



Was Christ Really Born On Christmas Day?

It is a tradition that this season every year, the atmosphere is charged and the mood is ecstatic, the good, the bad and the ugly occur. Christendom is in frenzy over the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. One question that needs an answer is Was Christ really born on Christmas Day as most Christians believe? asks *Obinna Nwodim*

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Side Bar

Your favourite **UNIPORT Weekly** goes on returns next year.
Merry Xmas
and
Happy New Year
-Editor

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In a Manger

Christmas

Waiting For The Little Drummer Boy

By Williams Wodi

Caesar Augustus, Census, Angels, Shepherds, Wise Men, Magi, Stars, Mary, Joseph, Manger, Mystery birth; these are some of the names, celestial symbols, events, places and meanings that are associated with Christmas and the great celebrations

that go with this special season that dates back well over 2000 years and still counting going to Bethlehem of Judea to have a mystery child was a very wise and thoughtful decision by Joseph and Mary. After all, they were neither customarily nor legally married to each other as they prepared to

embark on the divine trip. As Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah said in a combustible Sermon at the 2011 *Christmas Carols and Service of Nine Lessons* organized by the Nigerian Television Authority last weekend, nobody witnessed Joseph paying any bride price to Mary's family. I might, at

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On E'West Rd

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Towards A Hitch-Free Xmas

By Humphrey Ogu

It is the dream of everybody to have a Christmas devoid of safety and security worries. The actualization of that dream is, however, largely dependent on steps taken by the individual concerned. For instance, driving at top speed in total disregard for road safety rules is certain to result in death. Again, leaving a gas cylinder on is a direct invitation to fire outbreak at home this dry season.

In this part of the world, where harmattan, which appears to be in a conjugal relationship with the season, is certain to accompany its spouse, fire outbreak is a common occurrence and its destructive effect devastating. Electrical appliances are also known as sources of fire outbreak. And so it behoves everyone to take extreme precaution in the use of these essential domestic equipment as a sure means of preventing fire outbreaks.

In a telephone chat with *UNIORT Weekly*, the Acting Head of the Fire Service Unit, Mr. Hanson Udontah, reaffirmed the preparedness of his men to tackle possible fire outbreaks on Campus, advising residents of the University Community to always switch off all electrical appliances when not in use, and report any fire incident in time. To contact the Unit, according to him, fire victims should call: 07069496938 and 08075851463.

In case of fire eventualities, those who reside outside the University Community, but within the State need to heed the above piece of advice by promptly contacting Rivers State Fire Service on 08072134849, 07031522199, hotline: 084-234777 and landline: 084-236190; while those who are travelling to other states should find out the contact lines of the Fire Service in those places.

Another issue that requires attention this season is security. This matter becomes even more crucial now that the security situation in the Country is posing some challenges. A new wind of insecurity appears to be blowing across the country, manifesting in cases of kidnapping and robbery in the Southern parts of the nation, while bomb blasts are fast becoming a regular occurrence in Northern Nigeria. In fact, no part of the Country is at the moment enjoying absolute security.

Worse still, places of worship have, for instance, become prime targets for detonation of bomb and

Improved Explosive Devices (IEDS). This is especially so, as the threats posed by the Islamic religious sect, *Boko Haram* has become too real. During Christmas festivities, most people take their families to amusement parks and suchlike relaxation joints. It is advisable at this point in time for everybody to exercise caution, be safety and security-conscious by reporting suspected persons and movements to the appropriate security agents for prompt counter-terrorism measures.

It is a known fact that security is everyone's business. The words of the Director, Centre for Ethnic and Conflict Studies (CENTECS), Professor Mark Anikpo, in an interview with this *Weekly* sometime ago, are instructive here as we approach Christmas and New Year.

"Most people think that security is the duty of the Police, Army, Civil Defence or other uniformed or security personnel. If you don't participate in security of your environment, you might be a victim of insecurity. If you don't report people who are likely to cause security breaches, you might be a

victim," Professor Anikpo once stated.

Equally relevant to the issue at hand is the submission made by notable columnist, Okey Ndiye, in an article titled: "*Security Is Everything*" in the online publication, *SaharaReporters.com*. He observed that "...the recent spate of violence in different parts of the country, and in particular the ratcheting up of bomb blasts in Abuja, ought to give pause to all of us... The war against terror is one that all Nigerians of goodwill should enlist to fight."

Again, experience has shown that burglary is much more common during the festive season. This, therefore, calls for extra caution. The security challenges in our immediate environment come in different forms. The bottom line is that everyone should heed the words of Professors Anikpo and Ndiye, as well as that of Mr Udonta and be involved in fighting insecurity and threat to safety.

Avoid harmful lifestyles, be security conscious, drive safely, be at alert, stay safe and have a hitch-free celebration. Wishing you all a safe and secure Christmas and a wonderful New Year!



