

RESPONSE TO YOUR PROPOSED ORDER AGAINST ME.

For the past four years, my family and I along with the mission our Lord and Messiah Jesus Christ entrusted to me had suffered great ordeal, unimaginable trauma and unquantifiable stress for things I didn't do. Everyone who knows me knows that my calling into this ministry of Jesus Christ based on love and inclusion is undeniable. When Bishop Stokes assumed office as the Bishop of New Jersey, we began to work well to the extent that I organized the first ever Diocesan Prison Ministry Conference since the history of the Diocese and as the chairman of the Diocesan Prison Ministry, invited him to one of the prisons in New Jersey for sacramental service.

In mid-2016, Bishop Stokes began to send his canon in charge of the historic black churches, Brian Jemmott to meet with three of my vestry members at [REDACTED] who don't appreciate the fact that I was bringing many blacks and Hispanics into the church, baptizing their kids, increasing the ministry of the church, bursting into singing and clapping during services, preaching directly from the Holy Bible, encouraging congregation to read the Bible passage, and growing the average Sunday attendance with mostly people of color. They started meeting in secret and building up issues that will help them get rid of me. At one of their meetings, Canon Jemmott told them that he observed that many people liked Gideon and if they attempt to get rid of him without a concrete allegation and stories that congregation would agree to, the church might disintegrate. That was when he told them that the only allegation that could get rid of Gideon was the Title IV. At one point, Canon Jemmott told me to begin to look for another ministry and move out from the Diocese of New Jersey. I asked him why? He said some people want to get rid of me. He even suggested I should join the department of Corrections as a full-time staff. I was really shocked at that because I knew I never did anyone evil or harm. In the course of their secret meetings against me, Canon Jemmott had also met with some members of [REDACTED] my previous church. Those he met at the church were very upset that I left their church for Grace, Plainfield and they had great animosity against me, including [REDACTED] and his friend, [REDACTED] whose last name you wrote as [REDACTED] which is not true. (I will address the issues of [REDACTED] and his friend, [REDACTED] in the following pages). These group of betrayers met and concluded their plans against me without my knowledge. On Tuesday, October 11, 2016, I went to Bishop's office to discuss with him the heat I'd been receiving from those three members of my vestry and Canon Jemmott's frequent visit and secret meetings not knowing the Bishop and Canon Jemmott had prepared an unimaginable report against me that could lead one to his early grave.

When I got to his office, he called Canon Jemmott, prayed and asked him to read out the note he'd already prepared, and he read out the purported report from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the two fellow [REDACTED] that my family helped and supported. I became like someone who was electrocuted and in deep shock. Tears of heaviness of heart and sorrow rolled down my cheeks like a flowing river. Bishop Stokes asked me if I had anything to say and I was like a dumb person. At once, Bishop Stokes handed me a prepared letter he had written prior to my arrival in his office to proceed on administrative leave immediately and I should cease from my pastoral responsibilities at Grace Church, Plainfield and in his Diocese. After three months, he sent another letter saying I must vacate the rectory with my family in mid-April 2017 with termination of my monthly salary and benefits. Bishop Stokes never invited me for any

conversation. Even the investigator he engaged never invited me or any member of my family to hear my side of the story. They went after my children in their schools causing a lot of trauma and anxiety to little kids who didn't do anything. They completely kept me in limbo. Due process and transparency never applied. A clergy colleague helped and recommended a canon lawyer whom I met and explained to him all I knew about the issue. The lawyer reached out to the Bishop and his lawyer but they never responded then until Bishop Stokes sent an Accord to my lawyer and advised him to tell me to sign it so he can end the case.

After studying the Accord, I refused to sign it because I was never invited neither do my wife nor any member of my family prior to drafting the Accord. Besides, the Accord was full of evil insinuations and the purported allegations that I never committed, and signing the Accord was accepting that I committed those evil. Bishop Stokes sent another Accord like the previous one and I refused to sign it. I told my lawyer that Bishop Stokes and his cohorts had held me to ransom for a lengthy period of time without any due process and that my spiritual life and those of my family were rapidly waning and that my family has confided in me that they don't want to be part of Bishop Stokes' church anymore. I instructed my lawyer to inform Bishop Stokes that we are no longer part of his church. We had to exercise our rights of freedom of religion and association with clear mind and conscience in worshipping and fellowshiping with our God. This great evil, injustice, and hatred meted out to us negatively affected the two churches we served. What the conspirators did to me, family, and ministry was complete betrayal, witch hunt, hatred, backstabbing, conspiracy, homophobic and all sort of evil to kill the spirit of ministry of Jesus in me and send me to my early grave.

