

<sup>42</sup> Thomas C. Oden, **How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity** (IVP Academic 2007); David Wilhite, **Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition** (Routledge 2017)

<sup>43</sup> See Eusebius of Caesarea, **Ecclesiastical History** (Andrew Louth ed, G A Williamson tr, Penguin Classics 2019) bk 9–10 (on Constantine's conversion and legal reforms)

<sup>44</sup> Lactantius, **On the Deaths of the Persecutors** (J L Creed ed, Clarendon Press 1984) ch 44

to significant doctrinal controversies. **Donatism** questioned the legitimacy of clergy who faltered under persecution; **Marcionism** sought to sever the **Old Testament** from the Christian Canon; and **Arianism**, led by the **Presbyter Arius**, challenged the **co-eternity and full divinity of Christ**.<sup>45</sup> These crises compelled the **Church** to convene ecumenical **Councils**; global assemblies of **Bishops** tasked with articulating authoritative **Doctrine**.<sup>46</sup>

- 4.6 Fast forward, the **First Council of Nicaea (AD 325)** condemned **Arianism** and produced the **Nicene Creed**,<sup>47</sup> affirming on the question of “**Who is Christ?**” **Christ is homoousios**; that is, “**of the same substance with the Father**”. Because of the centrality of the Nicene Creed to our **faith**, and bearing in mind the imperatives of the wordings which we confess by **faith** so frequently, particularly, during **Eucharist** (particularly in the Anglican Communion), we will treat it under a different sub-heading, subsequently hereafter.
- 4.7 Subsequent **Councils** in **Constantinople (AD 381)**, **Ephesus (AD 431)**, and **Chalcedon (AD 451)**<sup>48</sup> further clarified the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the unified yet distinct human and divine natures of Christ. Through these **Councils**, Christian orthodoxy emerged with structural precision and theological unity. The formative centuries of the **Church** also witnessed the monumental task of canonizing the Scriptures. With apostolic witnesses dying and heretical writings proliferating, it became necessary to determine which texts truly bore divine inspiration. For the **Old Testament**, the **Jewish Council of Yavneh (AD 90–91)** affirmed the books recognized across centuries of **Hebrew** tradition, yielding **thirty-nine Canonical books** characterized by **prophetic authenticity, doctrinal purity, and historical reliability**.<sup>49</sup> For the **New Testament**, the early **Church** applied rigorous criteria: apostolic authorship or direct apostolic connection, doctrinal consistency with the teachings of **Christ**, immunity from heresy, and widespread liturgical use. These standards culminated in the **Council of Carthage (AD 307)**, which ratified the **twenty-seven books**, now universally recognized as the **New Testament**

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<sup>45</sup> **The Early Church** (rev edn, Penguin Books 2001) 122–40; J N D Kelly, **Early Christian Doctrines** (5th edn, A&C Black 2000) 77–120

<sup>46</sup> R P C Hanson, **The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381** (T&T Clark 1988)

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Smith (ed), **History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**, by **Joseph Smith the Prophet**, vol 1 (2nd edn, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1963) LXXXIII–LXXXIV

<sup>48</sup> J N D Kelly, **Early Christian Doctrines** (5th edn, A&C Black 2000) 205–70

<sup>49</sup> **The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon** (rev edn, Hendrickson 1995) 37–114; F F Bruce, **The Canon of Scripture** (Inter-Varsity Press 1988) 116–235.

**Canon.**<sup>50</sup> Alongside these canonical texts, the **Church** also evaluated pseudepigraphal works, spurious writings falsely attributed to biblical figures, and apocryphal books, which, though edifying, lacked sufficient evidence of divine inspiration. While the **Protestant Reformation** excluded the **apocrypha** from its canon, the **Roman Catholic Church** retained them as deuterocanonical, a divergence that endures today.<sup>51</sup>

- 4.8 Through persecution, theological contestation, intellectual refinement, conciliar deliberation, and canonical definition, the Early Church established the doctrinal foundations upon which global Christianity stands. Its story is one of divine providence operating through human struggle, of **faith** shaped at the intersection of revelation and history, and of a community whose endurance under fire became the crucible of its universality. The enduring legacy of these early centuries continues to shape Christian identity, doctrine, worship, and global witness, binding the contemporary church to a heritage, both ancient and eternal.

## 5.0 THE NICENE CREED AND THE COSMOLOGY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

- 5.1 For ease of reference, coupled with my humble attempt at expatiating on the solemn words of the **Nicene Creed** as will be demonstrated anon. The **Creed** reads thus:

***“We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us all, and for our salvation he came down from heaven; and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. On the third day he rose from the dead in accordance with the***

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<sup>50</sup> Bruce M Metzger, **The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance** (Oxford University Press 1987) 90–269;

<sup>51</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, **The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol 1 – The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)** (University of Chicago Press 1971) 213–60; RPC Hanson,

*scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his Kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.*

*We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge and confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.”<sup>52</sup>*

- 5.2 The **Nicene Creed** did not just invent the concept of **God the Father, God the Son** and **God the Holy Spirit**, for it is also our belief as Christians that right from the beginning, **God the Father, God the Son** and **God the Holy Spirit**, being the same, inseparable and indivisible God (Triune God), exist(s) forever more; from eternity to eternity. **Jesus** did not mince words when He commanded his disciples to go into the world and baptize believers in the name of **God the Father, God the Son** and **God the Holy Spirit**.<sup>53</sup> In the beginning, God the Father enthused, beckoning to God the Son and God the Holy Spirit: **“Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness...”**<sup>54</sup> In that same beginning, after creation, the earth was void and without form, and darkness was upon the surface of the deep; but the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said **“Let there be light: and there was light...”**<sup>55</sup> Still, about the Holy Spirit, Moses said concerning Him, in his response to God's instruction, that **“I will not go except your Spirit goes with me.”**<sup>56</sup> Prophet Isaiah wrote concerning the **Holy Spirit** thus: **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...”**<sup>57</sup> Coincidentally, or, do I say, by divine fixation, this was the same text of the Old Testament which Jesus first read in the temple at the beginning of His earthly ministry.<sup>58</sup> Further, on the **Holy Spirit**, the **Psalmist** fervently prays thus: **“...take not thy Holy Spirit from me”**.<sup>59</sup> I wonder if any of the people outside

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<sup>52</sup> See: [https://www.bcponline.org/General/nicene\\_creed.html](https://www.bcponline.org/General/nicene_creed.html), accessed on May 7, 2026; see also: Hist. Christian Councils (Hefele), p. 294

<sup>53</sup> Matthew 28: 19

<sup>54</sup> Genesis 1: 26

<sup>55</sup> Genesis 1:2

<sup>56</sup> Exodus 33:14

<sup>57</sup> Isaiah 61:9

<sup>58</sup> Luke 4:18

<sup>59</sup> Psalm 51: 11

the Christian **faith** who criticize or mock the concept of **God the Father, God the Son** or **God the Holy Spirit** would pray, contrary to the supplication of the **Psalmist** that **God** should take away the **Holy Spirit** from him or her!

- 5.3 The **Nicene Creed** acknowledged, asserted and confessed the **triune** nature of God; **(The Trinity) - God the father, God the Son** and **God the Holy Spirit**; a concept which appears confusing and irreconcilable to the unbelievers, by then, and till now. Yet, there are very unassailable, glaring, convincing and esoteric imperatives upon which the **Creed** resonates or revolves. The **Creed** was not merely set out to unveil some poetic dexterities or talents of the era, but to unfurl ontology in its truest sense; **a total explanation of the reality behind our existence**. The **God of our Faith**, who is the **God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**,<sup>60</sup> and who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus, is acknowledged by the Creed as the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen; **this Creed demonstrates** the almightiness of the Almighty God and the awesomeness of all His creation. All that He created right from the beginning **works** perfectly well without any repairs, maintenance, or periodic revision by reason of human exigencies. Everything He made at the dawn of time remains in flawless operation, without periodic repairs, constant recalibration, turnaround maintenance, or emergency intervention.
- 5.4 Let us take the Sun and Moon (the most majestic pair of nature's witnesses) as examples. The Sun rises and sets every day; **so also does the Moon**. It has not been announced, noticed, or experienced that either or both of them **has/have failed** to rise or set, whether due to war, repairs, public holidays, traffic/hold-ups, conspiracies of powerful nations and men, maintenance, mergers and acquisitions—even by other creatures. As Christians, we are not unmindful of the brief heavenly 'interruption' through the instrumentality of Joshua, when he commanded thus: ***"...Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."*** The Bible records further that ***"there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."***<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Exodus 3: 6; 15; 16; Exodus 4:5

<sup>61</sup> Joshua 10: 12-14

- 5.5 The Romans worshipped so many gods, including the god of the Sun (Sol) and the god of the Moon (Luna), not appreciating until the fullness of time that the God of our **faith** is the Maker and God of the Sun, and also of the Moon. The Sun is the main source of energy known to man; others include water, wind, etc. Humanity consumes some freely, as God does not charge us or place tariffs on our consumption of light, oxygen, water, etc. Contrariwise, **governments** all over the world levy us for the consumption of power, water, and all other derivable energies tapped from the main sources – the Sun, Water, Wind, etc. The recent **invasion** of Venezuela by the United States of America, and the eventual capture of her President, Nicolás Maduro (leading to his transportation to the USA), was/is all about energy – oil; that is, who maximises or even monopolises the oil resources of Venezuela.<sup>62</sup> Shorn of other excuses, the ongoing war between **Israel** and the **United States** on the one hand, and **Iran** on the other hand, leading to the long anxieties surrounding the **Strait of Hormuz**,<sup>63</sup> is a reminder that all human powers and authorities, without any exception, usually vex, feud, rage, exploit, or even terrorise, in respect of what divine power freely distributes through God's unending kindness, benevolence, and righteousness.
- 5.6 Throughout the ages, and till now, the Sun has never negotiated prices, the Moon has never threatened **an** embargo, and the Wind has not at any time demanded any tariff. Throughout the ages, and even till now, the Sun has never negotiated prices, the Moon has never threatened an embargo, and the Wind has not at any time demanded any tariff. For the oxygen which humanity and governments freely obtain from the air, citizens are heavily charged tariffs in different hospitals all over the world. Assuming God imposes tariffs on the Sun and Moon, levies carbon taxes on continents, and charges

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<sup>62</sup> Associated Press, 'What We Know About a US Strike That Captured Venezuela's Maduro' (3 January 2026) <<https://apnews.com/article/venezuela-us-maduro-what-to-know-a57528ff315a7f70ed51a1721f5e0bc2>> accessed 8 May 2026; William Christou and Rachel Hall, 'Why Has the US Captured Venezuela's President and What Happens Next?' *The Guardian* (5 January 2026) <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/03/why-trump-us-attacked-caracas-captured-venezuela-president-nicolas-maduro>> accessed 8 May 2026.