People in Xmas mood during CARNIRIV

Staff, Students, Unveil Christmas Plans

By Otikor Samuel

Preparatory to Christmas and New Year festivities, staff and students are unveiling plans on how to celebrate the period which offers families, organizations and groups' opportunities for reunion and meetings, as well as relaxation and recreation after the hustling and bustling activities of survival in 2011.

For Jones Ayuwo, a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities, the season would offer a good opportunity to reunite with his family back in the village. He plans to commence the festivity with a Church programme at Our Saviour's Chapel to set the spiritual tone for the season, as well as making some people vulnerable to danger due to

mass movements on the Country's poor road networks and possible robbery attack.

"This year will be a bit special as I hope to travel with my family to my home, Ataba, where we would visit the countryside, participate in activities of the family, as well as football competition among club sides, which is a round-robin kind of event," he said, disclosing that he would not wish to miss the competition, which he said is one of the spectacular events that bring his people together during the season.

Also responding to how he would spend his Christmas Holiday, President, Rotary Club of Choba-UNIORT, Mr Chukwuemeka Abali, said the celebration would be in-house and limited to his nuclear family due to the hike in price of fuel and insecurity in the Country.

"Though, it is going

to be a quite celebration, I will take my family out on Christmas Day and on Boxing Day but we are not travelling home for the festivities," he said.

For Blessing Chimele, a Postgraduate Student of the Institute of Education, whose birthday is four days away from Christmas, she would spend the time with friends, family, well-wishers, as well as reflect on the prospects for the New Year. Miss Chimele also disclosed her intention to reach out in any little way to the less-privileged in society to enable them find some meaning in the birth of Christ.

A student of School of Science Laboratory Technology (SSLT), Miss Blessing Nwoke, who just concluded her final examination before the ASUU strike, said the period would be ecstatic for her following the successful completion of the five-year course as one of the pioneer students.



Jones Ayuwo

Blessing Chimele

Blessing Nwoke

Emeka Abali

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TIMARIV, UNIPORT, To Collaborate On Traffic Mgt On E'West Rd

By Ethel Wopara

Zonal Controller, Traffic Management Agency of Rivers State (TIMARIV), Zone 6, Mr. Gift Egbah, has declared the Agency's willingness to partner the University on traffic management along the East-West Road as part of its core mandate of improving traffic flow in the State.

Mr Egbah, who made the declaration when he led a team on a Courtesy Visit on the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, last Friday, said the Agency is desirous of collaborating with the Institution in the area of manpower, ensuring free flow of traffic and maintenance of law and order along the Choba axis of the Road.

The Zonal Controller underscored the need to also partner the Rivers State Environmental Sanitation Authority and other security outfits in the State in enforcing traffic rules and checking the activities of street traders and commercial motorists who are responsible for poor traffic management that leads to incessant holdups at the crucial East/West-UNIPORT Junction.

Receiving the team on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Ethelbert Nduka, expressed delight with TIMARIV for its willingness to work with the University, adding that Management would support efforts aimed at providing solutions to traffic problems on that section of the busy road. He noted that Staff and Visitors to the University are affected by heavy traffic



DV-C (Admin), Prof Nduka, (3rd from Right), TIMARIV Officers & other staff of the University

congestion along the road, which impacts negatively on security and economic activities around the area. In their contributions, Chief Security Officer of the University, Mr Reginald Isiguzo; Traffic Officer, Dr Gloria Emenike and Deputy Registrar, Information, Publications and Public Relations Unit, Williams Wodi, suggested designating parking spaces to commercial motorists and mapping out sites to street traders as short-term measures for managing traffic problems along the affected area.

Officer in Charge of Traffic Zone 6, Sampson Ambrose and Officer in Charge of Patrol Zone 6, Donatus Mbaa accompanied the Zonal Controller on the visit.

Christmas Is Around The Corner

Christmas is a season that most people look up to; a period when those who reside in the cities take time out to reunite with their families and loved ones in the countryside. Christmas starts from late November to December when the Harmattan begins and shops start advertising Christmas gifts, such as hampers, bags of rice, groundnut oil and at this time, prices of food stuffs are on the increase because sales are also on the increase. Christmas decorations and songs become more prominent and children count days to Christmas for their holiday. For children, it is goodbye to school and regimented morning routine.

Christmas is the most celebrated holiday in the world and is observed by billions of people. During Christmas, people travel a lot. These travels are usually planned ahead of time, because a lot of things are involved such as money and time, so people travel here and there to buy food stuffs, clothes and shoes for their children. Most families see it as a time to visit their aged parents, family friends and loved ones in distant places usually in the villages.

Travelling during Christmas usually takes place during the end of December which involves, friends and also families commuting by different means either train, boat, ship, car or aeroplane in order to be at a specific place at a

By Mercy Don-Baridum

specific time to reunite with others to celebrate the season.

Christmas Day is a public holiday which is marked by exodus from towns and cities as Nigerians return to their ancestral villages to be with family and loved ones to share with the less fortunate. As the towns and cities empty out, people will troop to the markets to buy things; chickens, goats and cows that be needed for Christmas celebrations.

