

Sunday, June 29, 2014

God's Kingdom Society

..... Branch.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

HAIL JEHOVAH AND JESUS CHRIST!

REPORT OF GKS MINISTERS' CONFERENCE, 2014

Unto JEHOVAH, the Architect and Sustainer of the entire Universe, Who is now gathering His people into His Kingdom through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be glory, honour, praises and adoration forever. – Psalm 75:1; Ephesians 5:19,20.

As conveyed to members through the circular letter released by the Executive Board dated May 15, 2014, the GKS Ministers' Conference was held in Salem City, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria from Thursday, June 26 to Sunday, June 29, 2014, by the grace of God. The Opening Session of the Conference commenced at 10.05 a.m. with TSP 20. Thereafter, the Chairman of the Executive Board, Brother G. O. Ifeacho, who was also Chairman of Conference, said the opening prayer. All Ministers, Sisters and grown-up youths of the Lord's Ministry were present. The Chairman expressed thanks to God Almighty for His help on Brother (Pa) J. T. Okome, who was able to attend the Conference, as well as his wife, Sister (Mama) Bernice Okome. Those absent were Brothers (Pa) J. T. Ukuta and T. T. Iwoh, (due to ill health) and Brother H. M. Keengu of Kenya. The Chairman appealed to members to pray for those who could not attend the Conference as a result of ill-health and prayed for their quick recovery by God's grace.

Brother G. O. Ifeacho, in his opening speech, thanked God Almighty for the miraculous deliverance given to some of our members from a bomb blast which took place at Emab Plaza, Wuse, Abuja on Wednesday, June 25, 2014. They include Brothers Chekwube Okoh, Edwin Enyamuke, Abasiofon Isang and Sister Grace Agiamah. Quoting 1

Thessalonians 5:18, the Chairman stressed the essence of giving thanks to God at all times for His goodness and protection.

As usual, some of the goodwill messages received from branches, groups and individual members were read at the Conference. They include those from Brother T. T. Iwoh, Sister (Mama) Regina Esimagbele and Sister Favour Ugoji, (all of the Lord's Ministry); GKS Laity Officers' Committee (LOC), GKS Youth Fellowship and GKS Women Fellowship National Committees. The Branches were GKS Warri, USA, Benin City, Diobu, Ughelli, Oko-Afor Unit, London, Liberia, Enugu, Rumuokoro, Ado-Ekiti, Oshogbo, Owerri-Urban, Amucha, Yenagoa, Jos, Asaba, Shogunle, Sokoto, Edjeba/Ugboroke, Sapele, Ekwulobia, Mararaba/Kuchikau, Bonny, Central Working Committee (CWC) Port Harcourt and Northern Branches Committee, Central Working Committee GKS Women Fellowship Port Harcourt Branches, Youth Fellowship Committee GKS, Warri, and the GKS Students' Fellowship UNIBEN/UBTH Chapters. The groups were Urhobo National, Igbo National, Lagos State Branches, GKS Engineers' Forum, Zone B GKS Warri, and Ruth Group Sisters, Warri. Others include: GKS Women Fellowship, Phebe Group Sisters, Sarah Group Sisters and Elizabeth Group Sisters all of Warri Branch who supported the Conference with donations. Goodwill messages were also received from many other groups and individuals including text messages.

Thereafter, the Chairman read his address which was on the theme of the 2014 GKS Ministers' Conference: **"The Need to Maintain Our Devotional Vow"**. In his paper, the Chairman of the Executive Board, after thanking God for keeping us alive to witness this year's Conference, emphasized the high level of carnality, intolerance, hatred, greed, arrogance, high-mindedness, hypocrisy, which results in wide spread corruption, violence, poverty, underdevelopment, widespread distress and so on in the world (Psalm 28:3; 10:2-18; Jeremiah 2:19; etc). Hence, those who have been given the grace to flee from the godlessness that pervades the world into God's organization, the City of Refuge, are indeed a special people. Thus, he stressed the vital importance of continuing to fulfill our pledge or promise by giving all our time and energy and other

resources to the work of God. The Chairman admonished fully devoted Ministers to be faithful to their vow until the end for their blessings and salvation (Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:23). He went on to state that "no one was forced to make the vow of devotion and having made it, each person must keep his vow, for it is better not to make a vow than to make one and handle it carelessly."– Deuteronomy 23:21,22; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6.

