

## Nigeria Tour Newsletter

### Abuja

We arrived into the glorious heat of Abuja with the expectation of an even greater fire - the fire of the Holy Spirit. The Special Holy Ghost Service in Abuja, theme "Let the Fire Fall" took place on the Friday of the week of our arrival.

*An empty auditorium before the evening service (bottom)*



*Vinesong ministering at the SHGS in Abuja (top)*

*A small fraction of the hall in Abuja (bottom)*



The new RCCG hall in Abuja seated around 500 000 worshippers eager to call down the fire of the Holy Spirit into their homes and lives, something that we as a team deeply long to see and experience wherever we go. As a confirmation on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17 where God declared that in the last days, He will pour out of His Spirit upon all mankind.

With that scripture in mind and hearts ready to call out for that outpouring we ministered two songs: Holy Ghost Fire and Peace Like A River. We were encouraged to hear how many were blessed by the words and the anointing.

Holy Ghost Fire: <https://youtu.be/OYpMIMf-yfs>

Peace Like A River: <https://youtu.be/mF6n49nKrXA>

To view our ministry on the night click on the link below:

<https://youtu.be/dPfyeLRFIPk?t=4h20m52s>

Pastor E.A. Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), mentioned that we were his favourite Worship group and that he wished that we would stay in Nigeria (which we intended to do for the next three weeks).

It was a very powerful night, in which the first talk of the evening was taken by none other than the Vice President of Nigeria, Pastor Professor Yemi Osinbajo, a full Pastor in the RCCG.

This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time that Vinesong has ministered at the RCCG Abuja Special Holy Ghost night (SHGS). The first time we ministered there, it was with the previous team in 2002. Pastor John has very fond memories of that time with Pastor Olu Obanure, who unfortunately passed away this year. Pastor Obanure championed Vinesong's visit to Abuja and ministry that night. In actual fact, that year Vinesong was already on tour in USA at the time, but flew to Abuja for the program.



From humble beginnings, the Abuja SHGS has grown from strength to strength, having their own land, with the new auditorium that was able to host the vast crowd that gathered.

On the Sunday following the Special Holy Ghost Service, we ministered at Central Parish, the parish that birthed the RCCG parishes within Abuja. Daddy and Mommy G.O. (Pastors E.A. & F.A. Adeboye) were present at this service as well as the Vice President's wife, Her Excellency Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo.



Following our ministry, Daddy G.O. said once again that Vinesong was his favourite Worship group and that, in his opinion, Our God Reigns is the greatest song that Pastor John had ever written. We give God all the glory for that encouragement.

### From Prisons to Palaces.....

Our ministry in Abuja was blessed, and following our ministry on Sunday - where we had sung the 'Prayer Anthem for Nigeria' - one of the organising pastors told us that we had been invited to the Presidential villa to minister. Every week, they hold a small praise and worship gathering, hosted by the Vice President and his wife. Before the ministry, we had a short time of worship with H.E. Mrs. Dolapo Osinbajo, her friend Rosemary and a few members of staff. Then we went to the larger gathering, which is a weekly time of prayer, testimonies and praise and worship for the VP, his wife and family and members of staff.



*Pastor John & the Vinesong team meeting with the Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Osinbajo and his wife, Her Excellency Mrs. Osinbajo (above)*

We had a wonderful time ministering with them and it was such an honour to sing the "Prayer Anthem" for Nigeria from such a prominent and strategic place in the country.

## Abuja









A big thank you to Pastor Agbolade and RCCG City of David Abuja who took care of our accommodation needs in Abuja. A huge thank you to Pastor Sola Olukoya and RCCG Jesus Embassy who gave their van and provided drivers for us to transport all of our equipment by road from Abuja to Lagos – a journey of over 450 miles and a major feat on Nigerian roads. The team did the journey by air to Lagos to minister in the local churches ahead of the RCCG Holy Ghost Congress.





*Pastor John and the team entering the plane from Abuja to Lagos (above)*

## Lagos



*A traffic jam in Lagos (above)*

From Abuja we travelled to Lagos to minister in the local churches ahead of the RCCG Holy Ghost Congress.

One of the highlights of our week in Lagos was our time of ministry at RCCG House of Gideons. They run an outreach in the morning from 6.30am – 7.45am for people to come and worship before they go to work.



*The team ministering at the morning outreach (above)*

It was so inspiring to see over 200 hundred people gathered in a roughly constructed tent to worship God before work. The people present represented many different denominations.

We ministered at Olive Tree parish, where the former senior pastor is now the Vice President of Nigeria.



*Vinesong at Olive Tree Parish (above)*

We sensed such a hunger for worship at all of our meetings and we were so blessed by the way that the congregations responded to the ministry and the anointing.