Christmas lights and banners are usually displayed on the streets, music played from speakers, and Christmas trees placed in prominent places which are common in many parts of the world; at town squares and consumer shopping areas to display decorations. Rolls of brightly colored paper with secular or religious Christmas motifs are manufactured for the purpose of wrapping gifts. The Christmas season in Nigeria is filled with various events such as parties, wedding ceremonies, launchings, Christmas Carols in churches and schools, visitation to places such as hospitals, prison yards, amusement parks, etc.

Christmas Day is a day set aside to celebrate the birth of Jesus into the world in the form of man to atone for the sins of humanity which is considered to be the primary meaning of the event. Some people feel it is a time to visit tourism sites. Such sites in Calabar for instance include *Marina Resort, Tinapa, Obudu Cattle Ranch*, as well as go for events such as *Night of a Thousand Laughs* and also other ceremonies such as *CARNIRIV* in Port Harcourt.

Speaking with *UNIPORT Weekly*, Doris Suanu of the Student Affairs Department observed that Christmas is a time to share with loved ones, especially her family, stressing that places she would like to visit include the motherless babies homes or even prison yards to share her love and gifts with them.

Also speaking, a Postgraduate student, Ngozi Okeh, said travelling during Christmas is not really the best, due to traffic jams on the roads. According to her, travelling on the road now when vehicles are so many is risky, not to talk of Christmas period when there would be so many cars and people using the roads, stressing that she would prefer travelling after the Christmas celebration when the road would be a bit free of traffic.

Christians celebrate Christmas in various ways where they attend church services in the morning and later in the day have fun, fun all the way. For some, this period is a time to celebrate their various festivals, beauty pageants, masquerades, wrestling, and lots of promos by companies at which lots of singing and dancing would take place. Where do you intend visiting or travelling to spend this period? Merry Christmas!

Some Xmas Shopping Tips

By Ethel Wopara



It's here again! It's that time of the year when we shop for gifts for loved ones, dresses and toys for kids, groceries and foodstuffs for the D-day and decorations for our homes. Shopping during this period could be very stressful, especially for working class moms. While it is advisable to shop in bits to avoid total body breakdown, it is also recommended to cash into sales promotions, discounts and prize slashes to reduce shopping cost. Here are practical tips to make shopping easy for you this season.

- **Avoid last minute rush:** Nothing is as stressful as last minute Christmas shopping. This allows you to beat the crowd at the shops and prevents you from picking up left-overs.

- **Take a list:** Pretty sure you already have a list. However, keep a pen and paper handy to write down ideas as they come. Ensure you take your list along to avoid impulsive buying.

- **Set a budget:** Work out a budget and stick to it. This would ensure you don't go bankrupt in January.

- **Look out for discounts:** Key into sales promotions this season like the on-going *first Port Harcourt Xmas Discount Market* at the Liberation Stadium, Elekahia, Port Harcourt and after sales services like home delivery services offered by big shopping malls in town.

- **Buy extra:** You never should underestimate the number of guests that could visit your home this period, so shop for extra food stuff, beverages and other household needs.

- **Pamper yourself:** Finally make out time this holiday season to pamper yourself. Reward yourself with something inexpensive but fun for working hard all year round. Have a Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year.



After Christmas Celebration: What Next?

One of the commonest features of Christmas in this part of the world is large-scale celebration. In most denominations in Christendom, this is the season to commemorate the birth of Christ. To each group, no amount of money spent in the celebration of the Nativity of Christ—the Saviour of the world could be said to be too much.

Whether or not December 25th date is the real birth date has, for ages, continued to generate controversy as some other sects in Christendom believe that the man whose birth is celebrated in the last month of every year was actually born on another date. This controversy has little or no effect on the magnitude of the festivities that characterize the yuletide.

To most people, irrespective of belief or religion, being among the living at the period is enough reason to celebrate. This especially so, when the number of people that die before the end of the year due various illnesses, accidents and some other causes is, to say the least, alarming.

In the lives of a people, who had to grapple with poverty, hunger, malnutrition, lack of basic health facilities, travelling on bad roads in vehicles that emit hazardous fumes and live in environments noise from private power-generating sets are in fierce competition over which will win in the generation of noise and fumes, resulting in scores of people dying daily, surviving each year, is therefore a major achievement. It, therefore, calls for celebrations. No doubt about that.