<sup>63</sup> See 'US, Iran Clash in Hormuz as War Escalates: What Happened and Why It Matters' Al Jazeera (8 May, 2026), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/5/8/us-iran-clash-in-hormuz-as-war-escalates-what-happened-why-it-matters>, accessed on May 8, 2026; Tucker Reals and Alex Sundby, 'U.S. Launches "Self-Defense Strikes" on Iran after Fire in Strait of Hormuz' CBS News (8 May, 2026); Jon Gambrell and Jamey Keaten, 'US-Iran War Disrupts Shipping through Strait of Hormuz' Associated Press (23 April, 2026); United Nations, 'Ceasefire Extension Offers Diplomatic Opening, but Tensions Persist in Strait of Hormuz' UN News (22 April, 2026); and Congressional Research Service, 'Iran Conflict and the Strait of Hormuz: Impacts on Oil, Gas, and Other Commodities' (11 March, 2026)

for photosynthesis, rainfall, gravity, respiration, etc., which of the nations of the world could afford them? Can we ever imagine what would then be the annual budget of God for running and controlling the entire world? What would be the assessed tax liability of the so-called developed countries of the world, including the **USA, U.K., China, Russia, Germany, Canada**, etc.? Most soberingly, would any of the third-world countries, including Nigeria, survive within the first fiscal quarter?

- 5.7 The good news is that the God of our **Faith** who the Nicene Creed asserts as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, rules, not as a revenue seeker, but as a Providential Giver. His omnipotence expresses itself not in abstraction and extraction, but in generosity; not in issuing out invoices, but through His heritage.
- 5.8 At this stage, let us pause to look at the soul-lifting and heavenly-revealing lyrics of that evergreen song titled **“How Great Thou Art”**,<sup>64</sup> and for the brevity of time, beam our inner searchlight to stanza one thereof which reads thus: **“O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow’r throughout, the Universe displayed...”** The song invites the soul to cast a deep gaze at the wonders, vastness and splendour of the created order of nature, and appreciate the visible grandeur and majesty of God; recalling the mystery that the same God who laid the foundations of the earth is not distant from it, and that across this arc, humanity is called upon to embrace the universe, not as a closed system of chance, scarcity, and exploitation, but as an open manuscript of divine generosity, power and love to sustain humanity.
- 5.9 Coming nearer home, our own indefatigable **King Sunny Ade (KSA)**, would appear to have reasoned along the same plane as **Carl Gustav Boberg** in composing his timeless lyrics titled **“The Merciful God.”**<sup>65</sup> In the immutable rendition, he enthused thus: **“A ngba ’tegun s’ára, a mọ̀ ‘bi t’ó ti wá; orísun omi là mọ̀, à mọ̀ ‘bi òjò ti wá... ifẹ́ tó lù’wa f’ẹ̀wà, ó pọ̀ lá pọ̀jù láyẹ ní bí...”**; literally translated into English, meaning thus: **“We revel in maximizing the**

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<sup>64</sup> Carl G Boberg, ‘O Lord My God, When I in Awesome Wonder’ (‘How Great Thou Art’) (1885), trans Stuart K Hine (1949) in The Baptist Hymnal (Broadman Press 1975) Hymn no 35.

<sup>65</sup> Sunday Adeniyi Adegeye (King Sunny Ade), The Merciful God, Atom Park Ltd, 1987

*beauty of the oxygen/air without knowing where it comes from; we may know the source of the river, but we do not know where the rain comes from... the boundless love of God to humanity is unsearchable...*" The poetic composition gently reminds us that, while humanity may trace the origin of a stream/river, the mystery of rain remains beyond our grasp. In so doing, the **Master Guitarist** dives toward a deeper truth: that God's love flows freely, unpriced and unpurchased, and that divine generosity precedes human calculation or comprehension.

5.10 I am not yet done with the **Nicene Creed**, as it encapsulates everything about our **belief** and **faith**. To my mind, the **Nicene Creed** is the **Charter of Christianity**; and in the **Anglican Communion**, we confirm our **faith** through it, constantly. A **Creed** is defined as "**A formal summary of religious belief; an authoritative statement of doctrine; a confession of faith**"<sup>66</sup>. The **Nicene Creed** is not a wandering or drifting flock of unmoored thoughts and notions, nor a frail of conjecture cast upon the airy realm of speculations or sterile abstraction. Nothing in it is gainsaying, nothing in it partakes of farce or suffers the indignity of a *faux pas*. Contrariwise, it stands impervious to fragility, wherein every word, every clause, every sentence, every declaration, every summation, and every conclusion contained therein is rooted in divine revelation, steeped in apostolic precept, and anchored in the immutable verities of the Christian **faith**. It is the distilled essence of centuries of theological reflection, the crystallization of the Church's collective encounter with the mystery of God, and the authoritative articulation of truths that transcend the vicissitudes of time. The **Nicene Creed** does not merely speak; it pronounces and declares with finality. It is not a product of idle musings, but the consequence of rigorous spiritual inquiry, conviction, and divine illumination. Each phrase may appear to bear the weight of mystery, but each assertion resonates with the echoes of Scriptures; each affirmation reflects a deep engagement with the supernatural.

5.11 The Creed is a testament to unassailable truth, fortified against the corrosive tides of ambiguity and absurdity. In the final analysis, it is a consecrated Charter of belief, where **faith** intersects reason and bows to revelation, having found its most eloquent voice. Thus, the Nicene Creed is not an abstract

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<sup>66</sup> The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language – 2010 Encyclopedic Edition, USA , at page 304

Creed for theologians alone. It is a cosmic declaration that every bishop, priest, and adherents of the Christian **faith**, should profess that the God we proclaim and confess is Almighty, not merely because He can rule, but because He chooses to sustain without charging us a dime.

5.12 The audience might, at this stage, be wondering why I am devoting much pace to the **Nicene Creed**. The reason is obvious. Whatever denomination any Christian group belongs to or shares, Christianity as a religion has one foundation. Although it is the orthodox Churches, particularly the **Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church**, etc., that recite the **Nicene Creed** so regularly, while Pentecostal and other Churches do not recite it often, the incontrovertible fact remains that the foundation of all Church denominations in the world is the same. The History of the Church, as elaborately encapsulated in the seven volumes of the authoritative works of **Joseph Smith**<sup>67</sup> and other Christian literatures, is the same. Our Charter remains: **One Lord, One Faith, One Church**. Needless re-emphasizing the very obvious that there is only one Church, which is indivisible, and only one Lord and Saviour. There is no denomination or sects in Christ, as there is only one Body of Christ. Therefore, irrespective of denominational affiliations, the Church Militant must come to terms with the need for urgent unity, cohesion, and amity within her rank and file. Recall that in Christ there is no East or West, no North or South. To those who still believe in or are encumbered by their sects and denominations, instead of appreciating the fact that the Church has only one Foundation, let them hear what **John Oxenham** says:

***“In Christ there is no East or West,  
In Him no South or North;  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.***

...

...

...

***Join hands, then, brothers of the faith,  
Whate’er your race may be;  
Who serves my Father as a son***

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<sup>67</sup> Joseph Smith, B H Roberts (ed), *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Vols. 1 – 7, Deseret Book Company 1902–1912).

*Is surely kin to me”.*<sup>68</sup>

5.13 The **Creed** itself is very explicit about **God the Son, Jesus Christ**, for obvious reasons, particularly to safeguard the nature of Christ, and provide a doctrinal statement of correct belief among Christians, amidst the **Arian** controversies earlier referred to. There was/is the Apostle's Creed which is a functional statement of the Christian **faith**, summarizing core doctrines regarding the Trinity, Jesus Christ and the Church. Though, not written by the Apostles, it summarizes their teachings and often referred to as the small **Bible** in the early days, before the canonization of the Old Testament in **70.A.D.**, and the New Testament in **325 A.D.**<sup>69</sup>

## **6.0 THE NICENE CREED AND THE MAJESTY OF CHRIST**

6.1 The assertion in the **Nicene Creed** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and also God incarnate, are rooted, among others, in the Scriptures, the birth of the Lord Himself, His ministry, death, and resurrection; after which the Church was born, and eloquent testimonies about His oneness with the Father were given, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by His followers. All these were also painstakingly weighed and considered before the **Nicene Creed** was formulated. It will not be out of place, particularly for the purpose of this lecture, to benchmark the truism of the God Son nature of Jesus Christ against some compelling lines in the Scriptures:

- **Abraham** is regarded and accepted as the **father of faith and of many Nations**.<sup>70</sup> He is also described in the Bible as “**the Friend of God**”.<sup>71</sup> Authoritatively, **Jesus** enthused, “**Before Abraham was, I am.**”<sup>72</sup>
- The same **Abraham** is recorded to have offered tithes to **Melchizedek**, the priest of the Most High God, in the Old Testament<sup>73</sup>; in the New Testament, this same **Melchizedek**, the priest of the Most High God, is

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<sup>68</sup> John Oxenham, 'In Christ There Is No East or West' (1908), tune 'St. Peter' by Alexander R. Reinagle (1830), *Songs of Praise: Enlarged Edition with Music* (OUP 1931) hymn no 537

<sup>69</sup> Acts 2:42; And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrines...

<sup>70</sup> Genesis 17: 4-7

<sup>71</sup> James 2: 23

<sup>72</sup> John 8: 58

<sup>73</sup> "Genesis 14: 18-20

described as the king of righteousness and the king of peace<sup>74</sup>, titles that constitute some of the divine panegyrics of **Jesus**.