Brother G. O. Ifeacho declared: "By opting for full devotion one has bound himself by an oath of allegiance to JEHOVAH and His Holy Organization – the GKS by way of making oneself available to be used by God for actualizing His purposes in this age." For this reason, he admonished Ministers to: feed the people spiritually with the word of God (1 Peter 5:2); show the highest possible example of good Christian behavior (John 13:15; 1 John 2:6); be diligent in the work of administering the aspects of the work entrusted to them (Romans 12:8); judge matters righteously (Deuteronomy 1:17; 17:8-11); encourage and pray for the sick, the spiritually weak, the bereaved and for the work of God, (1 Timothy 2:1,2), as well as visit members regularly to share Christian fellowship and strengthen them in the Lord (Acts 20:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:14). Making reference to those who kept their vow, he cited the example of the early apostles including St. Paul. Reminding Ministers of those who did not keep their vow, he cited Judas Iscariot, Demas, Phygellus and Hermogenes. – John 6:60-68; Luke 9:62; 2 Timothy 4:7,8,10; 1:15.

The Chairman highlighted various qualities Ministers should possess to fulfill their devotional vow. They include: knowledge, faithfulness and obedience. Others include non-compromise with opposers, enemies or detractors of the GKS in any way or manner whatsoever. Ministers must also deny worldly lusts, shun godless materialism and carnality (Malachi 2:4; 2 Corinthians 6:3-7; Hebrews 13:7,17; Psalm 139:21,22; 1 John 2:15-17). In concluding his address, the Chairman stated that Ministers have no choice but to do the work to which they have devoted themselves to the best of their ability while praying God who has called us into His Holy Organization to give us the

understanding, faith and strength to be able to carry on the work and to maintain our devotional vow until the end through Jesus Christ our Lord. – 1 Corinthians 9:16,17; 2 Timothy 4:5,6.

WORKING SESSION

The 2014 GKS Ministers' Conference working session was attended by Ministers only, and two reports were read. The Report "A Review of events in God's Kingdom Society (GKS) from June 2013 to June 2014" by Brother G. O. Ifeacho, Chairman of the Executive Board was read on his behalf by Brother T. M. Ekisewei, Secretary of the Executive Board.

The Chairman reported to Conference that the GKS website has been upgraded and it now includes the Youtube and Ustream functionality to enable members and visitors to the site watch our videos directly from the website. Also, the new site has a dedicated facebook and twitter page to be managed by Ministers, which is now running, by God's grace. On Recognition Exercise, Conference was informed that it took place in 22 branches/zones and that the results will be announced to the Church during the third quarter of the year. Also, Public Lectures were held at Ekpan, Igun, Orogun, Okurode-Urhobo, Umunede – Ika, Aladja, Obiaruku, Sapele and Orho-Agbarho all in Delta State. Others include: Uromi, Sabongida-Ora and Ikpoba Hill in Edo State; Kubwa – Abuja (FCT); Ofoni and Amassoma in Bayelsa State; Ekwulobia in Anambra State; Uzuakoli in Abia State and Okota in Lagos State. While Doctrinal Services took place at Ogwashi-Uku, Oghara, Jesse, Orerokpe, Sapele and Eku all in Delta State; Auchi and Benin City in Edo State, Kaduna in Kaduna State, Oyigbo in Rivers State and Mararaba/Kuchikau in Nasarawa State. Watch and Pray Listeners' Forum took place at Oshogbo in Osun State. Furthermore, Doctrinal Services will continue during the third quarter of the year 2014 (July to September) at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State; Yenegoa, Bayelsa State; World Bank, Aba, Abia State; Oleh and Irri, Delta State; Makurdi, Benue State; Omoku, Rivers State and Suleja, Niger State by God's grace.