By Humphrey Ogu

What is mind-boggling, however, is the rate of reckless spending, which often leaves individuals in penury in January. Most people celebrate Christmas without giving a passing thought as to how they would feed and generally fend for their families. They march into the New Year in abject poverty. This is worst among Civil Servants and other middle income earners that depend on salary that comes at the end of the month. In most cases, such persons are forced into hunger and to assuage it, they have to look



Revellers celebrating at CARNIRIV

for people or institution to borrow money from. This self-inflicted economic hardship is avoidable with some measure of prudence in spending habits in this season. There is certainly no wisdom in trying to impress people—friends and neighbours just for the sake of it. Nor is it reasonable to compete with anyone else in terms of dressing, feeding, material acquisition and all those mundane stuff that massage little egos. To do so is

tantamount to burying one's problems in bottles of alcohol, believing such problems would be laid to rest by that act. Of course, no challenge in real life vanishes without being tackled head on.

The panacea to having a Happy-New-Year friends and well-wishers are wont to say by way of greetings is to work towards it. No one has a Happy-New-Year because he or she has been so wished by words of mouth. And the best way to achieve happiness in January and beyond is to plan for it by avoiding extravagant lifestyle this yuletide. Profligacy at Christmas is the highway to a miserable New Year. Therefore, those who are desirous of having a joyous New Year must shun unnecessary spending; they

must prepare for that period before the next payday by saving enough money. The watchword, therefore, is to celebrate without forgetting that January is

sure to demand some debts from every living being: School fees, feeding at home, contingencies, etc. All said, the choice is for the individual to make. To those who accept the view expressed here and others who prefer to have Christmas jamboree now and cry later; I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! After the Christmas jamboree: what next? Of course, life goes on in January. Welcome to 2012!

A Reassessment Of Institutional Accreditation In UNIPORT

Last week, the University played host to members of the National Universities Commission (NUC) Accreditation Team, who were in the Institution for the newly introduced Institutional Accreditation for Universities. Authorities of the Institution were commended for the giant strides in the attainment of the vision and mission of the founding fathers. It observed that UNIPORT University has done well to be a rankable university, particularly as a second generation University in Nigeria.

This is a novel approach by the Commission in its responsibility of overseeing and ensuring that Nigerian Universities operated within the set guidelines for efficient service delivery. For five days, various areas of the University were examined by the Team of very experienced academics and professionals. Members of the Team did not leave any one in doubt that they knew what they were in the University to do, as they set out their job with a meeting with the Vice - Chancellor, Principal Officers, Deans as well as Directors and other schedule officers.

At the Exit Meeting, last Friday, Chairman of the Team, Professor Nimbe Adedipe, told the Vice- Chancellor and Management that the Team adopted 7 standards in the course of its assessment, noting that the mechanisms adopted were fair and just. He pointed out that these were indices that would ensure that universities in Nigeria returned to the good old days when teaching and training, research and community service were given a pride of place in the scheme of things. According to him, the clusters examined were an assessment of how the

By Obinna Nwodin

University had fared in the discharge of its core responsibility of teaching, research and community service, as well as meeting the primary objective of achieving its vision and mission; institutional governance and administration; research; quality of teaching learning and research; efficiency and effectiveness; extension services and consultancies; transparency, financial management and consultancy. Observations were made along these indices and recommendations made by the Team. It expressed optimism that if the authorities adhered to the recommendations, the University would be on course in becoming not only the best in Nigeria, but in Africa.

This is imperative when viewed from the backdrop that, recently, a Workshop on Quality Assurance and Quality Control was organised to boost the capacity of the University to achieve accreditation requirements. The Committee had observed that although the University was on course in achieving its vision and mission, its strategic goals have not been fully adhered to and that there was room for improvement. The Team recommended a shorter time line in achieving the goals, in place of adopting the current 10- year plan. On institutional governance, the Team submitted that Council and Management would need to meet to formalise the realization of the powers given them by the University Act.

The Team noted that the University has performed well within the framework of the declared strategic goals, adopted the Committee system, but that it must be cautious in setting up too many ad-hoc Committees. Professor Adedipe also observed that the University had done well in the application of resources available to it. He said that the Campus was impressive with good open spaces and well-maintained lawns. The Team also acknowledged the excellent sporting facilities in the University, suggesting the need to upgrade the Choba and Delta Park Campuses. The Team decried the poor state of hostel facilities, particularly the King Jaja halls of residence, advising that prompt attention be paid to them.

The Team also observed that adequate attention was not paid to the University Master Plan, stressing that the landscaping was not in consonance with the grandeur of the structures. It recommended a review of the Master Plan.

In the area of teaching and research, the Team noted that there was need to ensure that every member of the University community had access to information, stressing the importance of updating the University website regularly. It suggested a definite research policy in the University, including regular research fairs.

According to the Team, the University must begin to re-order its priorities such that the number of Centres and Institutes are rationalized. The Team commended the research efforts at the Institute of Petroleum Studies. It also commended the University for adhering to standards in the admission process, noting that the stand of the Administration was the right one. The Committee was impressed with the quantity and quality of students' intake vis a vis minimum requirement. It also expressed delight that the authorities adopted due process in the course of recruitment. The Committee also noted that while water and electricity supply are still epileptic, Information Technology needed to be improved upon for easy access to information.

On the general ethos, the Team observed that the University has done well as there was peace, cultural and religious harmony and no obvious report of cult activities.