We had deep times of ministry and saw many people stand for salvation and many more for a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with Jesus.



## Lagos Accommodation

We want to say a huge thank you to Bola and Bade Akingbade, who hosted us at their home in Banana Island as a blessing to us and to all of the churches in Lagos. They have been good friends to us over the years and were so generous in sharing their home with us. Whilst we were with them, we were able to have a small intimate time of ministry with them and some of their friends.



## RCCG Holy Ghost Congress

The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual RCCG Holy Ghost Congress, titled '*Songs of Victory*' was a blessing from start to finish.

Pastor John wrote the theme song, 'Songs of Victory' that you can listen to by clicking on the picture or link below:



(Sound Cloud: <https://soundcloud.com/vinesong/songs-of-victory-1>)

A powerful song proclaiming God's power as we wait for the return of Jesus.

### David Hathaway

This year we were joined by David Hathaway, who was invited on recommendation from Pastor John, to speak to all the Pastors and ministers in two afternoon sessions.

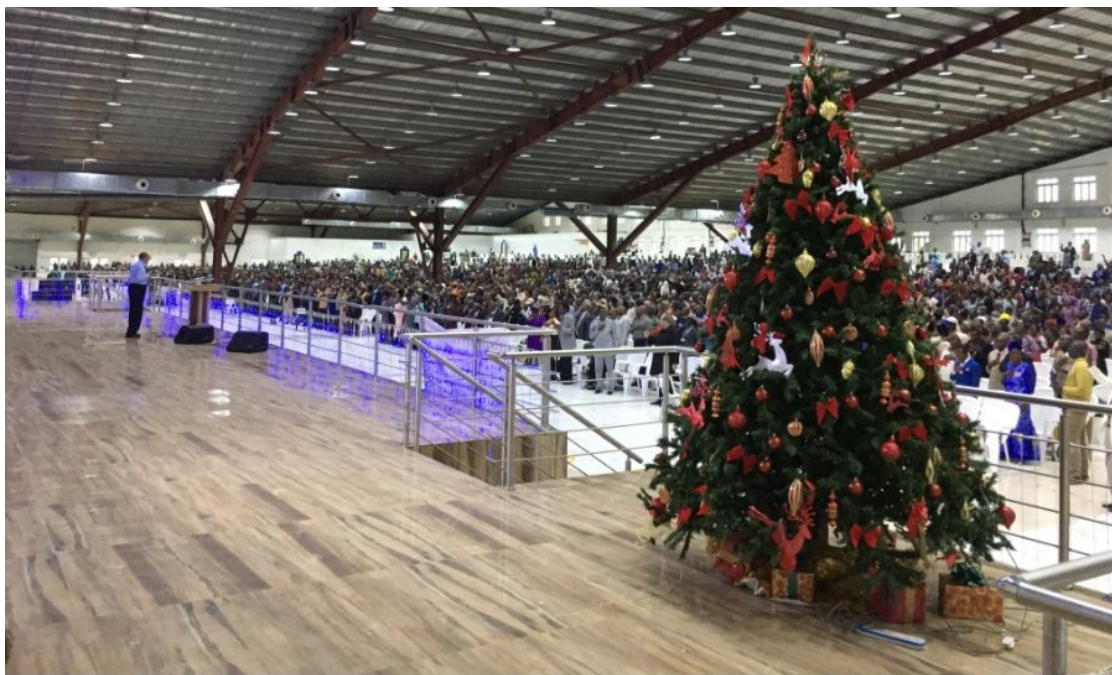
David's passion was evident as he addressed the ministers and shared his testimony of how God has shaped him over the years. How he has been healed from cancer twice and how he survived imprisonment in a Communist prison for smuggling bibles. He reminded and encouraged the leaders that all they do is only made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. He urged them and prayed for them to receive fresh fire and a fresh anointing to allow God to use them to do the impossible and take Nigeria and the nations for the Kingdom of God.

There was a tangible anointing as David spoke to the leaders. Many felt a sense of hope and encouragement to hear him, at 85 years of age, speak boldly about what God has done and still does through his work in the nations, where he has been evangelising for over 40 years.





*David Hathaway at the Holy Ghost Congress*



*David Hathaway speaking to the pastors in the pastoral prayer room before the congress began (above)*

## Congress Talks

In addition to ministering, we received very powerful teaching during the congress from a variety of renowned Christian leaders, many hailing from the continent of Africa. Most notably was Dr. Mensa Otabil, the founding pastor and overseer of International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and founder and Chancellor of Central University, Ghana.

