

Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon appointed Anglican Communion secretary general by [Fredrick Nzwili](#) in the [May 13, 2015](#) issue

Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon, a Nigerian bishop from Kaduna, in April became the first African to be appointed as secretary general of the 85-million-member Anglican Communion.

“His position on traditional Anglicanism is very firm,” said Bishop Julius Kalu of the Mombasa, Kenya, diocese. “This is good for us.”

Kalu said the appointment had come at the right time, when African Anglicans needed a bigger voice within the communion.

“The church is growing fastest here,” Kalu said. “We also have the largest membership.”

His appointment to the mostly ambassadorial post drew criticism from groups that pointed to antigay statements by Idowu-Fearon and alleged that he spoke in favor of criminalizing gay and lesbian people.

“I have never supported the law in Nigeria that criminalizes the gay community, and I will never support it,” Idowu-Fearon said in an April 6 statement. “The church is called to love and protect everyone without discrimination, ‘love the person but hate the sin’ whatever the sin may be, corruption, sexual sins of all kinds, misuse of power, or anything else.”

According to Episcopal News Service, he called claims that he was antigay misleading.

He said in the statement that “the Bible judges culture, including African culture. As African Christians we must accept other cultures and the way they also understand the Bible’s relationship with culture.”

Idowu-Fearon also has a reputation as an expert on Christian-Muslim relations.

“Josiah is, above all, a man of communion, a careful listener, and a respecer of the different ways in which we are called to articulate and live the good news of God in

Jesus Christ,” former Episcopal Church presiding bishop Frank Griswold told Episcopal News Service.

Idowu-Fearon has a Ph.D. in sociology from Nigeria’s Ahmadu Bello University, a master’s degree in Islamic theology from England’s University of Birmingham, and a bachelor’s degree in theology from Durham University, also in England. —Religion News Service; added sources

*This article was edited on May 6, 2015.*