This, certainly, is the time for all stakeholders in the University to put their hands on the plough in complimenting the efforts of Management in the quest to ensure effective service delivery in the University in line with recommendations made by the Institutional Accreditation Team to UNIPORT.



V-C, Prof. Ajenka (Arrowed), Principal Officers and the NUC Team

Biochemist Advises Varsity Community On Xmas Eating Habit



Dr. Wegwu, an array of fruits for Xmas

Following the merriment that accompanies Christmas celebration, a period when Christians and non-Christians alike commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, a Biochemist in the Faculty of Science, Dr Matthew Wegwu, has advised the University Community to moderate food consumption which is always abundant during the festival.

Dr Wegwu, who made the observation in a chat with UNIPORT Weekly last Wednesday, stated that though foods are nutritional substances consumed to assist body building and growth, it could be harmful when abused, warning staff and students to avoid the consumption of food with much oil, particularly, saturated oil as it is capable of raising the level of cholesterol, which is a major risk factor leading to heart diseases, heart attack and stroke.

Wegwu, who is also Acting Dean, Student Affairs Department, pointed out that excess alcohol in the body has the potential to interfere with glycolysis, which is the breakdown of metabolic pathways that

convert glucose into pyruvate, advising consumers to always check the percentage of alcohol and other solvent available in drinks before consumption. "Alcohol consumption should be done moderately but let me advise the University Community to abstain from consuming glued alcohol."

"Maggi is monosodium glutamate which is responsible for Chinese Restaurant Syndrome. It is not good for epileptic patients. We are also yet to know the nutritional value of pepper, except the fresh ones which should be consumed in moderate quantity as excess pepper could enhance ulcer, spices for noodles should be avoided," the Biochemist said, preferring local seasoning, which he said is more nutritious.

"Eat well, drink water moderately and live well. It is not the quantity of food consumed that matters, it is the quality, so do not take anything in excess. Junks should be eliminated," he advised, wishing all staff and students compliments of the season.

By Otikor Samuel



Jones Ayuwo

Ahead of Fuel subsidy removal by the Federal Government, a Lecturer in the University resorts to bicycle

CampusMetro PGDPT Graduates Donate Roll-Up Flex To IPS

By Headman Alu & Otikor Samuel

Batch III graduands of Postgraduate Diploma in Petroleum Technology & Project Development (PGDPT) of the Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS), have presented a roll-up stand to their Alma Mater displaying various geological field trips and intensive training activities embarked upon by the Class during the one-year programme.

Making the presentation to Director, IPS, Professor Mike Onyekonwu and Coordinator, IPS-PGDPT, Dr Sunday Ikiensikimama, Class Representative, Mr Chioma Chukwu, who was accompanied by one of his colleagues, Mr Inam Enobong, said the donation was in acknowledgement of the magnanimity of the Institute in hosting them in the one-year programme, commending Management for keeping the goals of the Institute alive.

Responding, Professor Onyekonwu congratulated them for the gesture, recalling that their commitment to studies had earned them excellent results. Also speaking, Dr Ikiensikimama urged them to translate knowledge gained during the programme into beneficial commodity for society, their families and future career.

In a related event, Mr Chukwu, has called for the inclusion of courses and Petroleum Software such as Well Testing, Reservoir Simulation, MBAL, SAPHIR, PETREL, ECLIPSE, as well as field trip for surface and sub-surface production in the programme.

Briefing UNIPORT Weekly after a Courtesy Visit on the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajenka, the Class Representative said that the inclusion of the Courses would expand frontiers of knowledge of the students, praising Professor Ajenka for his achievements as pioneer Director of the Institute.



(L-R) Chukwu, Inam, Prof Onyekonwu and Dr. Ikiensikimama

Waiting For The Little Drummer Boy

cont'd from p1

the risk of sounding blasphemous, add that there were also no Aso Ebi ladies that ushered Mary into any arena to search out her future husband in the presence of any congregation. There were certainly no bridal train, no flower girls or Priest proclaiming the mystery of "one plus one" between a man and woman.

Just a celestial proclamation by one Angel Gabriel and the Immaculate Conception was announced to a bewildered Mr. Joseph, who was not allowed any opportunity to seek explanation of the prophecy. Bethlehem, it would be recalled, was about eight kilometres from the city of Jerusalem where the almighty Caesar Augustus had decreed a census that was compulsory for all eligible citizens. So, nobody in that holy city knew that Mary and Joseph were not legally joined together as man and wife. Wise lovers! Now, those splitting hairs about the exact date of this mystery birth are merely searching for a needle in a haystack. Just perish the thought; after all, the Holy Book gave no exact date for the most important birth that changed the world. The debate by Ecclesiastical Scholars about the propriety of 25th December as the exact date of birth of Christ has become unnecessary, even undesirable. This milestone birth may not have happened in 1AD; it may have taken place in 2AD or 7AD. And so what? After all, most of the things we do today are simply based on agreement and social convention.