The report further stated that Watch and Pray on Radio commenced on Royal FM 95.5, Yenagoa on Saturday, September 7, 2013 and is being aired every Saturday from 10.00 a.m. – 10.30 a.m. On Saturday, February 1, 2014, we commenced broadcasts on Planet Radio 101.1 FM Uyo from 5.30 p.m. –6.00 p.m. Then on Sunday, April 6, 2014, we also started broadcasts at NTA Benin and it runs from 1.30p.m. - 2.00 p.m. Watch and Pray broadcasts have resumed at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Uniiq FM Accra, Ghana. We have however, withdrawn temporarily from DRTV Warri. By the grace of God the programme is still running at Ara FM Ilesha; Raypower FM, Lagos; Orient Radio, 94.4, Owerri; Crown FM, Warri; Harmony FM 103.5, Ilorin; and Aso Radio Abuja. In Port Harcourt we have recently changed stations; we are now on Family Love FM 97.7, from 9.30p.m. -10.00p.m. every Wednesday, and on television at NTA Port Harcourt every Thursday from 6.00 p.m. to 6.30 pm. The Watch and Pray programme is currently running on 10 Radio Stations in Nigeria and Ghana and 2 TV Stations in Port Harcourt and Benin City. The Chairman expressed thanks in the Lord and commended members in Port Harcourt, Lagos, Benin City, Yenagoa, Abuja, Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, as well as Yoruba Group, Efik Group and Igbo Nationale, besides individual members who have so generously supported the efforts of the Lord's Ministry in sponsoring these programmes. He prayed God to give them more and more of His spiritual and material blessings by His grace. – Isaiah 32:8; Proverbs 11:24,25; Psalm 126:5,6.

We shall commence Watch and Pray broadcast on JFM Radio, Warri from July, 2014.

Furthermore, Sarah Group Sisters of GKS, Asaba Branch will be sponsoring a Live TV Phone-in programme for 5 weeks and Watch and Pray TV Programme for 8 weeks during the third quarter of the year (July – September, 2014) on Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) Asaba. A brother at GKS Yenagoa Branch has paid for a quarter on Niger Delta Television, Yenagoa, Channel 25, which broadcast begins on Tuesday, July 1, 2014 from 5.30p.m. – 6.00p.m. We pray God to bless these members abundantly.

We thank God Almighty for the huge success that has so far attended the Evangelical Activities for the year, 2014 as well as the new converts that have come in by His grace. We also thank Him for His protection and guidance on us throughout the period. We

pray Him to continue to open the hearts of His children so that they may receive His word and join us to worship Him for their own blessings and salvation by His grace.

On development of infrastructure, Brother Ifeacho reported that the following GKS Service Halls are under construction: Owerri-Urban, Ota in Ogun State, Otagba-Ogbe/Kwale, Ekakpamre, Ikorodu in Lagos State, Calabar and Adeje. The Foundation Laying Ceremony of Okirika Service Hall will take place on Sunday, July 13, 2014. Salem Clinic and Maternity was renovated. Furthermore, he thanked God that Doctors from the World Health Mission, New York, USA, visited the Clinic and conducted minor surgeries on some members by the grace of God.

Reporting on property acquisition and development, the Chairman informed Conference, that the Church's land along Skinn Road, Warri has been cleared and work is ongoing. GKS Engineers Forum has provided architectural, electrical and structural designs for large, medium and small sizes of Service Halls for guidance of branches to build Service Halls. The Church bought landed property at Ugboroke, Warri, plots of land at Oshogbo, Ilesha, Eku, Osina, Ubogo, Suleja and Bomadi, while Brother Clement Oruekpedi donated another plot of land to the Church at Bomadi making it two plots. The Church also bought a plot of land at Amucha while Brother John Amakwe sold a part of his land to contribute to the purchase of the land. We pray God to bless him.

Other members also made land donations to the Church. These include, Brother (Dr) U. C. Ugoji who donated 4 hectares of land at Afam in Rivers State, Sister Agnes Ejeye of GKS, Gwagwalada Unit, Abuja, who donated a plot of land at Igun, Delta State, Sister Grace Edematie of Apapa Branch donated a plot of land at Ijegun, Lagos. The Ezie family of GKS, donated 3 plots of land at Olomoro. The Okocha family donated land at Ubulu-Uku while Brother Egbule donated a plot of land at Owa-Alero. The construction work for GKS Yenagoa Sub-bethel home for Ministers will commence soon. We thank God before thanking the member who initiated the project and all those who have contributed towards the project and pray God to bless them.

