

*commentary*

**Wish You Were There**

This year history, even if it is only two years, repeated itself in Texas! Legend has it that Texans are endowed with big hearts and they tend to do things in big ways: from the ten gallon hats to the ostrich boots to the "Obi Okonkwo" meals. Judging from the number of toothpicks expended, this writer will bet one hundred cents (no change) that at least two four-legged mammals of the caprine species made the supreme sacrifice in order to perpetuate the legend of the Lone Star State.

You had to be there. But if you weren't, it was worth all the trouble. For starters, I didn't see any Billy Carter or Lone Star beer within the confines of the three-to-five star Harvey Hotel. It was all Heineken and Guinness. Then there was the food. They were so generous and diligent that it was easy to assume that room service has provision for fufu in Texas.

This year's meeting was of great significance. It will go down as a turning point for the IAD in terms of the spirit and the strides taken during the year. Registration took off in earnest, an achievable goal was finally set - the education project, incorporation is in process and there seem to be an overall increase in awareness. It was also significant because of the increase in the number of new people. There was Emilia from LA, John from Houston, Cletus and Maria from Dallas. Most commendable is the effort of the regulars who are there at every meeting. There has been three so far (Washington D.C., Minneapolis and Dallas). Dominic Ezeani, Cyril Agupugo, Cyril Maduagwu, Dorothy Aneto, Onuoha Ejidike, Isaac Obi, Amaka Obidiegwu, Chris Obidiegwu and Chike Aniukwu have attended all three. Kenneth Aledu, Fidelis Onwusowulu, Ifeanyi Ozueh, Fidelis Umeh, Obiageli Obidiegwu, Emmanuel Obikwelu and Emmanuel Ekwelundu have attended two. Whether you were a host or a guest it is commendable that you cared enough to allow yourself to be bothered. Not only is everybody's business nobody's business but there is always strength in numbers.

How to entice more people to attend meetings and therefore increase our number is still a puzzle. One of the ideas thrown around is a scutage in lieu of attendance. It is possible that as we begin to achieve some of our goals some valency will be instilled on the masses. Deontology is what we are trying to address without dictating same.

Permit me to relate to you the experience of a certain male indigene of Agukwu, our neighbors on the other side of the lake. This "poor" fellow has resisted the "new" religion and all its trappings and associated opulence all his adult life. Him and his buddies exercised their religious duties by practicing the age old ancestral cum Pagan rites the same way their fathers and forefathers did before them. But the numbers were dwindling and finally he himself fell victim to the coercion of the Christians and converted. The bills seemed endless to him. There was the AMC, Easter duty, contributions for relief/disaster victims, ordinations, and so on and so forth. When Harvest came he, of course, defended his humble reputation by donating some of the fruits of his labor (rooster, yam, fruits). Then came the famous post-Christmas fund-raising popularly known as the bazaar. He arrived at the feast and inspected the mouth-watering display of abundant and ready-to-eat food. Much to his surprise, when he presented his plate to be served, the attendant asked him to pay for the food. The anger that brewed inside him was of Catholic proportions as he reviewed the situation. He paid all the dues, some of the the cooked food belong to him and yet he has to pay to eat. At a loss what to do, he unceremoniously removed himself from the premises. As he saw the situation he has been taken, robbed. These do-good church people are always asking for contributions but never give anything back. They are even

so stingy that you have to buy food at their party. Before he converted to Christianity, he only paid a few pence a year for dues as a Pagan. Yet, when they have a feast and kill a goat you get your due share whether you are present or not. No extra charge! He had no choice but to drop out. As it so happened, his pregnant wife gave birth to a boy whom he wisely, albeit proudly, named "Ulu ka na muo".

Take it as you will.

To everyone who has hosted/attended any of our meetings I say, on behalf of all the brethren,

Thanks for caring.

Yours faithfully,  
Chike Aniukwu