The first recorded celebration of Christmas took place on 25th December, in 336AD during the reign of Emperor Constantine, who was the first Roman Christian monarch. It was Pope Julius I, however, who officially decreed the date we have set aside to mark the birth of Christ. The *Mass of Christ* (Christ Mass, also known as *Communion* or *Eucharist*), was shortened over time to be known simply as *Christmas*. The birth of Christ which happened over 2,000 years ago, has since been appropriated by people of all races and creed as a huge present to humanity. Even non-believers find it almost impossible to escape from the encompassing aura of Christmas celebration. Those who do not believe in Christmas are forced to *suspend* their lives until after the event from which they have no hiding place. Those who dodge Christmas are boxed out of their self-denial on *Boxing Day* when most people go sight-seeing and exchange gifts in the true spirit of the season.

In Nigeria, Christmas, which came with our less than edifying colonial experience, remains a huge family and community event. In a special season like this, family members get together to have fun and relive old experiences. For some, it is about the only time in the year when they are compelled to return to their forgotten villages to join in community development and meet old folks. Spoilt city children become very ecstatic on experiencing countryside life for the first time and even learn a few things in their mother tongue. Village life takes on a new meaning for everybody altogether.

Back in town, parties, shows, fun, visits, exchange of gifts, text messages and a lot of eating and drinking will take place. Some will go to church to listen to winding and boring sermons about a story we all learned in Sunday school classes. People will decorate streets and artificial trees, dance in street carnivals, while mischievous youngsters will be on hand to light up the night skies with firecrackers, despite endless Police warnings about the illegality of the act. Children will visit *Santa Claus* grotto in anticipation of gifts from a wishful spirit from outer space. It is the only time when people temporarily set aside the drudgeries of this life to settle into an unaccustomed slow rhythm that does wonders to their health and sense of humour.

In the so-called good old days, Church choirs used to visit congregation members in their homes to sing *Christmas Carols* in anticipation of some generous rewards ranging from cash to presents that are in agreement with the spirit of the season. Do people still attend the *Service of Nine Lessons* these days? Many things have changed in indeed. Good old *Christmas Cards* are no longer in vogue these days. Inscrutable SMS, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, Email, Phone Calls, now occupy the space vacated by the old mode of Christmas greetings.

The 2011 Christmas spirit has

been severely dampened by the shadow of fuel subsidy removal by executive fiat. That the people no longer have a say about harsh economic policies that affect them is one of the ironies of modern governance in Nigeria. Senator Magnus Abe is heading the Senate Committee that is investigating the contentious fuel subsidy matter. Yet Mr. President is speculated to be going ahead, by other means, to remove the so-called subsidy that benefits a few fat cats at the citizen's expense. By the way, did Mr. President tell us about removal of fuel subsidy when he unfolded his transformation agenda on his campaign trail?

Fuel subsidy or no fuel subsidy, chickens, goats and turkeys will be sentenced to death without trial this Christmas season. No trial judges would be required. Ditto for bags of rice and their complement. Whether you believe in the message and significance of Christmas or not; whether you agree or disagree with the date of birth of the wonder boy, whether or not you have money to celebrate this *Yuletide*; it is practically impossible to escape the mood of this special season that promises joy to the world and peace to mankind. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in advance! See you in 2012.



Agric Faculty Farm Slashes Livestock Prices For Xmas

By Mercy Don-Baridam

Christmas is in the air and to join millions of people around the world to celebrate this period, lots of sales are ongoing and the Faculty of Agriculture Demonstration Farm is not

left out its proprietors have promised to make products available and affordable to the University Community in time for the Yuletide.

This disclosure was made by the Demonstration Farm Officer, Mr Tubotamuno Sikibo, while exchanging views with *UNI-PORT Weekly* at the Farm in Choba Park, last Tuesday.

Mr Sikibo, who is also the Farm Manager, disclosed that the Demonstration Farm has started selling some of the quality farm products such as chicken (broilers) and eggs to service the season, mushroom, snails, fish, vegetables, fruit tree seedlings, flower seedlings and oil palm seedlings. He added that prices are moderate, disclosing that trainings are also available in fish farming, snailry, mushroom production and broiler and egg production for interested

members of the public.

"In this farm, we have nine Units which include mushroom, livestock, poultry, forestry, wildlife, fisheries, farm power and machineries, which involve processing and the use of tractors, Commercial and Research Unit, and also the Crop and Soil Science Unit in the main Campus behind the University Water Company. We have started processing four types of timber trees too", he disclosed.

In her contribution, the Head, Poultry Unit, Bassey Brown, disclosed that as long as stock lasts, sales would be ongoing, even in the New Year, pointing out that the demonstration farm does not only engage in production of quality farm products, but also has room for training of outsiders.