The Executive Board is working on building plans for a Sub Bethel home at No. 1 Pike Street Lagos while a part of the Ibadan sub-bethel home is nearing completion. Meanwhile, GKS Aba Branch (No. 51A Ehi Road, Aba) is constructing their Service Hall in addition to a Sub-bethel home. GKS Service Hall Ota in Ogun State and that of Abakpa-Nike in Enugu have been roofed. The GKS Service Hall, Ughelli was expanded and as a result the Sub-bethel home was affected. The Station Minister presently operates from Salem City, Warri. Also, the GKS Service Hall in Chaza and Gwagwalada Units are under construction. The Executive Board has set up a Land/Property Committee whose duty is to produce a land / property policy for the Church and properly document all land and property by the grace of God.

On development of Service Hall, the Executive Board is reiterating her desire to build Service Halls in rural areas. To this end, branches and zones are to forward to the Executive Board information on the plots of land in rural areas that have not been developed through their Station Ministers for consideration. Documents should also be included.

Reporting on music, Brother Ifeacho said that approval has been given to the Boma Nume Orchestra of GKS, Port Harcourt and Chidibere Orchestra of GKS, Warri Branches to record their original songs. Other groups will be considered in due course. Also, the GKS Choir, Warri Branch has been approved to record the Theocratic Songs of Praise (TSP) on DVD to enable branch choirs sing uniform tunes. Meanwhile, the Lord's Ministry is working on the corrected GKS Hymnbook which will be released soon.

The Lord's Ministry sent Ministers to foreign branches i.e. Ghana, Liberia, London and Kenya. Meanwhile, a 4 Bedroom Quarters is under construction in Liberia. The purpose of this is to provide accommodation for members during Public Lectures at the forthcoming Freedom Day celebration in Liberia as it is being done in Ghana. To this end, members are encouraged to prepare from now to travel to Liberia for the programme. Furthermore, the Service Hall has also been expanded while that of London has been dedicated.

While commiserating with members who lost their beloved ones, the Chairman thanked the Most High God that within the Conference Year, there were cases of safe delivery of our sisters of children and miraculous deliverances of members from ill-health, accidents, kidnappers, and so on.

The Ministers' Conference also took the report on Finance and Accounts which was read by Brother O. D. Akinwale, Treasurer, GKS. Other reports were submitted to the Ministers' Conference. They were the report on Business by Brother S. C. Nwaeke, Spiritual Adviser, who is also the Chairman of the Business Committee, Works and Maintenance by Brother A. O. Ottah, Chairman of Works and Maintenance Committee and Education by Brother T. C. Mazi-Rapu, Vice Chairman, Human Resources and Education Management Board.

DECISIONS

After diligent, sober and prayerful deliberations, the Ministers' Conference arrived at the following decisions by the grace of God.

1. Evangelism:

It is obvious that evangelism is the supreme task of the God's Kingdom Society (GKS), *The Church of the Living God*. However, there will be no Public Lectures next year, 2015 because of the General Elections in Nigeria. Doctrinal Services will therefore be held from February to September, 2015. Branches in consultation with their Station Ministers are hereby directed to forward to the GKS Secretariat, E. T. Otomewo House, Salem City, Warri, their formal requests to host Doctrinal Services with proposed dates for consideration not later than the end of October, 2014. This is to enable us draw up a schedule before the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles celebrations. In order to enhance the publicity for these activities, we encourage zones/branches to take out Radio and Television adverts in addition to the free handbills and posters given to branches by the Lord's Ministry to publicize the programme. The Lord's Ministry will continue to assist smaller branches financially on this.

2. The Executive Board has approved 28 doctrinal subjects to be printed in leaflets for the benefit of members of the public. Furthermore, the Board is proposing that the Church

should be in at least 20 radio stations across Nigeria, 5 TV stations and at least 1 satellite TV station within the next 3 to 5 years.

3. Review of GKS Constitution:

The report on the review of the GKS Constitution as submitted by the Constitution Review Panel is being looked into by the Assembly of Lord's Ministry Elders (ALME).

