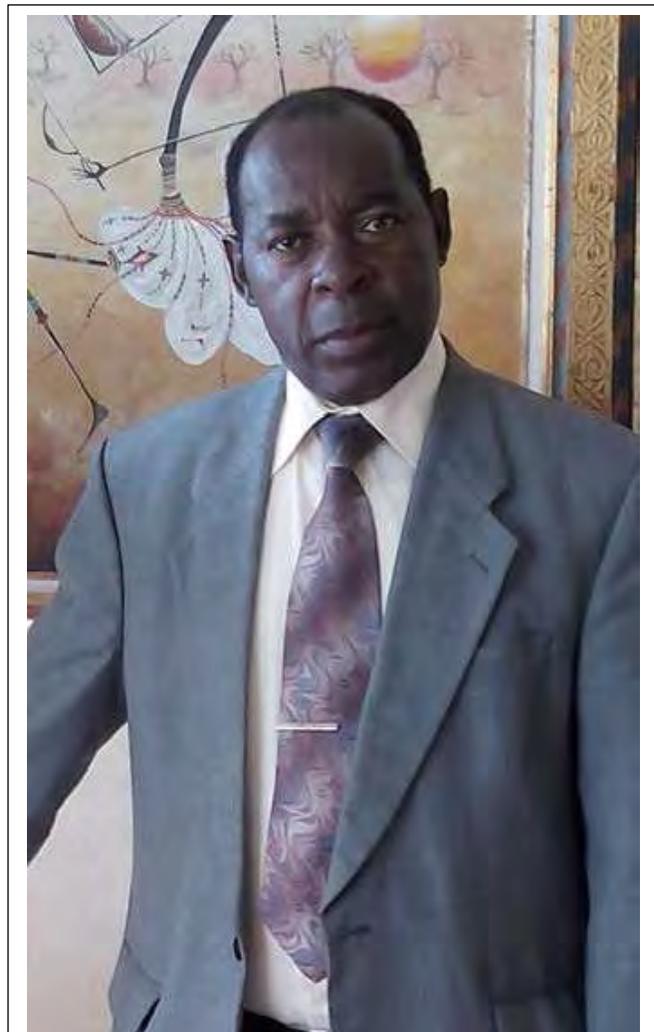


Rev. Afonso Nelson Taty Ntoko Has a Large Vision for Sao Tome and Principe

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Rev. Afonso Nelson Taty Ntoko

WFWP in Sao Tome and Principe chose this year to commemorate International Women's Day at the National Secondary School, to speak to young girls on the topic, "Women at the Center of National Development."

When we started at 11:00 AM, the hall was not yet full of students, girls and boys. Some other female authorities like military members, teachers and entrepreneurs attended the conference. The main lecturer was the Rev. Afonso Nelson Taty Ntoko, the president of FFWPU in Sao Tome and Principe. Rev. Taty Ntoko started to demonstrate that no differences exist between men and women through the dual characteristics as explained in Divine Principle. Yet, men and women have different functions, which through their give and take action harmonize in their portion of responsibility. The woman should not be rejected in our society, as happens in some part of Africa, due to the tradition, religion or culture. The woman is considered like a machine to produce children without any future; a man can have five wives or more without providing any guarantee of taking care of them all. A widow doesn't have a right to all property after the death of the husband. The woman is discriminated against for sexual pleasure because of excision recommended by certain religions. She cannot study or get her own job, etc.

Rev. Taty Ntoko appealed to all the women to wake up and work with, not against, men, but to improve their competence to eliminate any inferiority complex. He urged them to develop their morality and dignity and to work with men in a partnership and complete each other in their different functions and tasks. The woman has to take care of the family, where she is the center of development in educating her child to become a good future leader with a good mind to serve the nation. Without morals and spiritual education in the family, no hope arises for the nation, he said.

Rev. Taty Ntoko exhorted girls and ladies to kick out homosexuality from our continent and educate their daughters on abstinence until entering a pure marriage for stable families and avoiding HIV/AIDS and other STDs.



Students appreciated his address and following comments and displayed intense interest. The hall became crowded with three hundred students.

To close this conference, the schools' bright student musicians demonstrated their talent in offering an exciting spectacle of song and dance.



From an e-mail message by Ms. Alaomi Augustine:

Recently my husband and I came into this mission; we have many challenges we would like to defeat together with our few members. We are only eight blessed families with our blessed children and some single members.

The Rev. Taty Ntoko's message on International Women's Day was to awaken young girls for their future on Sao Tome and Principe's front line of development. In that way, they should hold strong youth values to avoid pregnancy, to keep their purity until marriage and to stand against alcohol, drugs and free sex. Rev. Taty Ntoko told them that if they want to overcome all those challenges, they should understand character education, which he promised to teach them on future occasions.

Following his lecture, he talked about some bright women in the world: Margaret Thatcher, a former prime minister of Great Britain, Jeanne d'Arc [Joan of Arc], and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. As strong, active women, he mentioned Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and Hillary Clinton in the United States. When Rev. Taty Ntoko asked in the hall who among you want to become a big lady leader in our nation -- president of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, a government minister or a deputy? Half of the participants stood up.

Then the Reverend started to talk about True Mother, Hak Ja Han Moon. The whole hall became quiet, as everyone listened very closely. Rev. Taty Ntoko focused most on True Mother's opinion about the man-woman relationship -- not fighting each other because they are not only equals but are partners in collaboration. The faces of some ladies in the hall changed, because it's unusual to hear those words from the ladies' side. Rev. Taty Ntoko told them, "No longer say, behind a big man exists a big lady. We must change from now by saying, Beside a big man exists a big lady." Everybody applauded.

Ours is a small nation. People do ask what obstacles we face. I asked our national leader about that and he replied as follows:

Sao Tome is small, poor country with two hundred thousand inhabitants, many living on donations coming from big economic countries like the US, France, Japan and Taiwan. Also, some international bodies used to help such as the UN, and the European Union...

We are focusing more on youth education. Education is the main issue for development in a country. Young people are facing many bad influences -- alcohol, drugs, smoking and free sex. Especially young girls living in large families whose parents cannot take care of all the children. Everyone has to find some way to survive. You can imagine what comes next.

We need to educate young people, but we need education materials, public rental spaces for education, exchanges of experiences out of the country with other societies. To travel out of this country is very expensive. The only available means even to move around our sub-region is by air.

Rev. Taty Ntoko used to say to us, "If our mind and vision can be sincerely united, everything we do today will succeed tomorrow. So, dream becomes reality." He wants to call us to the sacrifice and long vision of our providence. That's why he said to work on the farm but prepare for the future.