

Ecumenical Retreat, Research, and Wellness Centre

Executive Summary

The **Ecumenical Retreat, Research, and Wellness Centre** (ERRWC) of Owerri, Imo state, Nigeria, will exist to minister to Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox religious leaders. Our mission will be to provide vital spiritual care and training, continuing education, and respite, to strengthen and form Christian leaders, both clergy and lay, for service in parishes, classrooms, and faith-based organizations in Nigeria and beyond. Our vision is to be a place for life changing experiences through personal encounter with the Living God, seminars/conferences, academic study, and renewal. We provide counseling and organized activities designed to help Christian Farmers and Fulani Herdsman in Nigeria cope with trauma of displacement and help them make a successful transition to nonfarm jobs. We envision an international center for fellowship, dialogue, and unity between diverse members of the Body of Christ.

The foremost priority of our ministry will be service to those in positions of leadership in Christian faith communities throughout Nigeria. We will serve both clergy and lay leaders, through a range of educational and training programs, with a special emphasis on those pastors who long for rest and revitalization, as well as vocational training. However, our facilities and programming will be open to Christian leaders from around the world.

Across the full breadth of our ministry, ERRWC will seek to create an atmosphere where networks are forged among key leaders and groups, around Kingdom values and practices, for God's glory, and for the good of people throughout Nigeria and around the world. Our strategic plan will include outreach to churches that are struggling, transitioning, hurting, and/or declining.

ERRWC programs will focus on the following priorities:

- **Spiritual Companionship** – for those who desire to grow in prayer, seek to become more aware of God's presence in their lives, and desire to know themselves in relation to God.
- **Continuing Education for Pastors** – compelling continuing education plays an essential role in a pastor's ministry and personal wellbeing, and therefore the wellbeing of his congregation. Although our focus will be on continuing-education for pastors, we will also offer a range of educational/training programs for other church staff, volunteers, and lay leaders, with an emphasis on *Leadership Development*.
- **Christian Farmers and Fulani Herdsman Outreach-** Providing counseling, financial assistance to individuals, families, churches or groups and encourage farmer- herder dialogue through organized activities designed to help Christian Farmers and Fulani Herdsman in Nigeria cope with trauma of displacement. The farmer-herder conflict has become Nigeria's gravest security challenge, now claiming far more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency. It has displaced hundreds of thousands and sharpened ethnic, regional and religious polarization. There is an unprovoked and sustained attack by people who are not known but who are working closely with the Fulani herdsman because they are widespread. The assailants are using military style assault weapons *and* sometimes dressed in military fatigues.

- **Pastoral Needs** – all pastors are susceptible to burn out. In order to equip pastors for long term effectiveness, we will provide seminars and courses geared toward pastoral care, counseling for pastors, and healthy life balance.
- **Strategic Planning** – training in the essential practice of designing a framework for a God-glorifying fellowship to flourish.
- **Wellness Center** – comprehensive wellness education to promote healthy living, including creation of a Personalized Wellness Action Plan.
 - ❖ Holistic approach to wellbeing: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, social, occupational, environmental, financial.
- **Research Training** – instruction on best-practices in research for religious leaders, as well as how to develop an academic career in the field of research; seminar format, on-location and online.
- **Counseling Services** – options will include counseling for pastors, church staff, and lay leaders who need assistance in their own lives, as well as training for those who provide counseling services to their congregants.

Additional offerings

- **Senior Citizens Computer Training Program** – practical training for older adults in the use of modern personal-computer technologies, including smart phones and tablets; open to the public.

Facilities

- We will offer simple, yet comfortable overnight accommodations for up to 25 people. Additional amenities will include buffet style kitchen, living/community room, chapel, meeting and conference rooms for up to 100 people, and computer lab.

Administration

- Ubnlinks Foundation [<http://ubnlinksfoundation.org>] will oversee the all operations of ERRWC. Ubnlinks board member, Ven. Stanley Ukachukwu, will serve as both lead administrator on-location, and Spiritual Director of ERRWC.

Venerable Benjamin Udochukwu Nnaji is President/CEO of Ubnlinks Foundation Inc., a U.S. based not-for-profit organization, dedicated to serving and encouraging the educational, social, spiritual, and physical needs of needy individuals and organizations. Ubnlinks Foundation is a corporation organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including distributions to organizations that qualify as tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Ubnlinks Foundation is a registered participant of the United Nations Global Compact. Fr. Nnaji is a preacher, counselor, and teacher of the Word with special spiritual insight. An active contributor to human rights and emergency relief issues, Fr. Nnaji serves as Priest-in-Charge, at St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, Bronx, NY.

A detailed white-paper is available upon request, for those interested in learning more about the Ecumenical Retreat, Research, and Wellness Centre.