

Homosexuality causes rift between religious groups

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigeria's Anglican church has deleted all references to its mother church from its constitution, deepening a rift over homosexuality but stopping short of a feared schism.

A statement on the church's Web site Tuesday said "all former references to 'communion with the see of Canterbury' were deleted" at a meeting last week. Instead, the constitution affirms its ties with all churches that maintain the "faith, doctrine, sacrament and discipline of the one holy, Catholic and apostolic church."

With 17.5 million Anglicans, Nigeria has a strong voice in the 77 million-member worldwide Anglican Communion. Nigerian Anglican Archbishop Peter Akinola has emerged as a leader of Anglican conservatives around the world, taking a key role through the Global South grouping of churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America in opposing any church acceptance of homosexuality.

The Nigerian and Ugandan churches broke ties with the U.S. Episcopal Church over its 2003 consecration of a gay bishop living with a partner. A dispute over same-sex marriages in England has deepened divisions.

No one was available to comment Tuesday on behalf of Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams or the Anglican Communion office in London about the changes in the

Nigerian church's constitution.

Williams has struggled to keep liberals and conservatives from a formal break. But some fear an unbridgeable rift has opened between liberals—many of them in North America—and conservatives, who are strongest in Africa and Asia but include many North American traditionalists.

In an open letter to other Anglican leaders, Akinola said the Nigerian church

changed its constitution 'so that those who are bent to walk a different path may do so without us.'

"We have chosen not to be yoked to them, as we prefer to exercise our freedom to remain faithful," he said.

The Nigerian church said its constitutional changes allow it to set up missions outside Nigeria and cater for churchgoers unhappy with recent theological innovations encouraging practices which the Nigerians recognize as

sin.' That appeared to refer to the United States. Nigerians and other Africans already have arrangements with some conservative U.S. parishes whose members object to the U.S. Episcopal Church's stand on homosexual clerics. Nigeria also has established its own churches in the United States for Africans and other who do not want to attend churches linked to the U.S. Episcopal Church.

Archbishop Akinola has described the blessings of same-sex unions and gay bishops as a "Satanic attack" on the church.

Akinola also slammed a July 25 announcement from England's bishops that gay priests in same-sex partnerships will remain in good

standing as long as they promise to follow church teaching that limits sexual relations to heterosexual marriage.

The English bishops' statement was a response to a new law on same-sex partnerships in Britain, which goes into effect Dec. 5.

Cemetery preserved

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gotten," said Hanahan City Councilman Levy Berry. "If we're able to get things right, we're going to really have to give honor where honor is due."

Abraham Williams Jr., the last known living link to the cemeteries, found the first cemetery walking through the woods. Others hope to find the second cemetery, known as Gadsden Cemetery, said Melvin Reid, who plans to follow Williams' verbal directions when the weather cools.

The group will help search the entire area, said president Kenny Johnson.

"If we roam the whole area, eventually we're going to find it," Johnson said. "It's out there somewhere."

Act 4:1-4 Bible study

Continued from page 8B

Their type of laying on of hands was not to bless the apostles. It was, in fact, to arrest them. Peter and John were arrested and kept in jail overnight because Jewish law did not allow trials at night. Although the Jews were under Roman rule, the Sadducees were given almost unlimited authority over the Temple guards thereby easily facilitating the arrest of Peter and John. The only reason the Sadducees had, and needed to arrest them was that the apostles' teachings contradicted their beliefs and teachings.

Because it was already evening, the Sadducees had the apostles arrested and detained overnight. Their intent was to try the apostles the following day. However, no matter what they had planned, nothing could change the fact that nearly 5,000 men had heard and accepted the Gospel message the apostles had preached and now were a part of the Jerusalem church.

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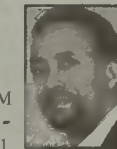


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