- **Jesus Christ**, through prophesy, was to come in form of a King from the lineage of **David**,<sup>75</sup> the Israelite king, who is also described as “**the man after God’s heart**”.<sup>76</sup> In flesh, Jesus was heralded as “**Son of David**”;<sup>77</sup> but **David** himself prophesied about this **Son** of his, saying: “**The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.**”<sup>78</sup> The Lord Jesus Himself corroborated this, thus: “**For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.**”<sup>79</sup>
- Various, **David** described Jesus with so many attributes : “**My Rock, my Fortress, my Deliverer, my God, my Strength in whom I will trust...**”<sup>80</sup>
- It is not surprising then that stanza six of that melodious hymn – “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**”,<sup>81</sup> reads thus: “**Hail Him, ye heirs of David’s line, whom David’s Lord did call; the God incarnate, Man divine; and crown Him Lord of all.**”
- No **prophet, king** or **Judge** on earth, before or after Jesus, ever declared that “**I am the way, the truth, and the Life.**”<sup>82</sup>
- In like manner, **no prophet, emperor, president, monarch**, or anyone howsoever has ever proclaimed that: “**I am the resurrection and the life.**”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Hebrew 7: 17

<sup>75</sup> Micah 5: 2

<sup>76</sup> I Samuel 13:14

<sup>77</sup> Matthew 21:9

<sup>78</sup> Psalm 110:1

<sup>79</sup> Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43

<sup>80</sup> Psalm 61:2

<sup>81</sup> Perronet, Edward, *All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.*” First published in *The Gospel Magazine*, November 1779.

[\[en.wikipedia.org\]](https://en.wikipedia.org)

<sup>82</sup> John 14:6

<sup>83</sup> John 11: 25

- In the same vein, no human, born of any woman, has ever commanded or rebuked the wind to be still, and the wind obeyed him.<sup>84</sup>
- Similarly, no **metaphysicist, magician, or cosmologist**, since the creation of man, has ever walked upon the sea as though walking on the highway, without being drowned.<sup>85</sup>
- No **bishop, preacher, cleric, ruler, or philosopher**, has ever taught love, harmony, peace, forgiveness, tolerance, forbearance, long-suffering, sympathy, empathy, etc., as the Lord Jesus did, and still does.<sup>86</sup>
- Even the **traducers** and **haters** of the Christian **faith** have not been able to controvert the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and His birth by a Virgin;<sup>87</sup> His death and resurrection still remain a mystery to them.<sup>88</sup>
- While in human flesh, He commanded death to release Lazarus from the grave, and death obeyed Him;<sup>89</sup> and after His crucifixion, He swallowed up death in victory.<sup>90</sup>
- It has never been written or testified about any human on earth that he was going about doing good.<sup>91</sup> The beautiful hymn titled "**Jesus, Good Above all Other**"<sup>92</sup> lends further credence to this truth.
- From the time of the first **Adam**, through to **Abraham**, to **Isaac**, to **Jacob**, dovetailing to **Moses**, extending to **Joshua, Samuel, David**, and the prophets, and even till date, none of them ever called himself the **Son of God**, or called God his Father, and, above all, connected us with **God as our Father** and **we as His Children**.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Mark 4: 39

<sup>85</sup> Matthew 14:24-26

<sup>86</sup> Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 22:37-38, Luke 6:20-23, Matthew 6:14-15, Luke 23:34, Matthew 5:44, John 13:34

<sup>87</sup> Isaiah 7: 14, Matthew 2:1, Luke 1:31

<sup>88</sup> Mark 8:31; Matthew 28:2

<sup>89</sup> John 11:43-45

<sup>90</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Isaiah 25:8

<sup>91</sup> Act 10:38

<sup>92</sup> Percy Dearmer, 'Jesus, Good Above All Other' in \*The English Hymnal\* (Oxford University Press 1906), set to the traditional German melody 'Quem Pastores'

<sup>93</sup> John 14:2, 1 John 3:1, John 14: 13-14, John 16: 23; John 17: 1, John 18: 11

- The **Lord's Prayer**, as he taught us, bears eloquent testimony to this nexus between **God the Father** and **us**, and vice versa: ***"Our Father, who art in Heaven..."***<sup>94</sup>
- The sundry miracles He performed with such ease are riveting, amazing, awesome, marvellous and unprecedented – ranging from, among others, **turning water into wine;**<sup>95</sup> **feeding the multitudes with five loaves and two fishes;**<sup>96</sup> **raising Jairus' daughter from the dead;**<sup>97</sup> **healing many who were sick and afflicted;**<sup>98</sup> **casting out demons;**<sup>99</sup> **restoring sight to the blind;**<sup>100</sup> **healing of the ten lepers;**<sup>101</sup> **healing the Centurion's servant;**<sup>102</sup> **healing of the woman with the issue of blood.**<sup>103</sup>  
Even during His travails, when Simon Peter, took out his sword and cut off the right ear of **Malchus, one of the servants of the Lord's traducers, Jesus rebuked Peter**<sup>104</sup> and thereafter, still touched the ear of **Malchus** and healed him.<sup>105</sup>
- In terms of learning, wisdom, understanding, depth, knowledge, reasoning, logic, profundity, versatility, vastness, acuity, precision, authority, gut, audacity, bravery, brevity, succinctness, immutability, inviolability and impeccability of words, teachings, pronouncements, etc., no philosopher, astrologer, inventor, scientist, researcher, mathematician, physician, lawyer, judge, monarch, emperor, seer, necromancer, etc., can be compared with Him, not in the least, in the remotest of measures. He is just incomparable.
- At no time in human history, from creation until now, has God declared of any human thus: ***"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well***

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<sup>94</sup> Matthew 6: 9-13; Luke 11: 2-4

<sup>95</sup> John 2:1 -11

<sup>96</sup> Matthew 14: 19-41

<sup>97</sup> Mark 5: 41-42

<sup>98</sup> Matthew 8:16

<sup>99</sup> Mark 1: 34

<sup>100</sup> John 9: 1-7

<sup>101</sup> Luke 17:12-17

<sup>102</sup> Matthew 8: 5-13

<sup>103</sup> Matthew 9: 15-22

<sup>104</sup> John 18: 10-11

<sup>105</sup> Luke 22:51-52

*pleased;*"<sup>106</sup>...*"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him."*<sup>107</sup>

- No wonder **Apostle Paul** posed the question which remains unanswered to this day: **"... to which of the Angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"**<sup>108</sup>
- Jesus remains the only soul who has traversed this planet without any blemish;<sup>109</sup> no allegation or accusation,<sup>110</sup> whether remote or otherwise, of any misdeed, misdemeanor, quarrel, misunderstanding, mistrust, scuffle, rift, dispute, feud, grudge, animosity or hostility between Him and any other person.<sup>111</sup>
- Do we recall that, after appearing to Peter upon His resurrection, He did not ask him, "Peter, why did you deny Me, even after I had forewarned you?"<sup>112</sup> Rather, because of the apostolic leadership He intended to entrust to him, coupled with the love He had for him, He simply asked: **"Peter, do you love Me?"**<sup>113</sup>
- What manner of man is He!<sup>114</sup>

## **7.0 FAITH: SUBSTANCE BEYOND SIGHT**

- 7.1 The word **faith** is defined as an **"Inner attitude, conviction, or trust relating human beings to a supreme God; It is regarded in Christian theology as a divinely inspired human response"**.<sup>115</sup> At its core, **faith** is the **capacity to see with the soul what the eyes cannot behold**. Apostle **Paul** describes **faith** as **"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."**<sup>116</sup> Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he did a very extensive treatise on the awesome powers and potency of **faith**; reminding us of how, through **faith**: **the elders obtained a good report; the worlds were framed by the Word of**

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<sup>106</sup> Matthew 3:17

<sup>107</sup> Matthew 17:5

<sup>108</sup> Hebrew 1: 13

<sup>109</sup> Hebrews 7:26 (KJV)

<sup>110</sup> John 19:4 (cf. Luke 23:4)

<sup>111</sup> 1 Peter 2:22 (KJV)

<sup>112</sup> Luke 22:34

<sup>113</sup> John 21:15–17 (KJV)

<sup>114</sup> Benjamin Dube, 'What Manner of Man Is Jesus' (YouTube, 2016) <URL> accessed 15 May 2026.

<sup>115</sup> **Faith** (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 22 January 2026) Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc

<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/faith>> accessed 24 February 2026

<sup>116</sup> Hebrews 11:1, Holy Bible, (KJV)

God; Abel's sacrifice was more acceptable to God than that of Cain; Enoch was translated that he should not see death; Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his household; Abraham obeyed God by moving out, not knowing whither he went and sojourn in the land of promise; Sarah received strength to conceive seed, at an old age; Abraham offered Isaac for his sacrifice; Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come; while dying Jacob bless the two sons of Joseph; and also while dying Joseph, gave commandment concerning his bones; at birth, Moses was hid three months of his parents, and when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; the walls of Jericho fell down; Harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace; Gedeon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, and Prophets, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain promises, and stopped the mouth of lions.<sup>117</sup>

7.2 **Faith** is an instinct in the human soul, predating denominations, liturgies, temples, synagogues, churches, and traditions. It is as ancient as consciousness and as perennial as breath itself. It remains one of Scriptures' most exalted virtues and one of life's most enduring mysteries. In the treasury of divine economy, **faith** is the highest currency.<sup>118</sup> **Faith** is more than a devotional instinct; it is a superior epistemic lens, a spiritual intelligence that apprehends realities inaccessible to sensory inquiry, for **faith** does not operate within the poverty of empirical limitation but within the wealth of divine revelation.<sup>119</sup> **Faith** is the innermost attitude of courage and conviction, the confidence that **God** is who He says He is, and the assurance that His promises are neither poetic exaggerations nor **sacred hyperbole but eternal guarantees. Faith does not pretend that reality is absent; it merely insists that reality is not ultimate.**<sup>120</sup> It does not silence fear; it anchors fear. It does not eliminate questions; it enthrones **God** above them.