4. POSTING OF MINSTERS:

- i) Brother P. O. Ekireghwo who was formerly of Lagos is redeployed to the Headquarters as Station Minister, GKS, Warri Branch. He takes over from Brother E. I. Okoh. Brother T. C. Mazi-Rapu is to assist him.
- ii) Brother D. O. Ikpuri who was formerly of Ughelli is posted to Benin.
- iii) Brother T. O. Esimagbele who was formerly of Port Harcourt Branch is posted to Abuja with Brother O. U. Uwejeyan assisting.
- iv) Brothers T. T. Iwoh and B. C. Nwaiwu remain as Station Ministers of GKS, Owerri.
- v) Brother T. O. Ugoji remains as Station Minister of GKS, Aba Branch while Brother O. K. Onakughotor is posted to assist him.
- vi) Brother K. U. Owivri is posted to Calabar
- vii) Brother J. A. Afonughe who was formerly of Isoko branches is now posted to Port Harcourt with Brother O. E. Oriaku assisting.
- viii) Brother I. O. Odiete remains as Station Minister of GKS, Ibadan while Brother W. O. Orode is posted to assist him.
- ix) Brother O. K. Iriferi who was formerly of Abuja is posted to Lagos with Brother A. O. Nwabuikwu assisting.
- x) Brother M. O. Urhobo who was formerly of Agbor is posted to Isoko
- xi) Brother A. I. Okocha who was formerly of Calabar is posted to Kano.
- xii) Brother E. U. Oddo who was formerly of Sapele is now posted to Agbor.
- xiii) Brother M. K. Bazunu who was formerly of Benin is posted to Sapele.
- xiv) Brother O. A. Obelikpeyah is posted to Ughelli as Station Minister.
- xv) Brother P. O. Ayikimi remains as Station Minister of GKS, Yenagoa.
- xvi) Brother G. O. Nnadi who was formerly of Kano is posted to Onitsha.

Brother D. E. Alli is redeployed to the Headquarters. We pray God to give the Ministers the spiritual enablement to carry out their duties diligently to His glory and praise.

STATE OF THE WORLD

TERRORISM

It is common knowledge that so many groups around the world, complaining of one grudge or the other, are causing mayhem and destruction, largely to innocent citizens on a daily basis. Security at airports and other entry points in many countries are now at its peak. All these are taking place in spite of the deployment of vast resources in terms of men and equipment.

Here in Nigeria, daily are our sensibilities assaulted and jarred by reports of internecine conflicts and terrorist acts such as suicide bombings, killings, abductions, destruction of properties and so on. Few months ago, over 200 girls were abducted from a Secondary School at Chibok in Borno State. They are yet to be freed despite appeals from well-meaning Nigerians, leading statesmen, Church groups and individuals from various parts of the world.

The fact is that the devil, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" is the one behind the spate of terrorism in the world today. (Ephesians 2:2) He is the one moving religious fanatics, political extremists, and sundry rogue elements who have made gold their god to trouble the earth relentlessly.

We appeal to all people of goodwill to continue to pray for the leaders so that God would direct them aright and enable them to make the necessary sacrifices for the sake of peace and security. (1 Timothy 2:1-4; Matthew 5:38-44) We also pray that God would touch the hearts of the terrorists so that they may see reason and backtrack from their atrocious ways. We appeal to the abductors of the Chibok girls to release them for the sake of God and humanity. We also exhort all Christians and indeed, all

people of goodwill to continue to exercise strong faith in God Who "maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire". (Psalm 46:9). "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." - Psalm 107:29 See also Isaiah 43:1,2; 45:22; Psalm 65:5; 46:1-3.

In the meantime, we advise people to take precautionary measures for their safety as security agencies have advised. They should also be prayerful, vigilant and guide their affairs with discretion. Jesus Christ charged us thus, "**Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**" - Matthew 10:16; Ephesians 5:15-18.

UNEMPLOYMENT

All these terrorist activities have added new dimensions to the vagaries and vicissitudes of life in Nigeria by way of deepening problems of unemployment, slovenliness in payment of gratuities and pensions, corruption in high and low places, poverty and deaths through stress and diseases, etc. Perhaps the starkest expression of the unemployment crisis facing the country occurred on Saturday, March 15, 2014 when no fewer than 19 young men and women died in stampedes at various stadia where they went for interview. While we sympathise with the families of those who lost their lives in the unpleasant incident that took place on that day, we appeal to the government to ensure that the event does not repeat itself and that promises made to the victims and the applicants are strictly implemented.