Christmas is often marked with lots of merry making, drinking, eating and dining with friends and family members and to celebrate this period, the sale of chicken and fish to the University community is in full gear. So, what are you waiting for? Just visit the Demonstration Farm and purchase livestock at reduced prices. Merry Christmas in advance.



Some birds in the University poultry

GUIDEPOST

APPOINTMENTS

Dr I.P. Aleleye-Wokoma, Department of Animal and Environmental Biology, granted a *Contract Appointment*, effective on date of assumption of duty.

Dr Owekumo Eradiri, granted *Visiting Appointment* as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Technology, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, effective on date of Assumption of Duty.

Dr Otu Ekpeyong, Department of Sociology, appointed Senior Staff Advisor of the African Students Mission Headquarters in Ghana.

STUDY LEAVE WITH PAY

Mrs Ifeoma Asianuba, Department of Electrical/Electronics Engineering, granted a Study Leave with pay effective, October 2011 to September 2013.

2011 COMMUNITY XMAS DRAMA

The Institute of Arts and Culture (Arts Village) invites the entire University Community to a drama performance titled: *Mary, the Blessed Mother*, written by Julie Okoh and directed by Sam Dede on Monday, December 19, 2011, at Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium. Time is 6:30 p.m. Attendance is free.

Contact: Sam Dede, Events Manager (Arts Village)

LITERARY EVENING IN HONOUR OF V-C

Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Rivers State branch holds a *Literary Evening* in honour of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, at the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge on Tuesday, December 20, 2011. Time is 4: 00 p.m. Lovers of poetry are invited.

Contact: Obinna Nwodin, Chairman ANA Rivers

ENUMERATION OF DOGS ON CAMPUS

Following a memo titled: "Menace and Dangers of Stray Dogs on Campus" issued by the Health Services Department, an enumeration exercise for dogs owned by staff has been slated between Monday, 19th December and Friday, 23rd December, 2011. Time: 7:30 am to 1:00 pm daily. Staff resident on Campus who own dog(s) are advised to submit a copy of Anti-Rabies Vaccination Certificates for each dog to the Environmental Health Officer at the Health Centre before the date of inspection. Defaulters would have their dogs impounded.

Contact: Dr Chinwe Ezirim

XMAS SAFETY ALERT

As we proceed on Christmas Holiday staff are advised to be safety and security conscious:

- Ensure that all electrical appliances are switched off
- Ensure that all windows and doors are locked
- Ensure that all taps are turned off

Briefs From Other Varsities

UNIUYO PRODUCES PIONEER MED DOCTORS

Pioneer Medical graduates of the University of Uyo; have been inducted into the membership of Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN). The 16 medical doctors were offered automatic employment for *Housemanship* at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.

Registrar of the Council, Dr Abdulmumini Ibrahim, charged the new doctors to apply both theoretical and practical trainings learnt in the University to real life situations.

UNIJOS INDUCTS PHARMACISTS

6² new Pharmacists from the University of Jos, have been inducted into the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN). Registrar of PCN, Mr Ahmed Mora, charged the inductees to discharge their professional duties with humility, honesty and the fear of God. The Valedictorian, Emmanuel Onyekachi, who made a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 4.59 on a five point scale, promised to apply what they were taught in their practice, commending Lecturers of the Department for imparting sound knowledge and morals to them.

UNILORIN 49 BACK IN COURT OVER ENTITLEMENTS

The 49 Lecturers of University of Ilorin (UI) reinstated by the Supreme Court, after the University sacked them following the ASUU strike in 2001 are back in Court to enforce the implementation of the judgement terms. The affected staff want a Federal High Court in Ilorin to direct the University to comply with the terms of the Supreme Court judgement, including the payment of their allowance and promotion benefits.

UN WANTS HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES

A study commissioned by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has stressed the need to prioritise access to higher education for

refugees, as a tool to rebuild lives and for post-conflict reconstruction.

The report, *Refugee Education. A Global Review* by the policy development and evaluation service of the UNHCR, published last month, said access to education among refugees was limited and uneven across regions and settings of displacement.

Covering primary, secondary and higher education on a global scale, the study aimed to find ways to improve the

UN agency's policy and programming in order to better achieve its mandate to promote refugee education. According to the report, lack of financial resources and their inconsistency, as well as a shortage of educational expertise both within UNHCR and among implementing partners, has limited progress on refugee education. One of its recommendations is for more higher education opportunities for refugees, since higher education plays a critical role in advancing both individual refugees and leadership in societies in

protracted crises and in post-conflict reconstruction.

UK LOWERS VARSITY FEES TO FILL DEGREE COURSES

By Tim Ross

Almost a fifth of English universities have cut the price of their degrees as they try to attract more students. The decision to cut fees comes just over a month before the deadline for university applications. Figures showed that 24 new universities and former Polytechnics and one further Education College have lowered their tuition fees to below £7,500 a year. Most elite academic institutions and red-brick universities will still charge the maximum £9,000. Applications to university have fallen 13 per cent before the increase in fees next autumn. The decision to cut fees comes just over a month before the deadline for university applications, meaning thousands of students who have already applied may find their costs falling.