7.3 This is the reason many submit that **Faith** is inherently **eschatological**; it stretches the believer's vision beyond the contours of time into the geography of eternity. It is the pilgrim virtue that pulls tomorrow into today,

<sup>117</sup> Hebrews 11:1-33

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Hebrews 11:1-6; Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7 — see also Augustine, *Confessions*; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q.1

<sup>119</sup> Macdonald, Paul A. "A Realist Epistemology of Faith." *Religious Studies*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2005, pp. 373-93. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20008613>. Accessed 14 May 2026.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 373 See also: 2 Cor. 4:18, Holy Bible, (KJV)

that makes future promises a present possession and sees the invisible city whose builder and maker is **God**. By this token, it becomes manifest why **Abraham** stands as Scripture's timeless **paradigm of faith**<sup>121</sup>, a man who **obeyed without demanding explanation, trusted without seeking guarantees, and surrendered without the faintest whisper of resentment.**<sup>122</sup>

- 7.4 To the **Centurion**, who demonstrated exceptional **faith** in Jesus, praying Him to just speak the word and that his servant will be healed, telling Jesus that he was not worthy that He should come under his roof, Jesus exclaimed: **"...Verily, I say unto you, I have not found such great faith, not in Israel."**<sup>123</sup> It is by **faith** that we, as adherents of the Christian religion, believe in **God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit**. It is through **faith** that we believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is by **faith** that right from our youth, we believed in the Bible stories narrated to us by our parents and Sunday School teachers. It was through **faith** that **David** killed **Goliath** with just a stone and a sling;<sup>124</sup> it was through **faith** that **Samson**, even when he had been turned into a human wreck, summoned extraordinary strength and pulled down the pillars of the **Philistine temple**, and it is recorded of him that he killed more in his death than when he was alive.<sup>125</sup> It was through **faith** that the disciples of old, particularly the first twelve, followed Him without hesitation, persuaded of His divine authority and believing that He was the Master.<sup>126</sup> It was also by **faith** that all the martyrs of old voluntarily surrendered and submitted not just to persecution, but even to death. **Faith** is not born of coercion, and we, as Christians, have chosen to embrace our **faith**, and accept our fate, voluntarily, believing not just in the Scriptures, but also in the received and acceptable traditions of the Church. Thus, it is through **faith** that we believe in the world hereafter, acknowledging the assurance that Christ has gone to prepare a place for us.<sup>127</sup> Through **faith** as well, we lay hold of answered prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, having assured us that when we pray, whatever we ask in His name shall be given unto us.<sup>128</sup> Relating the

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<sup>121</sup> The New Testament confirms that Abraham is the paradigm of **faith**, see *Hebrews 11:8–10 and 17–19*

<sup>122</sup> Genesis 12:1–4; 15:5–6; 22:1–12; God calls him to leave his country, and he obeys; he believes in God's promises despite seeming impossibility; he demonstrates obedience by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac without questioning God.

<sup>123</sup> Matthew 8:8–10

<sup>124</sup> 1 Samuel 17: 49–50

<sup>125</sup> Judges 16:21–26

<sup>126</sup> Matthew 4: 18–20

<sup>127</sup> John 14:2–3

<sup>128</sup> John 14:13–14

above submissions to the theme of this lecture, through **faith**, we believe that we shall reign triumphantly with the Lord at the dawn of resurrection.<sup>129</sup>

7.5 The adherent of any **faith** believes in its charter, codes, canticles, philosophy, ideologies, values, precepts, tenets, cardinals, pathos, ethos, culture, and other nuances associated with it. Thus, **faith** can be intoxicating and invigorating; charming and enchanting; soul-lifting and ennobling; inspirational and motivational; endearing and enduring, etc. One common denominator about the Christian **faith** is that, despite all the vicissitudes it has suffered, coupled with the turbulence, tribulations, victimization, oppression, suppression, coercion, and vilification it has undergone in ages past and even till now, the **Master** forewarns and assures us that: ***"In the world ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."***<sup>130</sup>

7.6 It, therefore, goes without saying that if the **Master** Himself, experienced and suffered hardship, vilification, oppression, injustice, insult, opprobrium, stigmatisation, degradation, humiliation, relegation etc., who are we not to pass through the hurricanes, whirlwinds, storms, tornadoes, tsunamis, discrimination, acrimony, feuds, animosity, castigation, ferocious attacks, gory episodes, massacres, genocide and the present-day crucifixion? We are convinced that the Master moved from the Cross and travailed to **Golgotha**, descended into the grave, captured the kingdom of hell, resurrected from the dead, and triumphantly ascended to heaven. He assured us as well that: ***"...in my Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you...;"***<sup>131</sup> ***"...I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."***<sup>132</sup> We should be reassured and comfort ourselves with the soothing and emphatic words of **Apostle Paul** that ***"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waited for the manifestation of the sons of God"***.<sup>133</sup>

## 8.0 UPON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY CHURCH....<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> 2 Timothy 2: 11-12

<sup>130</sup> John 16:33

<sup>131</sup> John 14: 2

<sup>132</sup> John 20:17

<sup>133</sup> Romans 8:18-19

<sup>134</sup> Matthew 16:18

- 8.1 Let us, for a moment, consider the grammatical context of the statement made by Jesus Christ after Peter confessed that ***“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,”***<sup>135</sup> to the effect that: ***“I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...”***<sup>136</sup> Be it noted that the statement is in the present continuous, not in the past tense. Jesus did not say, ***‘Upon this rock have I built my Church...’*** In other words, one would not be committing heresy to assert that Jesus did not build any physical Church; rather, He laid the foundation through His deeds and blood. It was a most stoical sacrifice which He made for humanity, and the most invaluable and boundless love demonstrated by God to mankind, as evinced by **John** that: ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”***.<sup>137</sup>
- 8.2 Peter, as mentioned by Jesus in the Bible, is a metaphor for every Christian, or put in another way, for anyone who sincerely shares the **faith** of Christ. It is also a figurative expression which avails for the benefit of every Christian. Roughly, Jesus made this declaration between **2B.C.- 4B.C.**, for he died at **4B.C.** Since then, the Church is still marching on, despite all odds. That readily reminds us of that melodious chorus:

***“The Church is marching on  
The Church is marching on  
The gates of hell shall not prevail  
The Church is marching on”***.<sup>138</sup>

- 8.3 Two thousand and twenty six years after the death of Christ, the gates of Hades have not been able to prevail against the Church; contrariwise, it is the Church that has been prevailing against the gates of Hell and Hades, put together. When Christianity was born, it met with stiff and violent opposition and resistance, even by the Jews, who, when they heard Peter, declaring that ***“God has exalted Jesus with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour...”***

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup>

<sup>137</sup> John 3:16

<sup>138</sup> 'The Church Is Marching On' (anonymous traditional gospel chorus, adapted from Matthew 16:18, origin indeterminate, widely transmitted through oral congregational tradition) cf E M Gordon, 'We're Gathered to Pay Homage', African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal, no 584.

**And we are His Witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost whom God has given to them that obey him”,<sup>139</sup>** they took counsel to slay them. But **Gamaliel**, a much-respected Doctor of the Law, among the Jews, counselled them against lifting their hands against the Apostles, drawing their attention to the rise of **Theudas** who once boasted that he was Godsent, and Judas of Galilee, who had much followers because of his pretentious representations; but that both of them perished, as well as those who obeyed them. He then admonished: **“Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow; lest haply, ye be found even to fight against God.”<sup>140</sup>**

- 8.4 Again, two thousand and twenty six years after Gamaliel counselled that if the Christian **faith** was/is not of God or God-ordained, it would soon perish like the facades of **Theudas** and **Judas of Galilee**; but if it be of God, no one can overthrow it, lest, that man be fighting against God, the Church is waxing stronger and stronger, expanding wider and larger, moving from glory to glory, ascending to higher grounds on daily and continuous basis; espousing the beauty of God and the majesty of Christ to all nooks and crannies of the world; unconquered by powers and principalities at different stages in different ages; undeterred by adversities from different parts of the world, since its inauguration, and till now, and so shall it be; until the second coming of Christ.
- 8.5 In the process, there is an intersection between the mighty and the lowly, the learned and the unlearned, the inventors and the consumers, the scientists and the astrologers, the philosophers and the cosmologists, seers and wisemen, manufacturers and end-users, governments and the governed, empires and their emperors, sovereigns and subjects, leaders and followers, judges and lawyers, doctors and patients, farmers and peasants, pilots and passengers, sailors and traversers, sun and moon, Angels and Archangels, dwellers and strangers in time and space, mighty oceans and the seas, the flowing rivers and the streams, the crickets in the forest, leaves on the trees, birds in the air, all creations seen and unseen etc., that Christianity is the **faith** that will berth the ultimate triumph, leading to the glorious Crown, irrespective of the present travails of, and orchestrated vilification of the **Faith**.

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<sup>139</sup> Acts 5:31–32

<sup>140</sup> Acts 5:29–39

## 9.0 TESTAMENTS OF HISTORICAL FIGURES ABOUT CHRIST AND THE BIBLE

9.1 Permit me to project some empirical statements and testimonies from men and institutions across the globe to buttress the foregoing submissions:

- **Harvey** (1578-1657), **Boyle** (1627-1691), **Faraday** (1791-1867), and **Maxwell** (1831-1879) were all committed Christians. **Boyle** (the first scientist to show **Harvey**, **Boyle**, **Faraday** the difference between compounds and elements, was a lay preacher. **Faraday** (the discoverer of electromagnetic induction) once read only from the Bible for a sermon, saying his words could add nothing to God's. **Maxwell** (who discovered magnetic flux) penned these words: ***"Lord, it belongs not to my care, whether I die or live. To love and serve Thee is my share, and that Thy guard must give."***<sup>141</sup>
- **Arthur H. Compton**, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, says that ***"Science is the glimpse of God's purpose in nature. The very existence of the amazing world of the atom and radiation points to a purposeful creation, to the idea that there is a God and an intelligent purpose back of everything... An orderly universe testifies to the greatest statement ever uttered: 'In the beginning, God...'"***<sup>142</sup>
- **Sir Isaac Newton** (1642-1662), a **Scientist**, most renowned for formulating the **laws of motion and the universal law of gravitation**, so often named the father of modern science, confessed, ***"We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatsoever."***<sup>143</sup>
- **Samuel F. B. Morse** (1791-1872), the **Scientist and Inventor** who revolutionized communication in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and invented **telegraph**, wrote near the end of his pilgrimage: ***"The nearer I***

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<sup>141</sup> Ray Comfort, *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible Is Supernatural in Origin* (Bridge-Logos, Newberry, FL 32669) p.32

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p.32

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p.33; see also Richard Watson, *An Apology for the Bible, in a Series of Letters Addressed to Thomas Paine* (R Faulder 1806) 57

*approach the end of my pilgrimage, the clearer is the evidence of the divine origin of the Bible... and the future is illuminated with hope and joy.*"<sup>144</sup> When the mind travels far, it needs a sure word to bring it home.

