

Report about my visit to Nigeria with the Celestial Church of Christ
By Alois Seidl
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Since many years I have been visiting the Celestial church of Christ in Vienna. Last year we could hold an Interfaith Blessing with them, and thus even deepen our relationships.

This may be one reason that I was invited by their leader, Rev. Arthur Nzekwu, the Superior Evangelist of Vienna and also their worldwide mission-leader, to attend their annual meeting in Nigeria around Christmas time. I agreed and prepared for my first trip to Africa. I must admit I was a bit nervous, but I was also looking forward to it a lot.

The meeting took place in the city of Imeko, 4 hours drive from Lagos. Their founder Samuel Oshoffa died in that place, that's why they organize a 6-day-meeting every year. It reminded me of Cheon Pyeong, with members visiting True Father's tomb there.

I spent 10 days in Nigeria, (6 in Imeko). I was their guest, they organized everything, so I couldn't move freely. Our brother Imo Nkanta, the FFWPU leader of Lagos, picked us up from the airport and spent some hours with us. Us, this was Rev. Arthur, his wife and daughter. I have not seen any white person except myself during these 10 days. We were first 2 days in Lagos, in a hostel which was guarded by security personnel. I was not allowed to go out alone.



On the streets there was incredible traffic-jam, in between always motorbikes, gasoline-smell, dusty, dangerous roads. On the roadside I could see little huts where people were living or staying in order to sell drinks, food etc..

The city of Imeko looked like a big village, full of white-clothed Celestial followers. They had prepared white gowns for me too. No shoes allowed, so 6 days only socks (they went barefeet, for me the sand was too hot). The gowns were too tight for me, but I had to wear them always, a real indemnity. I thought, that's what it must feel in Mekka.



It is hard to say how many people were there, from 50.000 to 200.000, they were everywhere, and I could not go too far away from the center, because it would have been too dangerous. Arthur always watched over me, he was concerned. I was like a celebrity, all the time somebody wanted to make pictures or videos with me, and it was difficult to keep smiling all the time.

All day it was very noisy, but also the night time was very loud, so I slept average 2 hours a night. I got weak at the end and I also caught a cold, used my coat to cover me when sleeping. But the atmosphere was very nice, you do everything slower and more relaxed because of the heat.



Arthur made sure that I met the most important people. Of course he wanted to show off with me too. I met Emmanuel Oshoffa, son of the founder, we celebrated his 70th birthday on Dec. 25. Also I gave a (25-min)-speech, and I spoke about True Parents too. Worldwide all Celestials watch this. Like this big Christian open-air-meetings, there were billboards where

you could see me miles back. Surely this was the biggest crowd I ever talked too. I was the only invited guest speaker.

Rev. Arthur connected me with Mama Osho, the real leader there, maybe number 2 or 3 in their hierarchy. She tried very much to take care of me, for example she drove me in her car (with own chauffeur) to all the meetings.

I was also invited to their womens'-only-meeting, where I had to talk as well.



We also visited the hometown of Arthur's wife where we stayed overnight in her mother's house.

Finally Mama Osho drove us to Lagos, and the following day we left for the airport.

On the way there she arranged to meet her personal tailor to take my measures, she wanted him to sew an African "suit" for me, which is considered a big honour for somebody.

I could tell many more small interesting details about my time in Nigeria. I felt God so close in these unusual circumstances where often it was not sure what would happen next. Also, I thought it was good that I could pay indemnity physically, having mostly a cold with a headache, little or no sleep, always being in the public, feeling watched.

Arthur will be staying till Jan. 28th, I hope he and Rev. Imo Nkanta can connect more. Arthur understands us, respects True Mother very much and is actually very close to us. Now we should use the momentum, because the Celestial Church is big in Nigeria, also all Africans know them. I could not speak much about the Blessing there, because only Arthur understands us and he wants to connect with the FFWPU there.

Before I left for Nigeria, we prepared a newsletter for the Celestial church, which I took with me. It was greatly appreciated by their leaders.

I hope that our members in Nigeria especially can use this foundation now to connect more with the Celestial Church, give them the Blessing. Arthur had good talks with Rev. Imo Nkanta, I hope they continue now too.

In conclusion I can say that the whole Africa-experience was very precious to me, also that I was not in hotels and big meeting halls, but in countryside of Africa with all the dangers and excitement, and always the slight tension because I represent True Parents, and all their leaders wanted to talk to me. My most public time ever. Thank you Heavenly Parent, thank you True Parents!

