



Jos Jottings, April 2024

“Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything”

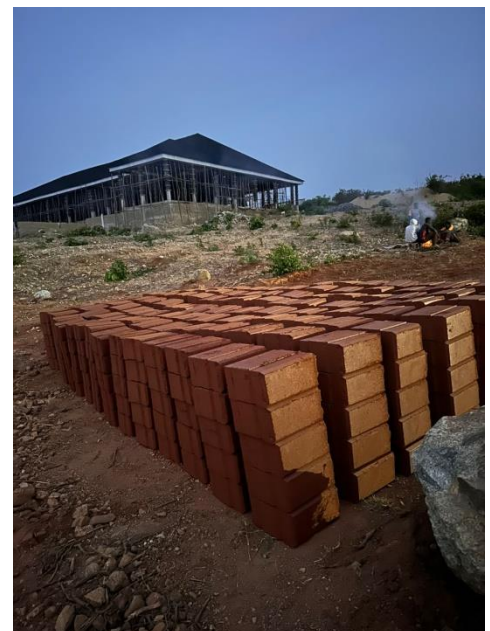
The writer of the letter points to an important truth in Hebrews 3:4. We humans may take pride in building this or that, but ultimately it is God who is the real builder. Indeed, it is God who gives us, out of his own character, the desire to build places of family comfort, of fruitful community interaction and growth, and indeed places of worship. Have you noticed also how much easier it is for we humans to destroy and burn down, rather than to build? Maybe building is hard work for us because while we are then following in the footsteps of our creator, our human nature does not easily take on his loving, patient, creational and creative energy. But I find that wherever genuine followers of the Lord Jesus go, notably in Jos, they seek to build places of healing, education, family refuge, and worship – places where the human soul can thrive in the ways Jesus intends us to.

Good progress in constructing the Tambes-Pankshin School for disadvantaged kids



In light of that, I am delighted to be able to report on good progress being made on erecting the main buildings of the new Tambes-Pankshin School for disadvantaged kids. Archdeacon Rinji Kwashi (Bishop Ben’s son, pictured left) led a night-and-day mud brick-making working bee down on the site 16-17 April, with other members of Bishop Ben and Gloria’s adoptive family. It is a great example of wise use of readily-available local resources (the necessary mud), which when dry forms interlocking construction blocks with better insulation and even bullet-resistant properties compared with expensive cast concrete blocks.

Behind one of the resulting piles of drying mud bricks, you can clearly see the very impressive emerging structure of one of the main buildings of the new school, ready for its wall spaces to be filled in with the interlocking mud bricks. Meanwhile, a night photo gives a bit of an idea of the way in which the working bee continued through the night to produce the very large number of bricks required to finish the building!



There is a very deep personal commitment within the Kwashi family to this “good work”! Please keep praying that this new school hostel and campus will be a wonderfully peaceful and protected place where many disadvantaged kids and orphans can find transformative Christian love and care. I hope to report on progress in more detail in the Jos Jottings May edition.

The Security Situation

As foreshadowed in Jos Jottings for March, unfortunately immediately after the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, there was reportedly a series of attacks by Fulani Islamic tribesmen over 12-13 April and 18 April on nine predominantly Christian villages in Bokkos Local Government Area, south of Jos in Plateau State (Kopnanle, Mandung-Mushu, Kopyal, Josho, Manduk, Njukudel, Mandarken, Nghahtigut, and Chikam villages). 38 deaths were reported, including the shooting of a one year old girl together with her young mother, along with the burning of homes and at least one church. Kaduna, Benue and Enugu States have also reportedly been affected by attacks on Christian rural communities and church leaders later in April. I am anticipating being able to visit one or more of the affected Plateau State communities, and to meet with internally-displaced villagers being supported under our Diocesan partnership shortly during my 8-16 May visit. This is a precious opportunity to reassure those who have lost so much and experienced so much trauma that they are not alone, and that their Christian sisters and brothers in Australia stand with them in their tears.

8-16 May liaison visit

As I write, breaking news is that Prince Harry is planning to visit Nigeria for talks about the Invictus Games, either shortly before or shortly after 8 May. But I can pretty much guarantee that our paths will not cross, and that I will not see him or Meghan up in Plateau State, where life is gritty, challenging and at times dangerous, especially for those rural people of Christian faith. But I am hoping that there will be many opportunities for me to meet with the wonderful Anglican sisters and brothers in Plateau State – my friends – who, through their lived-out love for and confidence in Jesus, are making a real difference in the lives of the least, the last and the lost. Look forward to many new and inspiring video interviews with these folk who walk so closely in the Lord’s footsteps when it would be so much easier and safer to hide away or just not stand out for the faith! Once again, please be assured that every contribution you make through Anglican Aid under our missional partnership is making a huge positive difference to many lives!

For prayer:

- Praise God for the progress being made on construction at the Pankshin-Tambes school campus, and pray that it will very soon be a safe home and place of fruitful living for many kids left as orphans or traumatised by the religious/ethnic cleansing campaign being waged against Christian rural communities.
- Pray for the continuing impact of Fulani evangelists in turning thousands of Fulani hearts away from violence, destruction and despair into the love of our Saviour, the Prince of Peace.
- Please pray also for increasingly effective government protection of rural communities in Plateau State by the Nigerian Army and police, in Plateau State and in other affected parts of Nigeria.
- Continue to pray for those Plateau State villages attacked over December/January, and now April, that the displaced village communities may feel safe to return home, and that there will be no further attacks on them.
- Keep praying for our ministry training bursary students at the Christian Institute, Jos, including as Ven Godwin Makabi hands over his Rector’s role to a successor.
- Please keep pray for extraordinary energy and protection for Archdeacon Chimezie Anukam and his team of Jos Diocese relief workers, and for donor generosity in contributing to the urgent human needs of the thousands still in IDP camps in Plateau State.
- Please pray for a safe and effective liaison visit by myself to Jos 8-16 May.

To make a tax-deductible donation to Diocesan partnership projects for training at the Christian Institute, or to support our persecuted fellow-Christians in Plateau State in Nigeria, or ministry to “at risk” children”, go to <https://anglicanaid.org.au/locations/Nigeria> , and select the project of your preference. To book a presentation on the situation in Nigeria and our partnership with Jos Diocese for your church, school or fellowship group, contact Rev Canon Patrick Cole on pandncole@bigpond.com .