- **Napoleon Bonaparte**, one of the most influential figures in world's history, was a famous French military commander and ruler who knew what force could build and what force could not keep. He spoke of Scriptures with unusual candour, thus: ***"The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it... I never omit to read it, and every day with new pleasure."*** Then he turned from the Book to its Lord: ***"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man... Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires... upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."***<sup>145</sup> The road from the **Cross to the Crown** is not upheld by force, but by love revealed and commanded in the Word.
- **Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (between 1901 and 1909)**, admonishes that, ***"No educated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible,"*** and further added, ***"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."***<sup>146</sup>
- **Thomas Jefferson, the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States (1801-1809)** stated that the ***"studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make us better citizens, better fathers and better husbands,"***<sup>147</sup>
- **William McKinley, the 25<sup>th</sup> President of the United States between 1897-1901** thundered that ***"The more profoundly we study this***

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<sup>144</sup> William J Federer, "'What Hath God Wrought' — Samuel Morse & the Telegraph' (American Minute, 2 April 2012)

<<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/-What-Hath-God-Wrought---Samuel-Morse---the-Telegraph.html?soid=1108762609255&aid=vdWvHrPT5FQ>> accessed 24 April 2026

<sup>145</sup> Ibid p. 54; see also American Tract Society, *Napoleon on Religion* (Tract No 477, American Tract Society 19th century) (reporting Napoleon at St Helena: 'The Gospel is not a book; it is a living being ... I never omit to read it, and every day with new pleasure');

<sup>146</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Realizable Ideals* (The Macmillan Company 1911) 163 (urging Bible study and stating, 'No educated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible'); William J Federer, *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations* (Fame Publishing 1994) 561 (attributing to Roosevelt, 'A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education')

<sup>147</sup> Ibid p.55

*wonderful Book... the better citizens we will become and the higher will be our destiny as a nation.*"<sup>148</sup>

- **Andrew Jackson**, the 7<sup>th</sup> President of the United States (1829-1837) declared, **"That book, Sir, is the Rock upon which our republic rests."**<sup>149</sup>
- **Franklin D. Roosevelt** the 32<sup>nd</sup> American President between 1933 and 1945 enthused thus: **"...The Bible is a fountain of strength."**<sup>150</sup>
- **Ulysses S. Grant**, the 18<sup>th</sup> President of the United States between 1869 and 1877, exhorted thus: **"Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties."**<sup>151</sup>
- **George Washington**, the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the United States (1789-1797) posited, **"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God or the Bible."**
- **Charles Dickens**, a famous English writer best known for his novels about Victorian Society and social injustice, submitted thus: **"The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world".**<sup>152</sup>
- **Robert E. Lee**, a controversial historical figure confessed thus: **"In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength,"** and likewise affirmed his full acceptance of **"the infallible Word of God."**<sup>153</sup>
- **Abraham Lincoln**, the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United State between 1861 to 1865, described the Bible as **"the best gift God has given to man."** In 1863, while calling a day of national fasting and prayer, he reminded his nation that it is **"the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God"**. It was also his position that **"The sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven**

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 56

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p.56

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p. 57

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 60

by all history: that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.”<sup>154</sup>

- **Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** during the **Second World War**, asserted thus: **“We rest with assurance upon the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scriptures... The flame of Christian ethics is still our highest guide”**.<sup>155</sup>
- **Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the first Black President of South Africa**, widely celebrated for his leadership and revered as a **Global Citizen**, stated that: **“The Bible helped to shape me”**<sup>156</sup>
- **Lord Alfred Denning, Master of the Rolls**, widely regarded as one of the greatest **Jurists** the Commonwealth has ever produced, scintillatingly penned about some portions of the Bible thus: **“The Psalms of David were the hymn-book of the Jewish Church. They are repeated in the Book of Common Prayer. They are one of our greatest literary inheritances. They are said daily in our churches. Psalm 15 is usually sung at the beginning of the legal year in Westminster Abbey: Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle? or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? Even he, that leadeth an uncorrupt life: and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.... “It contains the life and teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ who was a Jew - and of all the twelve apostles who Were Jews - and the letters of Paul who was a Jew. It contains the Sermon on the Mount which should be of comfort to the Jews, especially these two verses: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matthew 5: 11-12).”**<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p.60

<sup>155</sup> Sir Winston S Churchill, ‘Moses: The Leader of a People’ (1932), reproduced in *Step by Step* (Odhams Press 1939), citing W E Gladstone, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* (1890).

<sup>156</sup> Nelson Mandela, quoted in Michael Trimmer, ‘Nelson Mandela and his **faith**’ *Christian Today* (6 December 2013) <<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/nelson-mandela-and-his-faith/34956.htm>> accessed 13 May 2026

<sup>157</sup> Alfred Denning, *Landmarks in the Law* (London, Butterworths 1984) pp. 314–315

- According to the **Congress of the United States of America**, the **Bible is the Word of God**. In a joint resolution requesting the President proclamation of **1983** as the "**Year of the Bible**," it declared thus: *"... the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation and people... Deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scriptures led to the early settlement of our nation... Biblical teachings inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States* (Public Law 97-280).<sup>158</sup>
  
- Much of modern scientific knowledge is built on the discoveries of other Bible-believing Scientists like:
  - **Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)**: Experimental science, physics;
  - **Francis Bacon (1561-1626)**: Scientific method;
  - **William Petty (1623-1687)**: Statistics, scientific economics;
  - **William Derham (1657-1735)**: Ecology;
  - **James Joule (1818-1889)**: Thermodynamics;
  - **Henri Fabre (1823-1915)**: Entomology of living insects;
  - **Joseph Henry (1797-1878)**: Electric motor, galvanometer.<sup>159</sup>

9.2 The foregoing references constitute just a microscopic, quintessential testaments from a few historical figures, world leaders, thought leaders, renowned ideologists, scientists, jurists, statesmen, legislature(s), emperors, monarchs, potentates, and others, concerning the truism, reality, essence, fidelity, imperatives and divine nature of our **faith**, belief, calling and vocation. At this point, permit me to apply the Latin maxim **res ipsa loquitur**, meaning: *"the fact speaks for itself"*.

## 10.0 TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY IN NIGERIA

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<sup>158</sup> Ray Comfort, *Scientific Facts in the Bible: 100 Reasons to Believe the Bible Is Supernatural in Origin* (Bridge-Logos, Newberry, FL 32669), p.61

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 32

- 10.1 Whatever anyone might say, posit, enthuse, endorse, postulate, accept, counter, or deny, the fact remains that the growth and civilization of Nigeria are vertically and horizontally related to the birth and inauguration of Christianity in the country. With **Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther** leading the early Christian fathers, the first Secondary School in Nigeria, the **CMS Grammar School** was established in **1859**.
- 10.2 According to that leading Christian Religious Studies scholar, **Prof. (Bishop) Dapo Asaju**,<sup>160</sup> the **Missionaries** also established western medical care to Nigeria and other parts of Africa. They first served by establishing dispensaries and later founded the earliest mission hospitals in Nigeria. The Roman Catholics, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Sudan Interior Mission (ECWA) each operated reputable hospitals. The Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, and the Sudan Interior Mission (ECWA) each operated reputable hospitals. These were later complemented by leper colonies, orphanages, and other social welfare facilities.
- **Morally, Christianity provided ethical values such as justice, honesty, and integrity;<sup>161</sup> love for neighbour and national unity;<sup>162</sup> and respect for human life and dignity, since all men were created in God's image.<sup>163</sup>**
  - **The Missionaries pioneered Media Communication in Nigeria. While the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America were the main colonial mass communication outlets in the colonial era, Christian Radio, particularly the Radio ECWA, transmitting from Monrovia, Liberia, with a local office in Igbaja, Kwara State, became the main source of Christian broadcast, which was highly influential in the spiritual formation of many Christians across Nigeria.**
  - **The Church contributed to Agricultural development of Nigeria. The slogan at the outset of Missionary endeavour in Nigeria was Thomas F. Buxton's concept of 'The Bible and the Plough'. It is claimed that**

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<sup>160</sup> Dapo Asaju, Bishop Theologian, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), former Vice-Chancellor of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, and Bishop of Ilesa Diocese (2026)

<sup>161</sup> Micah 6:8

<sup>162</sup> Matthew 22:39

<sup>163</sup> Genesis 1:27

Missionaries introduced Cassava and Cocoa into Nigeria. They also established some of the earliest forms of modern farming.

- The Church introduced several skills and vocations to Nigeria, including Masonry, Carpentry, Building, Tailoring, etc. Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, whilst at Lokoja, established the first Vocational Centre, named 'Preparanda'.
- Politically, Christianity guides good leadership. It teaches servant leadership and stewardship;<sup>164</sup> and accountability.<sup>165</sup> These form the basis for advocating the culture of transparency, good governance, the fight against corruption and national development.
- Educationally, the Church raised the best of human capital development in all spheres of society. It built institutions through Christian missions that provided formal education, literacy, schools, universities, theological seminaries, critical thinking, science, skilled manpower, patriotism and informed citizenship.
- Socially, Christianity laid the foundations for compassion and care for the vulnerable in society. It promoted the care for the poor, widows, orphans, as well as the establishment of dispensaries, hospitals, leprosaria, orphanages, hospices for the sick and elderly, and reformatory homes.
- Generally, Christianity provided framework for nations to ensure the following: peace (Blessed are the peace makers)<sup>166</sup>, reconciliation (of ethnic, political, and religious divisions), national unity, civic responsibilities, prayer for leaders and nations, obedience to the rule of law, and contributions to the society. These constitute the building blocks of patriotism, democracy and citizenship. Also, Christianity also set the example of virtues such as diligence in labour, fairness, respect for the elderly, generosity, and care for the poor.<sup>167</sup> God is the ultimate authority in all matters of politics and governance. He created man,

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<sup>164</sup> Mark 10: 42-45

<sup>165</sup> Luke 12:48

<sup>166</sup> Matthew 5:9

<sup>167</sup> See Colossians 3:23; Proverbs 11:1; Acts 4:32-35

**organized his society, and provided laws and precepts in the Holy Bible for good governance and ideal society. In fact, God operated a theocracy before Israel demanded for democracy in form of monarchy. He chose both Kings Saul and David over Israel.**

10.3 I dare submit, without any atom of fear of contradiction, that the Christian **faith**, as exemplified by the Church, has been most beneficial to every nook and corner, tribe and ethnic group, other religious groups and adherents, and, by extension, the entirety of the nation, across board without any exception. In other words, the Church deserves being appreciated, acknowledged, applauded, cherished, celebrated, valued, commended, eulogized, lauded, extolled, exalted, rather than being intimidated, stoned, burnt, inundated, pestered, diminished, encroached upon, trespassed into, way-laid, double-crossed, maligned, abused, trampled upon, or persecuted in any form whatsoever, and howsoever – and from whichever part, State or corridor of Nigeria. Substantially, the Church has anchored Nigeria's evolution, progress, civilization, and transformation. The reasonable thing to do and expect on the part of the nation is to trust the Church and respect the Christian **faith**, so that together, we can both partake in the triumph and victory that ultimately await us in the world to come.

