

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ugandan Bishop and GLBT Advocate to Visit St. Paul

SAINT PAUL, Minnesota – (September 6, 2011) – Bishop Christopher Senyonjo, a leading advocate for LGBT persons in Uganda will be in the Twin Cities this month as part of a three month UK-USA tour. Named by *Huffington Post* as one of the Ten Most Influential Religious Leaders for 2010, the bishop's tour aims to educate about the difficulties facing LGBT people in Uganda and in the 75 other countries where same sex relationships are criminalized as well as to raise funds to continue his own advocacy work. An Anglican Bishop in Uganda from 1974-1998, he now directs St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre for LGBTQ/Straight Alliance in Kampala.

The St. Paul's Centre pursues a wholistic approach to the challenges in Uganda, providing essential services while also seeking systemic change and fostering genuine reconciliation for LGBT persons and other marginalized groups. Its programs include business development, HIV education and services, counseling, support for expanded schools, LGBT advocacy and dialogue, an LGBT legal resource team, and a sanctuary safe house for activists who need to be in hiding.

The theme for the tour is "Compass to Compassion." Bishop Senyonjo speaks of True North as the universal moral and ethical values that are the foundation for the common good. He calls on the Global South to make a cooperative effort to eradicate poverty and support health and education. Wisdom from the East signifies the religious traditions (Christian and Islam) that have brought much good to Uganda, but have also been used to sow misinformation and prejudice. And referring to the West he acknowledges the need to heal the wounds left by colonialism. The bishop's conviction is that only by addressing all these challenges together can Uganda move into the future with hope.

Accompanied by his wife, Mary, Bishop Senyonjo began his tour in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since arriving in the U.S. he has visited San Diego and Portland before coming to Minnesota. From here, he'll travel on to Chicago, Boston, Washington, New Jersey and New York, where he will receive the Unitas Distinguished Alumni Award from Union Theological Seminary.

The weeklong Minnesota leg of the bishop's tour is hosted by Wingspan Ministry of St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. For more than 25 years Wingspan has been a leading force for the full acceptance and affirmation of LGBT persons in both church and society. Wingspan is now a sponsoring partner in the bishop's work in Uganda.

While in Minnesota Bishop Senyonjo will meet with a variety of religious and LGBT movement leaders. Opportunities for the public to hear the bishop speak include a September 17 fundraiser at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (700 S. Snelling Ave., St Paul, 4-6 p.m.); September 18 worship and adult forum at St. Paul-Reformation (100 N. Oxford St., St. Paul; services at 8 & 10:30 a.m., forum at 9); and St. Paul's Episcopal Church on the Hill (1524 Summit Ave., St. Paul, 4 p.m.).

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