

THE MAKING OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN NURSES IN NIGERIA

THE 6TH ANNUAL NEXT GENERATION
CONFERENCE 2017 OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN NURSES, NIGERIA

The Fellowship of Christian Nurses, Nigeria (FCN) which was established in 1960 at the Vom Christian Hospital located in Plateau State, North Central Nigeria was primarily a student fellowship. Students from some Christian mission hospitals across various part of northern Nigeria who were former members of the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) between 1957 and 1960 constituted the bedrock of the fellowship when formed. Later, registered nurses got attracted and involved in the activities of the fellowship due to the uniqueness and peculiarity of the fellowship to Christian Nurses and Christian Nursing.

The first national conference of FCN Nigeria was held in 1961 at St. Luke's Anglican Hospital School of Nursing, Wusasa – Zaria, North West Nigeria with 20 persons in attendance. Students were the majority in that conference. Since then, the national conferences have been attended both by students and the registered Christian nurses and midwives. Due to the need to address the peculiar needs of the student nurses, the leadership of FCN Nigeria in June 2012 organized the maiden National Students Conference with 595 students from 40 Schools in attendance. The initiative was welcomed by the students as it created a

platform for comprehensive fellowship where students from various schools learned from each other in a spiritual atmosphere and shared best practices for the promotion of spiritual, academic and professional growth. Since 2012, FCN Nigeria has kept faith with the annual conferences with more students attending.

The 2017 annual conference was very unique as it was hosted following the resolution by the national leadership of FCN Nigeria to widen the scope of the forum to embrace young Christian nurses that have graduated in line with the concept of the Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI). For the first time, the conference was held under the auspices of the 'Next Generation' and participants were filled with joy and excitement to be part of this development. The conference, held at the Bethany Resort (Peace House), Gboko, Benue State, North Central Nigeria for the second year running, had as theme, "Maintaining balance in Nursing practice" with Esther 4:14 as the main text. Barrister Deacon John Shamata, a Nurse Tutor with the School of Midwifery, Maiduguri from North-East Nigeria served as the Guest Speaker. He centered his message on the conference theme by challenging participants on the life of young Esther who made a difference in her time to her generation.

431 persons comprising of student nurses, young graduate nurses and some matured nurses with passion in mentoring the next generation of Christian nurses attended the

conference despite the prevailing economic recession in the country. Some had to travel about 800 kilometers to the conference venue. Participants were drawn from over 60 schools and hospitals in 25 states across the country.

Presentations in plenary anchored by various leaders in FCN were, The future of nursing in Nigeria, Preparing for Christian marriage, Understanding yourself, and the Place of Christian Nursing students in missions. Topics that were handled in concurrent sessions also by various leaders in FCN were, Raising future leaders in FCN ministry, The nurse in healthcare delivery, Nursing care plan, The social media and the Christian nurse, The youth and substance abuse and skills acquisition. A Bible study session on the theme of the conference was held with all persons participating. The skills acquisition session centered on building the skills of the participants in the production of some household items such as Soap, Vaseline, Hair cream and balm. A talk show on mitigating examination malpractices in Nigerian schools was also featured. Discussants were Nurse Educationists, Nurse Clinicians and student nurses. A conference mass choir comprising of about 50 members from 5 schools entertained the audience with their song ministrations throughout the conference.

To the glory of God almighty, 8 persons gave their lives to the Lord, 167 persons dedicated their lives while 6 rededicated their lives to live godly lives. The

atmosphere at the conference was awesome as the visitation of the Lord was very evident. One Mr. Dangana Fain, a student nurse from the Department of Nursing Science, University of Jos attending the conference for the first time later commented, *“I so much felt the presence of the Lord all through my stay at the Conference ground and wished that I would not have to leave that place. It was so amazing being with other student and young nurses from across the country. I believe that my life and that of many others would not remain the same again. Thanks to FCN Nigeria for organizing this unique conference for us”*.

There is no doubt that the future of nursing in Nigeria is very promising. But this is largely dependent on the need to build on the foundation laid and the successes already recorded. FCN Nigeria is very committed to sustaining and stepping up our ministry amongst the student nurses and young nurses as a strong demonstration of our trust and belief in the ‘Next Generation’ as viable tools being fashioned, modeled and polished by the Master to build His kingdom on earth and in lives to the glory and honour of God.

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PICTURES OF NEXT GENERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017



Cross section of participants at the conference



Cross section of participants at the conference



Cross section of participants at the conference



Some household items produce during the skill acquisition session



Cross section of participants at the conference