## **11.0 THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN NIGERIA: NEED FOR INTROSPECTION AND RETROSPECTION**

11.1 That the Anglican Church, through its forerunner, the **Church Missionary Society (CMS)**, was the pathfinder of Christianity in Nigeria, particularly to the South-Western part of the country, is incontrovertible. That **Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther** was the first Bishop of African descent who tirelessly worked to project Christianity throughout Nigeria, is an accepted truism. A polyglot, it was he who translated the Bible from English language into Yoruba, Igbo, and Nupe languages. Very few forebears of the Christian **faith** in Nigeria, if any, worked as much as this man of God at imprinting Christianity in Nigeria. Like **Paul the Apostle** boasted, **he laboured more than all**<sup>168</sup> at planting the seeds of Christianity in Nigeria. He was an evangelist extraordinaire. There is no way or means the history of Christianity in Nigeria can be honestly chronicled without large chapters devoted to this very humble, committed,

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<sup>168</sup> I Corinthians 15:10

illustrious, assiduous, industrious, and deeply endowed man of God. We can safely label him as the Patriarch of Christianity in Nigeria, the very first Potentate. Whichever denomination any Christian church might belong in Nigeria today, the history of how the English Bible was translated to Yoruba, Igbo and Nupe languages, cannot be twisted, rewritten or rephrased. In other words, all Christians in Nigeria are beneficiaries of the **faith**, travails, triumphs, and victory of this essential man of God. I have taken up from this bearing so that we, of the Anglican Communion, can truly appreciate and grab our heritage, which is a very rich one.

- 11.2 There comes a most sacrosanct moment or do I say, a defining juncture, in the trajectory of every Institution when celebration must yield to cogitation, and the quest for expansion must submit to self-evaluation, prudence, and sincere re-examination. The Church of Nigeria (*Anglican Communion*) constitutes a formidable component of the Body of Christ and remains, undeniably, a prominent spiritual constituency within global Christendom. Without sounding immodest, may I state that while the true measure and essence of a Church does not merely lie in the latitude and or horizons of its influence, or in the numerical strength of its provinces, dioceses, parishes, and congregations across the country, its ultimate test resides in the depth of its fidelity to the letters and spirit of the Holy Writs. While this should not be construed as a lamentation, it is, no doubt, a lucid call for retrospection and introspection on the roles of the Church of Nigeria (*Anglican Communion*) in today's reality.
- 11.3 The Anglican Communion has, over the centuries, evolved into a global ecclesial family with shared doctrines and liturgical heritage.<sup>169</sup> History teaches that where truth and culture collide, tension becomes inevitable. The eventual rupture between the Church of Nigeria and elements within the global Anglican body must, therefore, be understood within this context.<sup>170</sup> Recently, the Church of Nigeria took a resolute stand and adopted a firm posture in defense of what it understood as a biblically grounded doctrine

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<sup>169</sup> Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight, eds., *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK, 1998), 1–15

<sup>170</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1–20

particularly on issues of sexuality.<sup>171</sup> This was not an act of defiance for its own sake, nor a gesture of ecclesiastical insubordination. Rather, it was the outworking of deeply held **faith**. Today, even as we celebrate liberation from what was regarded as a doctrinal heresy and compromise, some sobering questions confront us: **Are we truly free? Are we free indeed from the subtle grip of doctrinal hypocrisy and ambiguity? Are we free from the insidious embers of envy and hatred, factionalism, unhealthy rivalry, and concealed resentments that slowly erode the very substance of brotherly love? Have we, in casting off one yoke, unwittingly embraced another? Have we, in resisting doctrinal compromise, also guarded our hearts against the guile of pride, estrangement and loveless faith? Do we truly love our brethren and neighbours within the Anglican fold as Christ commanded, or have we merely replaced one form of error for another only to embrace relational severity and distance?** These are not merely rhetorical questions fashioned to provide effect; they are weighty cogitations, unfurling the true condition and state of our common **faith**.

- 11.4 My late father, a second generation in our Anglican/Christian **faith** lineage, expressed deep reservations about my going to study Law at the University of Lagos in **1972**, on the ground, inter alia, that some notable members of the legal profession were members of different secret societies, and, as a young man, he would not want me to join any of them upon being called to the Bar. Thank God for the intervention of the Holy Spirit that I eventually overcame my father's reservations and doused his trepidation, studied Law, and rose to become what I am today by grace, without partaking in any rituals at all, but only focusing on Jesus as the **author and finisher** of not just my **faith**, but also of my profession. Why have I decided to bring about this narration? The answer is simple. I am a Yoruba man of Ekiti extraction. It was through the **Ido Declaration of 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1984**, under the bishopric of that blessed man of God, **Most. Rev'd Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye (1929-2012)**, that a fresh Charter for the renaissance of our **faith** was enthroned, for that generation and for all generations thereafter, including, amongst others, the restoration of honour, respect, love and fidelity to one another, and the

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<sup>171</sup> "The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), statement on the 2005 constitutional revision, cited in "African Anglicans Redefine Relationship with Communion," *Christian Today*, 19 September 2005; and "Anglican rift over homosexuality deepens," *Mail & Guardian*, 20 September 2005. [[christiantoday.com](http://christiantoday.com)], [[mg.co.za](http://mg.co.za)], [[americananglican.org](http://americananglican.org)]

renunciation of secret cult membership. I dare say that this Charter was the precursor to the **Declarations and Oaths** being administered to the **Primates, Bishops and Priests** of the **Anglican Communion** today, although in a modified version. The **Declarations and Oaths** also apply to every communicant who partakes in the Holy Eucharist. Suffice it to state that the **Declarations and Oaths** have consequences on the deponent if he does anything contrary to what he has sworn to, as he willingly **brings himself under the wrath of God**.

- 11.5 In the apostolic conception of **Paul**, a **Bishop** is a **living homily of character**, a steward of holiness whose life must mirror the majesty of the office he bears. The **Scriptures** thunder thus: ***‘Rend your heart, and not your garments...’***<sup>172</sup> reminding us that true consecration is an inward flame, not an outward fabric. This translates to the fact that before a **Bishop** is known by what he wears, he must first be known by who he is, his character, his convictions, and his capacity to stand as a **Sentinel** for the flock of **Christ**. In **Apostle Paul**’s pastoral canons to **Timothy**<sup>173</sup> and **Titus**, he unveils the episcopal identity with precision and exactitude admonishing that ***“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”***<sup>174</sup> However, he added that desire alone does not **enthrone**; but **character does**. Thus, a **Bishop** must be ***“blameless,”*** he must be a man whose public and private life can withstand the scrutiny of **heaven** and **earth**; ***“the husband of one wife,”*** **disciplined in affections and anchored in moral fidelity**; ***“vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach”***.<sup>175</sup> **Paul** intensifies the portrait thus: ***“A Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.”***<sup>176</sup> Above all, he must hold ***“fast the faithful word”***,<sup>177</sup> becoming both **“guardian** and **herald”** of sound doctrine, able to withstand contradiction and silence falsehood with apostolic clarity.

- 11.6 I cannot improve on what the Apostle has articulated and ventilated regarding the office of the Bishop, except to add that they apply in equal

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<sup>172</sup> **Joel 2:13**

<sup>173</sup> David Guzik, ‘Study Guide for 1 Timothy 3’ *Blue Letter Bible* <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/>> accessed 31st March, 2026

<sup>174</sup> 1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1: 5-9

<sup>175</sup> 1 Tim. 3:2

<sup>176</sup> Titus 1:7-8

<sup>177</sup> Titus 1:9

measure to all men of God, from the least of the Priests to the Primate, as well as Christian adherents. But the pertinent question remains: **Are we actually sayers or doers of the Word?** While I leave each of us to search our individual minds, may I plead that, as our leaders and shepherds of the flock, some of our Bishops, albeit, a few of them, need a lot of reorientation, reflection, introspection, retrospection, re-examination, reappraisal, re-evaluation, reinvigoration, resuscitation, and recalibration, in order to properly adjust and live up to the high biddings of their divine calling.

11.7 Let me take this moment to announce the good news in the sense that we have a Primate who is meek, humble, polite, courteous, humane, kind, thoughtful and level-headed, just as his predecessors in office were/are, ditto for a comfortable majority of our Bishops. It is written concerning Moses, the man of God, and the only man whom the Scriptures record as having direct discussion with God, who, in turn, passed before him and showed him His back view, that: **“...the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”**<sup>166</sup> In the same vein, another good biblical Sentinel worthy of emulation is **Samuel**, who, after judging Israel for years and acting both as a Priest, Leader and Judge, asked them in public, before man and God, to interrogate, investigate, probe or question his integrity, fidelity, incorruptibility, and impartiality at any time, to which they all responded, **“Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man’s hand”**.<sup>167</sup> The Church cannot afford any tyrannical, vindictive, boastful, draconic, hostile, rude, uncivil, corrupt, uncourteous, uncouth, uncultured, garrulous, cruel, callous, insensitive, overbearing or intemperate Bishop or cleric in any form whatsoever. Under any circumstance, a Bishop is to unite, not to disunite; join, and not to put asunder; harness, and not to scatter; build, and not to demolish; plant, and not to uproot; guide, and not to misguide; lead, and not to mislead; speak peace, and not to ooze out guile.

