**COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC LAND LOSS**

**Good afternoon and Greetings to the members of the Commission of Inquiry into Historic Land Loss. I thank you for reaching out to me on the matter of the Glebe Lands, but I must confess to you that I do not claim to have extensive knowledge about the Glebe lands of the Church of England in Bermuda, now the Anglican Church of Bermuda. However, I will admit that my involvement in seeking knowledge about the Glebe Lands from the start of my ministry at St James until now, stem s from the assertion of my rights as Rector of Sandys parish. So for the past 43 years I have been concerned with the care and preservation of the Glebe Lands of Sandys as I look with hope that Bermudians will one day fill the incumbencies of all the parishes and the Cathedral. I have been concerned over the fact that the officials of the Diocese, namely, the Synod, were reluctant to give me any clear understanding on the matter of the Glebe Lands. And I have had to plod away with projecting assertions that I considered were complimentary to the glebe under my care. Because a large portion of ‘my glebe’ was stolen right from under my feet and was boasted about in the very presence of the Bishop of Bermuda along with vestrymen of the Parishes of Sandys and Southampton, I am distressed beyond measure as I think of how the glebe lands have been whittled away either by design or by…..**

**From a historical point of view, the Glebe Lands of Bermuda were distributed to the parishes by the colonial government at the very early history of Bermuda. My research yielded the following information. It was in 1613, the “governor” Richard Norwood divided the island up into nine parishes., with the division consisting of each parish with a land mass of 2miles. I don’t know if the division included St. Georges and Hamilton at that time, But with the island being considered as a land mass of 22 square miles, the nine parishes would have taken up 18 square miles with the town of St. George and the City of Hamilton being each given 2 square miles, making the total of 22square miles.**

**In the Anglican Church, a glebe is land belonging to a benefice and so by default to the incumbent.**

**At the time of the early settlement of Bermuda, the colonial government ensured that Bermuda along with the 13 colonies were given glebe lands in each parish and these existed for the benefit of the incumbent of each parish. I often wonder at the rationale for this. So I am going to suggest to you my personal “take” on the matter. In the modus operandi of grand old English home, the sons were expected to seek competence in certain fields of endeavour such as scholarly pursuits, science, medicine and law, and the son that did not measure up was encouraged to become clergy. Being at the**

 **2.**

**lowest rung of the totem pole, with the remunerations of such positions as being very small, it was considered that glebe lands would be at their disposal**

**to aid in their costs of living. That may well be a figment of my imagination, but it aids me in my understanding as to why glebe were especially given for the benefit of clergy**

**When I arrived in Bermuda I was installed and inducted into the Parish of Sandys under the canon laws of the Church of England 1604. This gave to Thomas Nisbett ( who preceded me in Bermuda) and myself the Freehold and Tenure and so by default the inheritors of the Glebe lands of the respective parishes. The Church was disestablished in 1975 when it became the Anglican Church of Bermuda, but until its canon laws were revised the old canon laws were still in force. The new canon law became effective as of 1980.**

**Section 7 of the Canon Laws of the Anglican Church of Bermuda under the title – REGULATIONS OF THE SYNOD RELATING TO CHURCH LIVINGS AND GLEBE LANDS CONSOLIDATION – In this act, No 1(a) The expression Glebe Lands includes all monies and investments arising from the sale of such lands or which may in the future arise from such sales. No where in the act does it give any idea of the actual land mass of each Glebe. The entire act is taken up with financial concerns of the glebe.**

**Sub section No 4 All glebe lands in these islands aand the investment and monies resulting from the sale of Glebe Lands are hereby vested in the Synod subject to the trusts, terms and provisions hereafter appearing and those already so vested are hereby confirmed subject as aforesaid.**

**The only direct reference to any Glebe Lands can be found in Subsection 2, which reads as follows: The portion of St, Georges Parish which is situated on the main island of Bermuda and commonly called Tucker’s Town shall be included in the living of Hamilton Parish and subject thereto. For each parish in these islands there shall be separate church livings and in respect of each church living there shall be one incumbent or rector in priests orders, regularly ordained in the church of England or in some church of the Anglican communion in full communion therewith.**

**Let me end my presentation on the Glebe lands of the Anglican Church of Bermuda by referencing to that which I note of at the beginning of this presentation. I remarked about how I was distressed, and I am adding devastated over the fact that a lawyer who seemed to be the legal arm of both mr. tercera and the Morgan Point Group was in a joint meeting with the rectors Wardens and vestrymen of both parishes along with the Bishop. In the process of our talks, the lawyer boasted how he had just finished writing up the deeds for the glebe lands that were farmed by Teceira for half of the Glebe**

 **3**

**land that was remaining between the Parishes of Sandys and Southampton. That he could be so emboldened as to make this claim in the very presence of the Bishop caused me to believe that the Bishop had foreknowledge of this action . The terminology of imminent domain came to mind. How Teceira claim imminent domain when I had been traversing the glebe lands many times in each year for the past 43 years. The only action taken was the Bishop having the remaining piece of land surveyed. I consider this to be violent theft in broad daylight, and an assault on me as Rector of Sandys Parish. I estimated that the land in question was worth upward of five million dollars.**

**If the Commission of Inquiry into Historic Land Loss is going to have an effective outcome, it must call upon the government of Bermuda to use it legal arm to right the wrongs of land Losses and Land Grabs.**

**I believe that the Anglican Church of Bermuda should be made to give an accounting of its stewardship of the Glebe Lands of Bermuda.**