

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN ELDERS FORUM HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2015 AT THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN CENTRE, ABUJA. UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF HIS EMINENCE, THE PRESIDENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA, PASTOR AYO ORITSEJAFOR AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

His Eminence, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor
His Grace, Archbishop Joseph Bagobiri
His Grace, Archbishop Magnus Atilade
Mr. Solomon Asemota, Esq. SAN
Maj. Gen. Ishaku Ahmed Dikko (Rtd)
Dr. (Mrs) Kate Okpareke FCA, mni
Engr. Ken Emechebe
Rev. Dr. Saleh Hussaini
Amb. Moses Ihonde
Rev. Dr. David Ogbueli
Amb. Maurice B. Ekpang
Elder Nathaniel C. U. Okoro
Elder Prof. Joseph Otubu
Rev. Dr. Musa Asake,
Barrister J.B. Daramola,
Mr. Mike Oyewole
Pastor Bosun Emmanuel

President, C.A.N.

Gen. Sec. C.A.N.

Asst. Gen. Sec. C.A.N.

Secretary

APOLOGY

Elder Shyngle Wigwe

OPENING

The meeting started at 2.25 pm with an opening prayer which was led by His Grace, Archbishop Joseph Bagobiri.

INTRODUCTION

Subsequently, there was a short session of self introduction, since most of the invited elders were meeting each other for the first time.

OPENING REMARKS

His Eminence, the President of CAN delivered a short opening address in which he expressed profound appreciation for the willingness of the Elders to volunteer their time and energy to serve the church as well as the nation. He stressed the need for the church to speak with one voice and the imperative for credible and respected Christian elders/leaders to join the Christian Association of Nigeria in speaking for Christians and Christianity in the nation.

(Please find attached a copy of the speech.)

DISCUSSIONS

Bishop Bagobiri opened the discussion by raising three issues for consideration.

1. The objectives of the National Christian Elders Forum must be clearly defined
2. What would be the relationship between the Elders Forum and CAN
3. How the Forum will conduct its assignment

The President of CAN responded that the main objectives of the National Christian Elders Forum is to have a credible voice for the church so that response to critical issues that affect Christians in the nation will not be restricted to the Christian Association of Nigeria. As the members of the Elders Forum meet, the objectives shall be further enumerated. As for its relationship with CAN, His Eminence explained that the National Christian Elders Forum is coming alongside CAN as a support institution. After the inauguration, the members of the Elders Forum shall decide how to conduct its assignment.

The President of CAN further explained that due to the liberty which the Elders Forum is expected to have, the Chairman of the Forum has not been appointed. When the Christian Elders meet, they shall exercise the prerogative of appointing the Chairman. In the meantime, Pastor Bosun was nominated to act as an interim Secretary pending the time when the Elders Forum shall be fully constituted.

Ambassador Ihonde suggested that it would be appropriate for the Forum to appoint a handful of its members to draw up a comprehensive modus operandi for it. This would not be for its activities alone, but also to enable the Forum tackle serious national issues. One of the major tasks that he identified is the need to reconcile various contending groups in Christendom in Nigeria, because a house that is divided cannot stand. The meeting, in agreement with him, stressed the need for the church to be united so that it can effectively confront a common foe.

As the discussions progressed, it was agreed that the National Christian Elders Forum should expand its activities by establishing cell groups in all the states in the nation in order to effectively bring its intervention to every nook and cranny of the nation. Some of

the serious crises that confront Christianity in the nation are recorded at some state levels.

Elder Okoro lamented the porous memory of many Nigerian Christians that gives the impression that Christians are unable to engage in sober assessment of serious situations. It is this inability to soberly reflect on serious issues that is pushing the church to a dangerous precipice that it must immediately reverse itself from.

In his contribution, Mr. Asemota traced the origin of Nigerian crisis to the imbalanced arrangement by the colonial masters that created a master – servant relationship in the nation. He expressed regret that it is unfortunate that in the nation today, some people have arrogated to themselves the positions of masters and relegated other citizens to the position of servant hood.

At the end of the passionate and intense discussion session, his Eminence, the President of CAN, reiterated the need for Christians to unite in order to solve the problems confronting the church and the nation.

NEXT MEETING

The President of CAN informed the National Christian Elders that a follow-up meeting may be summoned before the end of January.

VOTE OF THANKS

Elder Ken Emechebe gave the vote of thanks.

CLOSING PRAYER

Archbishop Atilade led the meeting in the closing prayer.

CLOSING

The meeting ended at 4.25pm.

Secretary