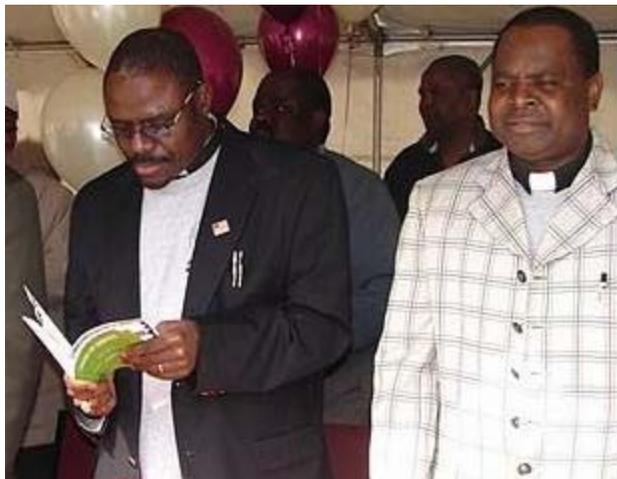


# AFRICA IN AMERICA



## DC Nigerians Build a Church

It is no secret to any reader of MJoTA, or to anyone who knows me, that I love Africa passionately. My first love for Africa, which endures, is for Nigeria: its people, their clothes, their food, their music, their churches, their traditional medicines, their late stars (Rex Lawson, Sonny Okosuns), their senior academics (Professor Ekundayo from Edo State, Professors Coker, Ifudu and Fagbenro-Beyioku from University of Lagos); and film-makers (Tari West, Osagie

Edoro-Ighalo, Iycke Clean).

The African Diaspora is growing and it is building in Nigeria and in the United States. On these pages I include pictures of the building of a second stand-



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alone structure on the grounds of the largest Christ Apostolic Church in Maryland, metro stops from the US Congress. Pictures taken from their website, with permission of Pastor, Timothy Agbeja ([www.cacofamerica.org](http://www.cacofamerica.org)) augment those I took during visits to this church since September 2006. Pastor Agbeja is seen conducting services when ground was broken, upper left on p232, and kneeling during laying of the foundation stone, lower left.

When I started working on MJoTA in May 2006, I believed that African professionals were like me: I was educated beyond my country's capacity to hire me when I came to the United States from Australia 30 years ago. The Australian government paid for all my education and I left, and since that day, have not

contributed a dollar towards Australian development. I am a "brain drain" from Australia to the United States; as had been my physician-parents from England and Northern Ireland to Australia. This happy abandonment of country is not the pattern I have observed for Nigerians in the African Diaspora.

The rule for Nigerians is absolute commitment to Nigeria and trips back home whenever the fare can be scraped together if the United States immigration officials permit them. Part of this commitment is to send money home. Another part of the commitment is to stay together in the United States; socialize and worship and as much as possible, only be with other Nigerians. You will not find a receptionist at a church who is not a relative of a pastor, or a shop assistant in shops selling Nigerian movies, fufu and egusi seeds who is not Nigerian. In the wider working environment Nigerians work with non-Nigerians.

These pages highlight the commitment that Washington Nigerians have for one of their institutions: the pentecostal Christ Apostolic Church. During a joyful Thanksgiving Day service in 2006 we danced and sang after the Pastor showed us that final approval had been granted to build the new church. Ground-breaking started 2 months later. On 26 May 2008 Dr Macharia Waruingi and I toured the new building. We were in Washington to attend a meeting called by the World Bank the following day to organize the African Diaspora to become involved in building and developing. MJoTA published an article about this meeting (MJoTA 2008,2(3):225). We were amused that the World Bank wanted to tell the African Diaspora what they needed to do, when the African Diaspora is clearly in control of its destiny. Congratulations to Pastor Agbeja and his church for a magnificent and sustained act of commitment to the African Diaspora.

*By SJ Dodgson BSc(Hons), PhD*

