

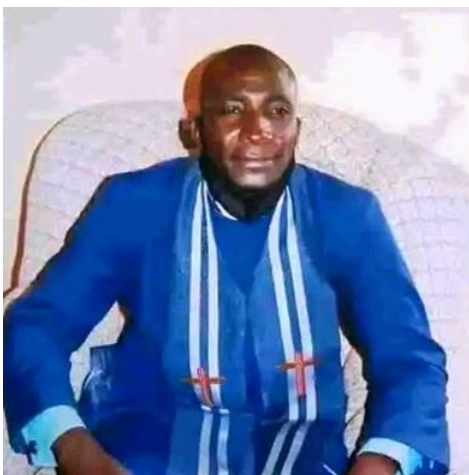


Jos Jottings, February 2025

Jesus stood still and ordered the blind beggar to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Jesus, outside Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem and the cross, Luke 18:40-41)

A Saviour who turns towards the cry of the desperate beggar

When our national news is full of popular concern – as one of the wealthiest nations on earth – about our cost-of-living pressures and over political developments in the United States, I cannot help wondering where there is any listening to the desperate voices of those suffering most deeply and most powerlessly in our world. I had particularly in mind the latest reported horrific terrorist attack in central Africa – the targeted rounding up and beheading or beating to death of 70 Christians in a Protestant church in Mayba, northeast Democratic Republic of Congo, on Thursday 13 February, by the Islamic State-linked so-called "Allied Democratic Forces" militia. Just one more example of the weekly attacks of this sort going on throughout central and sub-Sahel Africa. And did you know that the failure of governance in eastern DRC, and armed interventions there by Rwanda and Burundi, is also threatening to re-ignite deadly Hutu/Tutsi ethnic rivalries? Comfortable Australia may be blind and deaf to these sufferings, and those of our sisters and brothers in Nigeria, and we may feel powerless. But what an encouragement it is for us to know we serve a Saviour Jesus who hears the cry of the blind beggar over the noise of the crowd trying to shut him up, and a Lord of Creation who stops dead in his tracks, and turns in compassion to give his full attention and powerful restorative love to the least, the last and the lost! Plenty of other things were on his mind that day outside Jericho, but he heard, he stood still, he turned into our human despair, and he acted. So we know he also turns our prayers for those in such dire need!



Nigerian persecution: the attacks continue ...

The role of the Diocese of Jos in being an emergency relief hub for other dioceses within Plateau State, and even into neighbouring states like Kaduna State, continues. Thank you again for your prayers and generosity! Over the last month it seems that Fulani militant attacks on Christian rural communities have become more focussed on killing Christian pastors, local leaders and their families, and on systematic kidnapping for ransom. Attacks 27-31 January and 1 February on a string of mainly Christian villages in remote southern sections of Mangu Local Government Area in Plateau State reportedly resulted in the killing of at least 11 (mainly couples and entire families with children) and kidnapping of 4 more.

Meanwhile, in neighbouring Kaduna State:

- on 30 January, Pastor Ezekiel of the ECWA church (pictured) and 2 others were killed in Kwassam village, and 17 others kidnapped nearby;
- on 5 February, two separate night attacks in Kauru LGA, apparently targeting local community leadership, saw 3 killed (one the president of the local Development Association), 3 wounded and 10 kidnapped;
- on 5 February, another attack on Majagada Village, Lere LGA, saw ECWA pastor Bitrus Saleh Africa and 3 other Christians killed, with 12 others kidnapped; and,
- meanwhile "Truth Nigeria" is reporting the 23 February release in Kachia LGA – after payment of a ransom – of 8 Christians kidnapped in December 2024. Those released have told harrowing stories of being held, systematically deprived of food, and beaten and tortured along with some 200 other kidnap victims in a Fulani militant prison camp near Kaduna city. They tell of family members being killed by their captors to impress on their communities the pressing need to pay the ransoms demanded.

Please keep praying and giving generously as YOU stop dead in your tracks to hear the cry of the needy!



Zambiri School and the new Tambes campus

We are still looking forward to receiving the latest full reporting on building work at the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School. However, informal advice is that the mud-brick outer and internal walls of the main residence building are now in place. The foundation and roof for the central common area and chapel abutting the main residence (pictured left) are now ready for mud-brick infill work, and work to start on the two student hostel wings which will also abut and jump off from this common space. Strong support from other US and UK donors, alongside that from Australia, is now bearing very visible fruit at Tambes, as well as back in Jos at the Zambiri School's home campus. It has been a real joy to see the way in which a good number of those 80,000 hand-made modern

technology mud-bricks have been coming together so precisely, like huge Lego blocks, to form strong thermally-stable internal and external walls, just as planned (picture at right)!



Christian Institute, Jos: adjusting to change, training for challenging mission ...



Please pray for the Rev Timothy Gora, recently named as the incoming Registrar of the Christian Institute, Jos – a key role in ensuring that the academic staff and students, and all the material needs of the Christian Institute community and its facilities, are well-supported! We look forward to receiving encouraging mid-year student reports in due course. But in the meantime, please keep our Partnership Bursary Students (pictured in May 2024, left) very much in your prayers, especially as many come from communities under the direct threat (or even reality) of terrorist attack. For example, one of those kidnapped in December in Kaduna State was Joel Nuhu, a 27-year-old Christian pastor and theological

graduate from a Bible school in Lere LGA, on the border between Kaduna and Plateau States, who had been eagerly awaiting his posting to begin missionary work when abducted along with family members for ransom by these reportedly Fulani terrorists. Our bursary students are preparing for ministry in really tough places, constantly aware that their home communities and families are often under real deadly threat (as are they during their regular visits back to the village to assist in harvesting and the like during academic holidays).

For prayer:

- Thank God that when the challenges ahead of us and our fellow Christians seem so enormous and intractable, we can be confident in our loving Saviour's complete, compassionate, powerful and life-changing attention as we cry out to him.
- Keep praying for God's continuing protection of impoverished and displaced Christian rural communities in Plateau and Kaduna states particularly, for more proactive security force protection, and most of all for the Islamic militants within the Fulani ethnic group to come to a saving transformational knowledge of Jesus.
- Praise God for the construction work now going ahead quickly at the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School, and pray that the resources are provided for quick completion of student hostels, the perimeter security wall, and electrical and water supply infrastructure.
- Pray for quick appointment of the right person as Rector to lead the work of the Christian Institute, Jos, and for amazing wisdom and abundant godly grace for the incoming Bishop of Jos, Dr Ephraim Gongden.

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 through the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School, 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 .