TRADE IN HUMAN ORGAN PARTS FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANT

There is now a growing multi-million dollar trade in human organs. The organs are not only used for transplants (due to an increase in the number of people waiting for organ transplants), but also for illicit experimentation and for ritual purposes. It is said that organized criminals now make a fortune from unethical clinics "who will buy a heart, kidney or pancreas for wealthy patients". Recent research by the World Health

Organization (WHO) found that traffickers illegally obtain 7,000 kidneys each year around the world.

The desperation for these organs is such that victims could be murdered or kidnapped and forced to give up an organ or they are duped into believing they need an operation and the organ is removed without their knowledge. However, some people out of poverty agree to sell their organ. Already it is estimated that this illegal trade has risen to such a level that an estimated 10,000 black-market operations involving purchased human organs now take place annually – more than one every hour – according to WHO. Donations of organs should be done voluntarily in order to save lives, and should not be done for commercial purposes. Truly as the Bible said, the love of money is the root of all evil. (1 Timothy 6:10; Proverbs 28:20,22) Those who deceive people to remove their organs will certainly not be happy if someone else does it to them or to their loved ones. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets", said our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:12). God declares, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). Those who deceive and kill people in order to remove their organs are sinning against God and they will be punished adequately before being destroyed from the surface of the earth, if they do not repent. –Genesis 9:1; Deuteronomy 24:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:6; 1 Timothy 1:9, 10.

TAX ON CHURCHES

At its sitting on Tuesday May 27, 2014 delegates at the ongoing National Conference voted overwhelmingly that religious bodies in the country should pay tax to the government.

The decision was hinged on the argument that "pastors were making too much money at the expense of the people and that many of them owned private jets and universities". We recall that this issue had been canvassed at various times in the past.

While it is true that some religious leaders are busy making merchandize of the people (2 Peter 2:1-3), it would be wrong to tar all religious groups with the same brush. Ideally, Churches are set up as charity institutions. The government has the duty of monitoring them to ensure they keep to the terms upon which they were registered. Any deviation should attract appropriate sanctions. God Almighty who established the ministry directed that provision be made for their maintenance. The Levities were given the privilege to take charge of the offerings which were made by the children of Israel from the other tribes, and in all these they had a considerable share. This rule continued in the order of Melchizedek (Jesus Christ) the "greater and more perfect tabernacle". (Hebrews 8:2; 9:11; Numbers 18: 8-14; Leviticus 27: 30; Deuteronomy 12: 19; 14: 27) Our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, who had left all and followed him, were supported by the gifts and goodwill of his disciples and other people of goodwill. – Mark 3:13-19; Luke 8:3; Matthew 26:6-12; John 12:1-6; Luke 18:28; Matthew 25:40.

It is therefore contrary to the divine order for the Church to be asked to be paying taxes to the government. Rather, it is the government that should be supporting the true or genuine Churches because of the spiritual functions they perform by the grace of God.

The Lord's Ministry of the GKS as well as the membership have been striving within the limited resources at their disposal to attend to the needs of members and non-members who daily cry to her for assistance to meet their educational, medical, feeding, housing and other needs. These are duties the state should perform for the people but which she had abdicated or in some cases is unable to fulfill because of paucity of funds. In any case, the GKS pays substantial amounts to the government for land, and other forms of taxes on property, schools, etc. To further tax a church organization like the GKS, which is a purely Christian Organisation that is dedicated to the dispensation of the gospel would therefore be a misconceived idea that amounts to obstructing her duty to discharge her divine mandate of "Go ye and teach all nations". – Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16.

SANCTIONS ON COUNTRIES OPPOSED TO SAME-SEX UNIONS

It is unfortunate that Western Countries have imposed sanctions (or are threatening to do so) on countries opposed to Same-Sex unions. It would be recalled that when President Goodluck Jonathan signed the Same-Sex Prohibition Act 2014, leading Western Countries piled pressure on the Federal Government, expressed their objection to the law. Also, following the signing by the government of Uganda of the bill that calls for "repeat homosexuals" to be jailed for life, outlaws any promotion of homosexuality and requires people to report homosexuals, the European parliament responded by backing sanctions against Uganda, saying the country had violated human rights and democratic principles.