Your ORDER stated that I committed an offense of sexual misconduct, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]'s accusations include sending money to me, and depositing money into my Nigerian bank account for questionable purposes at inflated amounts. The only money [REDACTED] sent to me via Western Union in September 2012 was \$200.00 which was for his registration to attend [REDACTED] Conference [REDACTED]. He was duly registered for the conference and failed to attend. By the time he communicated to me about his inability to attend the conference, the cancellation deadline had elapsed, and conference was over. On the issue of [REDACTED] depositing money into my Nigeria bank account, there is no single evidence of that, and he had never deposited any money into my Nigeria bank account and nowhere on the account could you see any money deposited by [REDACTED].

Due to [REDACTED]'s persistency of wanting to visit the USA, I told him about the Brooklyn Tabernacle music ministry conference of October 2013. But he couldn't do the conference registration from [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] because many people in Africa find it hard to do foreign online transactions. What people do is to ask their family members or friends residing abroad to help them with the transactions and they will reimburse them. Because of the difficulty on [REDACTED]'s part to do the online payment for the conference, he pleaded with me to help and register for this conference together with the accommodation and that he will reimburse me which I graciously did. The Total money I collected from [REDACTED] was \$600 covering his registration and accommodation. [REDACTED] never gave me or pay me any other money.

I picked [REDACTED] from JFK Airport and took him to the conference where he pleaded with me to stay one night with him because he just arrived from Africa. I did and we shared the bed in the hotel room. In our culture in Africa, two or more adults can share a single bed or even shower at the same time without any atom of sexual attachment. It's our culture and every African know that. Nothing sexually occurred; and in the morning of October 4, 2013, I dropped [REDACTED] off from the hotel to the conference and gave him my address in New Jersey with the direction on how to get to my home with a cab at the end of the conference on Sunday, October 6, 2016. He arrived in my home in [REDACTED] on Sunday, October 6, 2013. I never made any sexual advances whatsoever to [REDACTED] throughout his stay with us in [REDACTED]. At a point, [REDACTED] wanted me to help him to file asylum so he can get his permanent residence quickly through [REDACTED] organization and through the Episcopal Church because he believed Episcopal Church is [REDACTED]." I asked him if [REDACTED], and that's when [REDACTED] told me [REDACTED]. I asked him why he lied to me that [REDACTED] when he was still in Africa? He told me he said that to me because he believed that as I was working with [REDACTED] in the USA, that might push me to help him. That got me upset and I told him I will never help him because that would be so bad on my part. My refusal made [REDACTED] to be very upset at me. [REDACTED] was so respected by my family and accepted as a family member to us.

[REDACTED] never paid me any rent neither did I kept any money paid to him by anyone. In the first instance, [REDACTED] had no work authorization to start with and the 400 dollars the church agreed to give him monthly is solely for his feeding and personal care because of his [REDACTED] he was rendering to the church. I took [REDACTED] to PNC Bank in [REDACTED] and helped him to open an account so he could be banking his money. When we moved to Grace Church, Plainfield, the church pleaded with me to live [REDACTED] with them so he could continue his music ministry and I graciously did that. When we moved to Plainfield, [REDACTED] continued to call my family and talked with our kids. On several occasions, [REDACTED] requested that my wife should help him and cook our African food and he came to Plainfield and picked up the food. Sometimes, we will take the food to him in [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

In late August 2016, I received a message from [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] University, [REDACTED] Michigan who told me that his friend and my distant friend and colleague, Rev. Eberechukwu Amaikwu from Nigeria gave him my contact information so he could meet with me. I asked him what for? He said that Rev. Amaikwu told him that I will be of great support to him. [REDACTED] insisted on coming to see me from [REDACTED] University in Michigan. I never lured him to visit us as you alleged. I told my wife about Solomon and she said he can come. The time he told us he will have the opportunity to come to New Jersey coincided with the Diocese of New Jersey Preaching Conference scheduled for September 29 through October 1, 2016 which I'd registered and booked a hotel for myself at the Holiday Inn in [REDACTED], NJ a month prior to [REDACTED] reaching out to us. I told [REDACTED] that I will be at the conference, and he pleaded to come with me. [REDACTED] arrived in New Jersey, we welcomed him with a Netbook Flexx 10 laptop computer that we bought for him, equipped with Office 365 to support him after he'd previously told us how challenging the school course loads were piling up on him because of lack of laptop. [REDACTED] was so happy with our kind gesture, and then we left for the conference.