11.8 As for us adherents and parishioners, we must extend love to one another and emulate the spirit of camaraderie, love, and fidelity among other denominations in the country. While I speak from personal experience, I also assert, by grace, my justification and vindication, that is, my triumph and victory. Perhaps, I am speaking in parables! Further, I humbly suggest, or do I say proffer, that the **Constitution of the Church of Nigeria** (Anglican

*Communion*) needs far-reaching amendments, reappraisals, and review in several areas and in diverse material particulars. Let us remind ourselves, both the cleric and the laity, of God's warning that: ***"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"***<sup>168</sup>

## 12.0 AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY AND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION, SUPRA-WEST

- 12.1 **Ajayi Crowther University (ACU)** is an institution conceived as a confluence of **faith** and scholarship. From its inception, ACU has been sustained not merely by policy, but by sacrifice, benevolence, and generosity of well-meaning individuals. Distinguished intellectuals such as **Professor Akinkugbe** and **Professor Ayo Banjo** lent credibility, positioning the University as a serious academic enterprise. Through their influence, **General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma** funded the construction of a state-of-the-art Library for the University. Equally remarkable is the contribution of **Dr. Toyin Okeowo**, whom, while the University was at a critical juncture, and faced with existential financial constraints, pledged his personal assets as collaterals to secure funding for the University to take-off. This was not mere generosity, it was a bold sacrificial statement at its highest order. He later reinforced this legacy with the donation of a sprawling Senate Building for the University.
- 12.2 In the same vein, **Mr. and Mrs. Folorunso Alakija**, donated an ultra-modern **Faculty of Law** building which elevated the academic infrastructure of the University. Taking it further, **Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN**, and his wife donated a sprawling **Vice-Chancellor's Lodge**, and also sponsored the roofing of the University Hall, which remains in use to date. At another critical juncture, when the University struggled to meet staff salary obligations and sought financial assistance from banks, and collaterals were demanded, **Chief Olanipekun** offered his Law Firm's account in return. Remarkably, the bank became swayed and dispensed with the requirement for collaterals. The loan was disbursed accordingly. Subsequently as well, the University repaid the loan in full. At a point in time, **Chief Olanipekun** also offered full-time scholarships to **over thirty clerics of the Church** for their Master's and Doctoral Programmes at the University.
- 12.3 Mention must be made of **Chief Tunde Afolabi**, a seasoned businessman and philanthropist, who has been one of the strongest supporters of the University.

He has made himself an instrument in the hands of God for the provision of quality education, at the University level, to brilliant students who cannot afford to pay their ways through school. Through the **Josephus Foundation**, **Chief Afolabi** has offered scholarships to many students, whose parents and guardians cannot afford the financial burden of paying their fees. Each year, **twenty five** awardees of this Scholarship Scheme have their tuition and related fees paid, in addition to receiving monthly allowances for feeding and textbooks. Each year, he pays in excess of **Fifty Million Naira (N50,000,000.00)** to fund this scheme.

- 12.4 Laudable mention must be made of **His Grace, the Most Rev'd Peter Jasper Akinola; Rtd. Bishop Olajide; Hon. Justice B. O. Ogunade; Olola Olabode Ogundana; Lagos and Lagos West Dioceses**; amongst other persons and Institutions who have, at diverse times, come to the aid and assistance of the Institution. While appreciating the Proprietors, that is, Province I, otherwise known as the Supra-West, the point must be made that much more is expected from them. Of all the **faith**-based Universities, and or private Universities in Nigeria, ACU remains the only one known to me that does not enjoy any regular or noticeable subventions at all. It has been surviving by **faith** and grace, courtesy of some well-meaning members of the Church, some of whom I have identified earlier. From the information available to me, between October 2025 to May 2026, only **Twenty Eight Million, Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira (N28,250,000.00)**, has come into the coffers of the University from a few sources, for specific projects, including research and development; the **ACU Development Foundation, ACU Choir, Students' Union Building**, contributions from a particular Diocese, as well as a contribution from a Council member. Against the background of the topic of this lecture, more particularly that the **Honouree** of today represents the Proprietors of the University, being the most senior Archbishop within the Supra-West, I plead, most fervently, and passionately with the Proprietors, and the entire Church, to come to the aid and rescue of the University. The popular saying goes: **"One cannot make omelets without breaking eggs."** And before one breaks eggs, he must have expended some money on buying it. For us, we cannot own or run a University without investing heavy financial resources in it. The popular Yoruba saying captures it all – **"Owo ni kèkè ìhìnrere"**, literally translated to mean **"Money is the chariot of the Gospel"**. There is no other way to maintain that University other than by constantly and substantially

investing and deploying financial resources thereto. **ACU** must not fail or falter. It is our mirror, and we must not allow it to either scratch or break. We Anglicans are not poor, but, with respect, it appears as if some of us lack the grace and enablement to give, unlike adherents of other denominations.

- 12.5 For our Bishops in their respective Dioceses, may I appeal, as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University, as well as the immediate past Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Governing Council for eight years, knowing full well where the shoes pinch and the entire body aches, that all collections and dues, due to the University from **St. Mathias' Day** and **ACU Day**, from the various Dioceses, be remitted to the University in arrears. Furthermore, I beseech our Bishops to extend to the University the same approach, style, wisdom and zeal with which they collect from their parishioners, archdeacons and churches the yearly assessments and other periodical dues and levies to **Ajayi Crowther University**. In other words, they should not stop at remitting to the University what are collected on **St. Matthias' Day** and **ACU Day**, but should, from time to time, ask, plead for and encourage special collections for the University, which is our pride. Being an Institution founded on **faith**, it should also be funded by **faith**.

### 13.0 ODE TO A FAITHFUL SENTINEL: THE MOST REV'D DR. JOSEPH OLATUNJI AKINFENWA

- 13.1 In every epoch of history, Providence raises men whose lives transcend mere biography and become theology in motion, living exegeses of **faith**, discipline, and divine purpose. Among such rare vessels stands **His Grace, The Most Reverend (Dr.) Joseph Olatunji Akinfenwa**, a **servant of God**, not fashioned by chance, but sculpted by the deliberate chisels of **grace, discipline, and consecration**. Born on **24th May, 1956**, not in the comfort of a vicarage but to diligent farming parents whose Anglican devotion seeded his early calling. Records had it that the young **Joseph** would return from church, and start preaching to imaginary congregations with his mother's "Òjá" on his shoulders, like a priestly stole, an early prelude to the ministry he would one day embody with rare distinction.
- 13.2 **Ordained in 1986 at St. Michael's Cathedral, Kaduna**, he advanced to **Canon in 1991**, and by **1994** became **Archdeacon** of the same historic Cathedral. His

consecration as **Bishop of Sokoto on 6th January, 1998**, at the age of **41**, marked him as one of the youngest episcopal voices of his generation; and within two short years, **April 2000**, he was translated to the See of Ibadan. His enthronement at **St. James's Cathedral, Oke-Bola on 2nd May, 2000**, placed him at the helm of a diocese that would, under his stewardship, become synonymous with structural strength, theological depth, and moral clarity. In **January 2003**, he assumed another mantle as the **first Archbishop of the Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province**, serving two full terms until **2013**, a decade that witnessed some of the most decisive reforms, pastoral upgrading, missionary expansions, and institutional fortifications within the Province. During this period, he provided leadership not only locally but globally, overseeing missionary works that extended across **Liberia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Chad, the United States, and the United Kingdom**, through the **Church of Nigeria Missionary Society (CNMS)**.

- 13.3 His scholarship is equally formidable. A graduate of **Ahmadu Bello University**, holder of a Diploma in Theology from **St. Francis Assisi Theological College, Wusasa**, with advanced degrees, and a **Master's** together with a **Ph.D from the University of Ilorin**. **Bishop Akinfenwa's** academic pedigree has continually fortified his ministry with intellectual rigour. In recognition of his contributions to evangelism and societal development, he received an **Honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) from Lead City University, Ibadan in 2013**.
- 13.4 These are not generic milestones; they are the **coordinates, and or, the perimeters of a consecrated life**, a journey of **faith** that mirrors, illuminates, and elevates the very theme of this lecture. A life that demonstrates that **faith bears fruit when conviction becomes courage, burden becomes service, sacrifice becomes legacy, and truth becomes witness**. Today, he is not merely counted among leaders in the **Christian Faith**; he defines leadership. He is not one voice in the choir; he is a tuning fork by which others find their pitch. Where many rehearsed tradition, he embodied it; where others proclaimed Scriptures, he incarnated it.
- 11.1 In an age that thrives on self-adulation and parades an exaggerated mirage of self-importance, the life and ministry of **His Grace, The Most Reverend Joseph Olatunji Akinfenwa**, stand in sharp contrast to what trends mostly in today's world. In him is the epistle of a man whose soul learned early how to

bow before God and yet stand tall before men. His ministry bears the gravitas of ordered liturgy, yet it breathes with the vitality of apostolic fervour; his scholarship is deep without being distant, and his pastoral authority firm without forfeiting tenderness. His humility has never been the fragile courtesy of timidity, but the seasoned grace of a man who understands that **greatness is safest in low places**, and that the true measure of a bishop is not in regalia or rank, but in the quiet, persistent willingness to wash the feet of those he leads.

13.5 Through decades of episcopal toil, he wore the mitre lightly, yet bore the heavy burden of the flock with meekness, **praying ceaselessly** while others are **sleeping and slumbering, weeping deeply from within for the Church** while others are **smiling** and **merry-making, labouring when others are resting**, and remaining on bended knees before the altar interceding for the Church. Behind the dignity of his office lay the **invisible weight of his episcopal cross**, a cross he carried with consecrated resolve, without complaint. Truth is, beneath the splendour of office lies the solitude of sacrifice, the discipline of prayer, and the vigilance of a watchman. His sacrifices were never trumpeted nor episodic, for he served with the instinct of one who believes that **God keeps His own records**. He embraced austerity when convenience was available; he stood for truth when compromise was easier; he remained steadfast when retreat was tempting. His life has been a quiet rebuttal to the notion that sanctity is unreachable: **he has shown that holiness is simply faithfulness repeated over many years**. In seasons when storms rose against the Church, he stood like an oak, **unbending, unbitter, and unbroken**, shielding the flock with a courage that was as tender as it was unyielding. His moral example has been, perhaps, his most eloquent homily: a sermon not preached from pulpits alone, but from the lived liturgy of his character, **the measured speech, the listening heart, the transparent convictions, the disciplined life, the steady conscience**, and the inner light that distinguished him long before mitres rested on his brow. In his speech, restraint; in his dealings, honour; in his thoughts, sobriety; in his judgments, fairness. He modelled what it means to shepherd without partiality, to lead without guile, and to embody the Gospel without distortion.