Legal authorities are even expressing the view that the judgments by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, combined with a London Court of Appeal ruling in 2010 clearly showed that governments in Europe would be acting illegally if they "legalised civil gay marriages without permitting them on religious premises too". In the London case, a registrar with Islington Council, Lillian Ladele, a Nigerian, had in 2009 taken the Council to court for refusing her the right not to officiate at same-sex civil partnership ceremonies. In their ruling the Court of Appeal judges decided that her orthodox Christian view of marriage "was not a core part of her religion", for which reason she lost her appeal. Space constraints would not allow us to go into the absurdity of a judge assuming the role of determining what constitutes a core part of the Christian religion. Suffice it to say that Christians are required to do all righteousness and not to pick and choose which laws to keep and which to ignore. – Matthew 3:15; James 2:9-12.

Whatever the leading lights in the world may say, the fact is that homosexuality is unnatural and is a sin. People should not allow themselves to be drawn into it in order to please men. (Leviticus 20:13; 18:22; Deuteronomy 23:1; Galatians 1:10) The Bible says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment." (Exodus 23:2) And "...for that which is highly

esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). All Christians should therefore continue to insist on their Christian beliefs.

NIGERIA AND 2015 ELECTIONS

It is imperative that we ensure that the electioneering process for the 2015 elections is reasonably free from coercion, intimidation, manipulation, corruption, and other vices. The choice of candidates for elective positions should emphasize character, honour and integrity, track record, not group interests and the goodwill of "godfathers".

It has been said that elections held in the recent past have given cause for hope that with the fear of God, diligence and proper planning, elections can be conducted with reasonable fairness in Nigeria. Both the leaders and the led should know that it is for their own present and future well being for elections to be conducted freely and fairly. Scripture says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." - Proverbs 14:34.

FESTIVAL DATES

- 1) **Youth Assembly:** To be held on a national basis from Thursday, August 21 to Sunday, August 24, 2014 in Salem City, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria.
- 2) **Freedom Day:** To hold on all Sundays in October – 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th of October 2014.
- 3) **Christian Feast of Tabernacles:**

As announced during the Last and Great Day of the 2013 Feast of Tabernacles, the 2014 celebration will hold from Sunday, December 14 to Sunday, December 21, 2014 in Salem City, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria, by the grace of God.

The Chairman, in his closing remark exhorted all members to be diligent in the work of God and commended those who are faithfully fulfilling their spiritual obligations in tithes, offerings and other contributions. He prayed God to bless them by His grace.

CLOSING SESSION

The 2014 GKS Ministers' Conference ended formally on Saturday, June 28, 2014 by God's grace. Apart from the Ministers, Lord's Ministry Sisters and youths were present. The session opened with TSP 97. Other activities of the session were the reading of the Declaration of Faith by Ministers, read on their behalf by Brother T. C. Mazi-Rapu. It was signed by Brother D. O. Ikpuri, on behalf of the Senior Ministers, Brother O. S. Atumuto for Intermediate Ministers while Brother K. I. Ekewedaye signed for the Junior Ministers. Receiving the Declaration of Faith, the Chairman of the Executive Board thanked God Almighty before thanking the ministers for the words in the declaration and prayed God to help us all fulfill our devotional vow by His grace.

In his closing charge, the Chairman exhorted members of the Lord's Ministry with the words of Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:8,9, that they should be of one mind, having compassion and love for one another, and that we should be pitiful and courteous for God to bless us with manifold blessings and salvation in the end. The Conference came to a successful end by God's grace, at 8.01p.m. after the rendition of TSP 192 (the GKS Anthem) and saying of the closing prayer by the Chairman.

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE

On Sunday, June 29, 2014, a Special Thanksgiving Service was held to thank **JEHOVAH** the Preserver of mankind for the success that crowned the 2014 Ministers' Conference and for His goodness generally on us all by His grace. During the Divine Service, Brother T. O. Esimagbele, Station Minister, GKS Port Harcourt Branches, preached the sermon "The Foundation of God Standeth Sure". (2 Timothy 2:19). In the sermon, the Minister, emphasised the fact that God's Kingdom Society (GKS) is the True Church of God in this part of the world and those who have been called into God's organization should be careful so as not to fall away from His way of Truth and salvation.

In conclusion, we thank God Almighty immensely for helping us to the end of the 2014 GKS Ministers' Conference and pray that He will continue to prosper His Church and

help us all to practice His righteousness for our blessings and salvation, all by His grace and power through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

T. Michael Ekisewei,
Secretary, Executive Board, GKS