We checked into the hotel, attended the conference and returned to hotel. During our conversation, [REDACTED] asked if I could support him to claim asylum through [REDACTED] because he was very anxious that the school might cancel his classes, terminate his I-20 and subsequently report him to the Immigration for not been able to pay his tuition as an international student. [REDACTED] asked me similar question that [REDACTED] asked me about filing asylum through [REDACTED]. I then inquired from [REDACTED] how he got the F-1 Visa from the U.S Embassy in [REDACTED] without proof of financial sponsorship? He said that Rev. Eberechukwu Amaikwu prepared all the documents for him, including sponsorship letter and account statement just to get the visa, and after he got the visa, Rev. Amaikwu withdrew the account statement; and now he has been telling him to do whatever he can to get money for his tuition or try to get his Green Card by any means; and that he has done what he could to push him to the USA. I told him that what his friend, Rev. Amaikwu did was obtaining a visa for him by fraud. I told him that after the conference the next day, we will explore the possibility of how he could get some support. I was doing everything in good faith and godly intentions. I never knew that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will take advantage of me and turned the good I did for them into evil.

The next day, Friday, September 30, 2016, we had breakfast in the hotel and attended the conference session. When we returned to the hotel room, [REDACTED] brought up the issue of his school and that of the asylum through [REDACTED]. I told him that I would like to call Rev. Amaikwu to talk with him. In [REDACTED]'s presence, I put a call to Rev. Amaikwu and asked him why he should send [REDACTED] to school in the USA without proper financial arrangement. He told me that [REDACTED] is a man who should hustle and struggle to survive like others; and that he ([REDACTED]) isn't the only one he'd helped to cross over to the USA. I advised him to look for money and send to [REDACTED] so he could finish up his first semester and then we can see how he can transfer his credit to a community college that might be relatively cheap here in New Jersey, otherwise he might run into problems and might be removed from the school. Besides, no one I know could cough out 4000 dollars for [REDACTED] to pay his tuition. He said he will consider the issue and figure out what to do. Afterwards, [REDACTED] and I went out for dinner at a local Diner nearby where he continued to ask me to support him through asylum that he knew I can do that for him through [REDACTED] Organization. When I asked him to tell me [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said he's not sure if he is but will like to get his papers through any means possible as his friend suggested to him. I told him that if [REDACTED] and try to claim an asylum through that, it might become another fraud because if the organization investigate and finds out [REDACTED] that could hasten his deportation. I suggested that the best way is to wait for his friend Rev. Amaikwu to send him some money to finish up this semester and then we can figure out what next to do. I didn't know my response was unacceptable to [REDACTED]. I never made any sexual advances whatsoever to [REDACTED] while we were together.

When we got back to the hotel, [REDACTED] was very busy chatting with someone on his phone. At a point, he pretended to be feeling ill and said he wanted to get some fresh air outside. I asked him if I should call an ambulance so he could go to hospital and he totally refused. I went to the bathroom for shower and as soon as I came out from the bathroom, I could not find [REDACTED]. He packed up his things including the new laptop and left. This was around 8:00 pm. I was devastated. I quickly called the [REDACTED] Police and reported to them. They arrived, took

some statement from me and told me they will be back. After a while, they returned and told me that [REDACTED] was not missing, that they went to Wendy's nearby and was told he came there, bought some burger, and browse through their free Wi-Fi and gently left. They told me not to worry that he might have gone to one of his friends; and that was exactly what happened. That his friend was [REDACTED] I didn't know that [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and Rev. Amaikwu had been in contact all the while I was with [REDACTED]. Rev. Amaikwu contacted me the following morning of October 1, 2016 and said that [REDACTED] was mad after I had the conversation with him (Rev. Amaikwu) over the phone and said that he should look for money there in Nigeria and send to [REDACTED] so he will not have problems with the school. Rev Amaikwu said that I should settle with him so things will not get out of hand. That's when I realized that this was a setup, conspiracy and betrayal to extort money from me.

I never made any sexual advances to [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] as they alleged; and I never admitted to the Bishop or to Canon Jemmott as they alleged of any sexual contact with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] whatsoever. We only shared one hotel room and slept in one bed which is very common in my culture for two or even three adults to share one bed without any sexual attachment. [REDACTED] connived with [REDACTED] together with few people at [REDACTED] who were upset that I left them for another church, and Grace Church, Plainfield who became uncomfortable with the great move of mission and outreach to the people of color, and betrayed me. They witch hunted me and repaid me evil for the good I did for them and the church. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] cooked these lies because of my refusal to support them to file and claim asylum through [REDACTED] Organization and [REDACTED] claiming that [REDACTED] which they are not. They knew I am human rights activist; and my refusal to support their claim for the asylum upset and angered them so much towards conspiring, back-stabbing and biting the finger that fed them which I never see coming. God in Jesus Christ is the greatest Judge who is judging anyone involved in turning my good deeds into this scary and deadly omen.

GIDEON UZOMECHINA+