



It began in San Antonio as we boarded a plane with Professor John, Ofoegbu, a citizen of Nigeria now living in the States.

He is the head of Unity for Africa and wants to see God do a special work in Nigeria. There is a saying that “as goes Nigeria, so goes the rest of Africa.” It is critical to Africa’s future. Nearly 150 million people live in a land mass just half again as large as the state of Texas. That would be equivalent to half of the US population living in the states of Texas and New Mexico. It is estimated that 50% are Muslim and 40% are Christian, with Christianity experiencing greater growth. This is the only country in Africa where Christianity is outpacing Islam. Unfortunately the gospel that is most often heard there is the gospel of prosperity. But the people are disillusioned because they are not experiencing it. We were in one of the poorest sections of Nigeria, under tight security (we were the only whites we saw the first seven days, until a soccer coach arrived from the Netherlands). We were either at the conference or secluded in our hotel. All of this made it one of the most difficult conferences for the two of us, especially for me because I like to be out and about. But it was one of the most rewarding, and we believed that we were right where God wanted us at the time.

The first Sunday morning there I spoke in the large home church of the conference with 2,000 or more in attendance. I spoke on our identity in Christ. After the services two doctors, husband and wife, came and gripped our hands saying “this is the kind of teaching that we need in Nigeria.” Later they would take care of me in my 24 hour bout with fever and dysentery. It rained nearly every day that we were there. The hotel had very little that worked as we would expect in an average American hotel. Our van was stopped frequently (at least 7 or 8 times) at check points to make sure that Connie and I were not kidnapped. But, we fell in love with the people. The food was another matter. It was too spicy for us. It did not like us either. But we vicariously enjoyed seeing pastor and professor, John O. enjoying it so much.

I would like to close with two testimonials from leaders who were there. First comes the testimony of Dr. Simeon Ononogbu, a leading pastor of a large church and Director of Unity For Africa, Ebonyi State: “Your coming to Nigeria with your wife is of a tremendous blessing to the church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria. The most fascinating of it all was your anointed



messages based on fear of God, righteous living and selfless sacrifice for the kingdom. This type of message is of invaluable benefit to Nigerian pastors, more so at this end of time. My honest prayer to God is that He brings you back to Nigeria next year. You and your wife are a blessing to this generation, in particular to me and my wife Lucky. God bless you real good.'

From Prof. John Ofoegbu, Unity for Africa Ministries, Inc. "Dear Pastor Steve and Connie, Grace to you and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. I would like to thank you and Connie for joining the Unity for Africa team that went to Nigeria this month for our 2008 conference. Both of you were great and our people enjoyed you very much. Our leaders spoke to me that they would like to see you come back next year to Nigeria during our October 2009 Pastors and Wives Conference. God used you to balance the extreme prosperity message that is sweeping Nigeria and all of Africa. Your messages on: "Christ in the Bible, humility, suffering, the Cross of Christ, and the importance of scripture memorization was well received. Some of the pastors told me that they were challenged to start memorizing God's word on a daily basis. In our sixteen years of working in Nigeria and organizing pastors and wives events, this year's event was the best in terms of content. Both of you brought sanity in a time when the message of the cross is taking a backstage to the modern prosperity message in our country. Our leaders took good notes while you spoke which was an indication of their hunger for God and willingness to learn. In spite of the daily rain (inclement weather), bad roads and poor transportation system in Nigeria, many came from the north, east, west and south to hear and receive the message of the cross. We averaged 1,500 each evening and less than that during the morning sessions. Both of you were on target and with the right attitude. Personally for me, I had the honor of knowing you better and working with you. You were a joy to work with and a gift to the body of Christ worldwide."

With these kinds of responses it is hard not to think of going back no matter how hard the trips might be. Just to get there involves 30-40 hours of transit. One interesting note I will share in closing is that on our one hour domestic flight back down to Lagos, the capital city of 17 million people, we encountered the worst turbulence that we have ever had in a plane. We had been in the air about 15 minutes when the plane suddenly dropped severely twice in a matter of seconds and then veered back and forth as though out of control. The "whole" plane erupted with the cry "Jesus, Save Us! Jesus Save us! Jesus, Help us!" Connie and I wondered how a plane load of Americans would have responded under the same



circumstances. Some of them prayed all the way until our flight landed, not silently, but audibly. We never heard anyone calling on Allah. We love the openness and transparency of these people.

We are thrilled to be doing what we are doing, and we can only do it because of your faithful support. In a few weeks we will be headed to Malawi for our last conference of this year. There will be 1,000 or so pastors and wives in the conference.

May God continue to bless and use you. We are pressing on (Philippians 3:14) and we are thrilled to have you running with us.

Steve and Connie