The change, sanctioned by the Government's fair access watchdog, was criticised for taking cash out of students' pockets after many universities that lowered their fees also reduced the bursaries they will provide while students study.

-Compiled by Otikor Samuel

Ndene Receives Institute Fellowship

Deputy Registrar, Dr Godwin Ndene, has been conferred with Fellowship of the Institute of Corporate Administration of Nigeria (ICAN), in recognition of his competence in administrative function, visionary leadership and outstanding performance as an ace administrator by the Governing Council of the Institute.

Ndene, who is Faculty Officer in the Faculty of Management Sciences, was cited for his organizational abilities in helping to achieve organizational goals in the public service, where he has made a mark. The Award which was conferred on him on Saturday, 10th December, 2011, at Aldgate Resort, Port Harcourt entitles Dr. Ndene to all rights and privileges associated with the prestigious Award.



Dr. Ndene

Was Christ Really Born On Christmas Day?

Cont'd from p1

Biblical accounts, historical facts, submissions by Ecclesiastical Scholars and even admission of the truth by Church leaders show that it has been an age-long doctrinal error that Jesus Christ was born on 25th December.

The physical features of Palestine, depicting the climatic condition of the environment indicates that Christ was not really born in December. According to the Gospel's story, there were shepherds attending to their flocks in the open fields by night when Christ was born. This could not have been possible, in December, because December which corresponds with the Jewish ninth month, *Chisleu*, (Zech 7:1) was a time of winter in Palestine when the people could not stay outside in the night due to the severity of the cold. But October which is the Jewish seventh month called *Tisri* or *Ethanin* (1 Kings 8:2), came with normal weather condition that permitted outdoor activities.

The fact that the Churches in Christendom observe the death of Christ in April also shows that His birth could not have taken place in December. Truly, Christ was crucified in April which is *Nisan* or *Abib*, the first month of the Jewish year, when the Feast of Passover or Unleavened Bread was celebrated. We all agree that Jesus Christ lived for 33 1/2 years. If we admit that He was born in December, it will mean that His 33rd Birthday was in December and six months later which was June, he died. Then the Churches would have been celebrating Christ's death in June. It is indeed a contradiction of the doctrinal position of many.

The re is no authentic history that lends support to the teaching that Jesus Christ was born in December. There was no festival as Christmas until the Fourth Century and it was the Roman Church in meeting paganism half-way that fixed December 25 as Christ's birthday.

beyond all doubt. Ecclesiastical Scholar Alexander Hislop had stated that, "The time of the year and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated proves its origin". Earl W. Count in his book *400 Years of Christmas* stated that "December 25th is no more the historical date of Christ's birth than is any other.

Hislop in his book, *The Two Babylons* further stated that, "There is not a word in the Scriptures about the precise day of Christ's birth. What is

falls in the month of *Marchesvan* which answers to the later part of October and the former part of November... From whence, it appears that Christ must be born before the middle of October, since the first rain was yet to come". Professor of Church History at the Mansfield College, Cecil John Cadoux in his book, *The Life of Jesus*, wrote, "There are no grounds to think that Jesus Christ was born in December".

Furthermore, the *Illustrated World*



Madonna and Jesus child

recorded there implies that at whatever date His birth took place, it could not have been on December 25th... The cold of the night from December to February is very piercing and it was not the custom for the shepherd of Judea to watch their flocks in the open fields later than about the end of October. It is in the last degree incredible, that the birth of Christ could have taken place at the end of December".

There is great unanimity on this issue among commentators such as Barnes, Doddridge, Lightfoot, Joseph Scaliger, Joseph Mede, amongst other renowned Ecclesiastical Scholars. Joseph Mede had stated that, "At the birth of Christ, every woman and child was to go to be taxed at the city where they belonged, whither some had long journeys, but the middle of winter was not fitting for such a business, especially for women with children to travel in. Therefore Christ was not born in the depth of winter..."

Hislop also quoted Gill as stating in his commentary on Luke 2:8 that: "The first rain

Encyclopaedia states that "Our calendar by which we reckon the days, months and years is dated from the first year after the birth of Jesus Christ. We call this the Christian era. But as we study and read, we will learn that Jesus Christ was not really born on the 25th of December.

The season is a time for most people to make more money. The most profitable season for nearly all shops is the Christmas season, the rate of crime; lawlessness and hooliganism have been known to be at their peak during this season. It is a time when people eat and drink excessively. And we ask: of what significance is this season for the edification and propagation of the reason why Christ was born, or rather was Christ born on Christmas Day? See you in 2012.



Faces of Winners of Maiden Garden City Choral Festival



Chapel of Annunciation Catholic Church Choir (UNIPORT) 1st position



Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Choir 2nd Position



Gospel Singers of Abieri, Imo State, (3rd Position)