

# African Exp

Feature by CUSO



Otobi - Vince and friends.



Otukpo - Easter celebration.



Otobi, Benue State - local village.

Vince Zelany, a masters student in forestry, and his wife Martha MacClure, are just two CUSO volunteers who have had interesting experiences in foreign countries. To hear their anecdotes and others, you can attend a meeting Wednesday March 31st at 7:30 p.m. in room 203 of the Student Union Building.

Martha and Vince's experiences began in 1979 while they were teaching in Nigeria as CUSO volunteers. CUSO is a non-governmental organization which operates in more than 30 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. In some of these countries, projects, aimed at helping the country become self-sufficient are sponsored by CUSO through local groups. In other countries volunteers who have skills that can be passed on to the people or that may be required by the country are sent from Canada. CUSO volunteers include nurses, doctors, engineers, nutritionists, fishermen, trades people, teachers, foresters and business people.

Vince and Martha received a posting in Otukpo, Nigeria, through the volunteer side of the CUSO program. They had heard of CUSO and investigated the possibility of volunteering while they were students at McGill University. Both graduates with degrees in Biology, they considered CUSO as a chance to experience living and working in another environment. Then followed the application process, which included filling in forms, medical and dental check-ups, an interview and finally, waiting. During this time, they attended a pre-orientation weekend run by returned volunteers

(R.V.'s), where they received a general overview of development issues and were able to share in the R.V.'s overseas experience. After receiving acceptance for an overseas posting, they received a series of ten or more inoculations and then in August 1979, they went to the pre-departure orientation in Ottawa.

At the 11 day orientation, they met others going to Nigeria and various parts of West Africa. These people included agriculturalists, medical people, technicians and teachers. At orientation, they received rudimentary teacher training, information on the country, information on health, etc.

After this was over, the various country groups split up and Martha and Vince, along with others bound for Nigeria, flew to Kano, Nigeria, stopping en route in Amsterdam. Upon arriving in Kano, a very old city and one of the centres of northern Nigeria's Muslim religion and culture, they spent 10 days in an in-country orientation. Here they received some language training, tours of the city and generally their first taste of Nigerian culture. From Kano they proceeded southward overland via Makurdi, capital of Benue State to their new home in Otukpo. They moved into their fairly comfortable two bedroom, bungalow style house which had electricity and sporadic running water. Their house was located on the compound of the boys' secondary school where they were both science teachers.

Otukpo is a rapidly growing Nigerian town at present. Petroleum income has provided funds for plenty of road and building

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