13.6 The odyssey of His Grace, starting from his ordination as a **Deacon in 1986, Priest in 1987, Canon in 1991, Archdeacon in 1994, Bishop in 1997**, and

**Archbishop** in **2000** has not been without he passing through bumps, meandering through gallops, maneuvering through waves and tides, in the course of which he faced a lot of travails and tribulations, some of which were targeted at his life. Among these was the religious crisis that occurred in Kaduna in the 90s, a crisis so bloody that churches were burnt and humans were maimed. It spanned about a week. His Grace was not solely worried about his life, but also about his flock, as well as the Cathedral where, in his narration, expensive Christian treasures were laid and kept. To escape the sieging attackers, he and his wife had to arrange for ladders to scale through the high fence of the Vicarage with their three children, one after the other.

- 13.7 At another point, he virtually decided to call it quit when, on his way from New Bussa from Ibadan/Abeokuta, after the inauguration of the New Bussa Diocese, he and others were waylaid by armed robbers; but miraculously, God dispersed all of them, as **He who was with them was greater than the spirits and forces** behind the armed robbers.<sup>178</sup> At another critical time, God saved **His Grace** from an air crash. According to his summary, he boasts thus: **"I continue to ascribe all honor and glory to Him because when he calls, He keeps. When he calls, He guides. When he calls, he sustains. When He calls, He is always with us on the journey. He said, I will never leave you; I will never forsake you."**
- 13.8 And in pondering the sacred weight of seventy years, one cannot but recall the timeless strains of that melodious hymn, titled **"Ten Thousand Years"**, composed by **Elmer Cole**, which celebrates the limitlessness of heaven's joy, that ***"Even if I still had ten thousand years placed gently into my hands, they would yet be too few to comprehend the depth of divine grace, too short to rehearse the mercies that have shaped this journey, and too fleeting to exhaust the testimony of God's faithfulness"***.<sup>179</sup>
- 13.9 And so, as **His Grace, The Most Reverend Dr. Joseph Olatunji Akinfenwa**, ascends this venerable hill called **Seventy**, he does not merely mark time, he embodies its triumph; for **Seventy** is **not the sunset** of a life, but the **sunrise** of an eternal relevance, the hour when a man's voice becomes a heritage that echoes through history, the season when his footprints become legacies that

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<sup>178</sup> 1 John 4:4

<sup>179</sup> Elmer Cole, "Ten Thousand Years" (mid-20th century), American Gospel Hymn; lyrics available at Divine Hymns <<https://divinehymns.com/lyrics/ten-thousand-years-song-lyrics/>> accessed 1 April 2026

will span through generations, and the phase when his presence becomes a benediction to the entire body of **Christ**.

13.10 Like the biblical **Joseph**, the son of Jacob, whose life reflects honour after preserving nations through famine, reconciling his family, and governing **Egypt** with wisdom and discernment,<sup>180</sup> **His Grace**, rightly deserves honour after serving in the Vineyard in different capacities and in different areas, unashamed, like **Apostle Paul**, of preaching the gospel and winning several souls into the fold. Providentially, our celebrant bears the **very same name – Joseph**. If the biblical **Joseph** stored grains against famine in **Egypt**, **Joseph** the Son of **Akinfenwa** stores **doctrine, discipline, and devotion** against the famine of moral decline that plagues modern Christianity in **Nigeria**. **One** built **granaries**; the other builds **souls**; both with quiet **genius**. Next to the biblical **Joseph** is the biblical **Samuel**, who remains a model of incorruptible **Judge, Prophet, and Leader**; a timeless **Sentinel** whose **integrity** survived the scrutiny of an entire nation. Also, on the sphere of **wisdom**, **Daniel** is the **wisdom-sentinel**; the exiled teenager who rose to distinction in **Babylon** because of his **integrity, prayerfulness, discernment, and unwavering loyalty to God**. The Bible records that **Daniel** *“resolved in his heart not to defile himself and maintained disciplined prayer even under threat of death...”*<sup>181</sup> Daniel's life is a blueprint of a **triumphant Sentinel**, tested by fire yet found **faithful**. In our own **Anglican** heritage, **Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther** and **Primate Joseph Abiodun Adetiloye** stand as perpetual testimonies that when a man lives up to the true meaning of the **Christian Faith**, his triumph becomes academic, spiritual, cultural, and historical. **His Grace, Archbishop Joseph Akinfenwa**, joins the trail, amongst others.

13.11 I lay a humble claim to have been closely associated with this prodigy of a clergyman in the last couple of years, starting from our working together at **ACU**, and my close interaction with him when, in the last two years, he was charged with the responsibility of leading the team to access and assess the various groups of Churches craving to have their own independent Dioceses in the South-West. The present Diocese of Ekiti South, which is now my home Diocese, was among the groups, and our team met **His Grace** on two or three occasions, during which I was marvelled by his meekness and simplicity,

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<sup>180</sup> Genesis 47–50

<sup>181</sup> Daniel 1:8; 6:10

coveted his friendship and conviviality, and appreciated his deep learning as well as his generous sense of humour. I met him on two occasions at the Bishop's Court, Ibadan, in company of his beloved wife, who qualifies as a Mother-in-Israel; the pillar behind the success of this great man of God. Her smiles and the peace she radiates are heartwarming and disarming. Like the biblical **Lydia**, she is always attending to the things of the Church and the Gospel.<sup>182</sup> Also like the **Abigail**, the wife of King David, she remains a reservoir of persuasion and pacification to her husband.<sup>183</sup> Theirs is a success story which itself constitutes a golden charter in Christendom. Within the context of this topic, **His Grace** has carried his Cross excitedly, passed through the travails of life and his calling, unperturbed through his unalloyed **faith** in the Lord, in whose Vineyard he has meritoriously served for the past decades. His head is lifted and not bowed; his integrity remains unscathed; his robe remains clean, without stain. Like **Apostle Paul**, he has not only weathered the storm; **he has fought a good fight, he has kept the faith; a Crown of righteousness awaits him**,<sup>184</sup> both now (in retirement), and in the world to come. While we, who are already on the Seventh Floor say to **His Grace: welcome on board to the seventh conclave**, I pray that your days will be long, and that the good Lord will bless the years ahead of you. **As your days, so shall your strength be.**<sup>185</sup>

## 14.0 CONCLUSION

- 14.1 As we draw the curtain on this lecture, let us gather the strands of our reflections into one enduring resolve: that **faith** must ascend into conviction, conviction must translate into courageous action, and action, faithfully borne, must ripen into an enduring legacy. For today, in this sacred convergence of hearts and history, we have honoured not merely a Bishop, but a **faithful sentinel**, whose life has been an epistle of sacred duty, readable, audible and immutable. Even as we celebrate this towering vessel of grace, we behold a Church and **faith** still negotiating and yearning for her own better self; a Church oscillating between the Cross and travails, with the hope to triumph, through **faith**. But that **faith** must be underscored, watered,

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<sup>182</sup> Acts 16:14

<sup>183</sup> I Samuel 25:31

<sup>184</sup> 2 Timothy 4: 6-8

<sup>185</sup> Deuteronomy 33: 25

nourished and sustained by earnestly holding unto our confession and beliefs in the same **faith** we profess.

14.2 Lest we deceive ourselves, the Church in Nigeria, or elsewhere, is not yet in a comfort zone, assuming it can ever be there. However, no religion or **faith** in the world has the assurances, both divine and factual, which our **faith** has, through the grace that is in Jesus Christ. He appreciated that the Church would pass through tumours, travails, tribulations, persecutions, and even crucifixion, but He encouraged us that **we should be of good cheer...**<sup>186</sup> It was not out of fun that the Master posed the rhetorical question that: “...**when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?**”<sup>187</sup> Apostle Paul wraps it up beautifully thus: “**For though we work in the flesh, we do not war against the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare is not carnal,, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.**”<sup>188</sup> The soothing balm can rightly be found in all the stanzas of that refreshing song titled, “**Ho, My Comrades**”,<sup>189</sup> particularly, **stanzas 2, 3, and 4**, which go thus:

...

2.     **See the mighty host advancing,  
Satan leading on;  
Mighty ones around us falling,  
courage almost gone!**
  
3.     **Fierce and long the battle rages,  
but our help is near;  
Onward comes our great Commander,  
cheer, my comrades, cheer!**
  
4.     **See the glorious banner waving!  
Hear the trumpet blow!  
In our Leader's Name we triumph**

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<sup>186</sup> John 16:33

<sup>187</sup> Luke 18:8

<sup>188</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4

<sup>189</sup> Philip Paul Bliss, 'Ho, My Comrades, See the Signal' in Ira D Sankey (ed), *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, No 1 (Biglow & Main 1875) hymn 201; CONH473

**over every foe.**

*Refrain:*

*Hold the fort, for I am coming,*

*Jesus signals still;*

*Wave the answer back to Heaven,*

*By Thy grace we will.*

## 15.0 EPILOGUE

- 15.1 I have striven in this lecture to go through the labyrinth of the component units and key words underscore the very topic which I have freely chosen for myself. I was not under any mirage that I have been called upon to perform a herculean task, addressing sentinels who have undergone diverse trainings, both locally and in the diaspora, in theology, particularly, Christian Religious Studies, and who, in the process, have grown and advanced to become the patriarchs and potentates of the **faith**. I knew I was called upon to “**bring coal to Newcastle**” when **Newcastle** is itself, the repository of coal. Thus, I plead that you consider the message and not the messenger, particularly when the messenger, who is a lawyer, has chosen not to address you in the maxims and lexicon of jurisprudence, which he is fairly familiar with. Howbeit, if you adjudge me guilty by my presentation, I will, like Paul of old, say, “**Unto Ceasar I go**”<sup>190</sup>, whereby I will submit this lecture to the Primate for his own assessment. In my voyage to him, I will remind him of what **Paul** said concerning **Zenas** that: “**Bring Zenas, the Lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them**”.<sup>191</sup> If I make any odyssey to the Primate, I will plead that **nothing untoward happens to me**.
- 15.2 May God grant us the courage, imbue us with the grace and benevolence to hold firmly to our respective Crosses, irrespective of the travails we face by virtue of the **faith** which we confess and subscribe to, so that, like the Patriarchs and Potentates of old, we shall, through **faith**, become triumphant, and reign with our Master, King, High Priest, Lord and Saviour in eternity. May we neither drop the baton nor the ball.

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<sup>190</sup> Acts 25:11

<sup>191</sup> Titus 3: 13

Thank you for the audience.

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*Ibadan*

*May 20, 2026*