Below is an excerpt of the essence of his talk on:

*How do we become victorious as Christians? – Mensa Otabil 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

*A very helpful illustration was given by Mensa Otabil: "Imagine that grace is the bridge that God creates for us to connect with Him and His promises and that faith is the means by which we can access that bridge. Grace and faith walk hand in hand. So whatever requires faith also requires grace. Grace gives access to what has already been provided.*

- *Grace provides*
- *Faith receives.*

*"Often, we do not receive the fullness of God's promises and grace because God has provided the grace but we have not developed the faith to walk on the bridge of grace.*

*Grace and faith enable us to:*

- *Work the miracles of God*
- *Receive the Spirit of God*

*People think that grace somehow lowers God's standards. Matthew 5:17-18 & 28 points out the difference between the standards set by the law and that of grace. The law says do not commit adultery, but grace says do not lust after a woman. Grace identifies sin when it is initiated in the mind whilst the law simply identifies what sin is." - Dr. Mensa Otabil*

Click on the link to listen to the full message:

<https://youtu.be/byUlub1ICV4?t=4h17m9s>

This is an example of the excellent teaching that we received during the week of Congress and we thank God that we were able to experience it first hand.



## Sacrifice of Praise

Pastor John spoke on the Saturday morning of the congress on the 'Sacrifice of Praise'.

He taught that the definition of praise is:

- *A prayerful thanking and adoration of God*



*Pastor John teaching on Saturday morning at the Holy Ghost Congress (above)*

Praise reminds us of God's goodness and helps us to connect with His power and greatness. Sometimes, due to the season of life we are in, or the circumstances that seem to overwhelm us, we find it hard to praise God and we find it hard to keep going. We have a choice to trust that God is good and to thank Him in spite of our circumstances and situation or to turn our backs on Him. The greatest peace comes in knowing that God is great, that he is bigger than the biggest challenges we face and to choose to rest in Him and trust that He has heard and will answer our prayers and the cry of our hearts.

It was such a timely message that helped to usher in God's peace and blessed assurance.

Click on the link to listen to the full message:

[https://youtu.be/A4uASfQv\\_II?t=20m14s](https://youtu.be/A4uASfQv_II?t=20m14s)

The teaching and subsequent worship brought a gentle but powerful presence of God with many descending on the altar to fall into God's goodness and mercy.



*Some of the many that came forward to rest in God's presence on Saturday morning (above)*

## Breakdown on the Third Mainland Bridge

As has become a tradition amongst us, following our ministry at the Congress, we minister at RCCG City of David on Victoria Island on the Sunday directly after Congress. Their first morning service starts at 8am and our plan is always to arrive there before 7am so that we can set up our equipment and do sound check with minimum stress.

We left the Redemption Camp, where the Congress is held, which is 65 miles away from the church, at around 5am. Our journey started well and we were happy to be on our way and on schedule. As we journeyed on the Third Mainland Bridge, the bridge connecting the mainland with Victoria Island, we got a flat tyre. Anyone who knows that bridge and the way that people drive on it will understand that this was a dangerous situation, plus at 5.20am, it was pitch black. The driver pulled the bus over and checked his spare tyre and with the help of Zach and Dan, worked to change the flat. Thankfully, as they were replacing the tyre, a breakdown truck came with it's flashing yellow lights to block the carriageway, making the job infinitely safer. The driver of the breakdown truck was a member of the Redeemed Church, and was so helpful and such a blessing as he helped tighten the spare tyre. When all was done he drove behind us as we exited the bridge to make sure everything was OK. Tony our driver said that the breakdown driver was like an angel. We thank God for His continual provision and care for us, and despite the early morning drama, we still arrived at church before 7am with enough time to set up. Praise God!





*Changing the flat tyre in the dark (above)*

*Vinesong pictured with the pastors and elders of City of David after arriving for the Sunday morning meeting (below)*



### **And Finally.....**

We thank God for the favour that he has shown us in Nigeria. Vinesong has been active in ministry in Nigeria for almost 20 years and our annual visits have made the nation a home from home. There is such joy during worship, such tenacity in prayer and people are prepared to give their all for God.

We thank God for everyone who contributed to make our time in Nigeria fruitful for God's Kingdom. From help with our visas, to accommodation, to words of love and encouragement and other acts of selfless giving. We love you more than you will ever know, but Jesus loves you best!

Pictures of the 2017 Holy Ghost Congress:



*Vinesong singing "Our God Reigns" with the 7,500 man choir at the 3km by 3km auditorium at the Redemption Camp in Nigeria (above)*



*At the old auditorium (1.5km by 1km) before the first ministry on Monday (above)*



*Pastor John and Daniel before ministering to the audience at the new arena, an estimated audience of 2 million.*

