



## Jos Jottings, January 2025

***"Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Jesus, speaking to his disciples, Luke 21:28)***

### ***Persecution and distress as we wait for Jesus's return***

In these last couple of weeks, I have been reminded of two outstanding things we find late in Luke's Gospel, and the Book of Acts. Firstly, that the Lord Jesus clearly told his disciples (and us!) to expect a world of war, turmoil, irrational hatred towards Jesus and the gospel of salvation through him, and deadly persecution of Christians, ahead of his second coming. But these are not signs of Jesus's lack of power or love of us. Rather, they are signs of his love for those who are yet to accept him as Lord, of the reliability of his Word, and that his glorious return and rule of justice and peace is all the more imminent. Second, that one of the distinctives of Christian faith in the early church was regular and intentional giving to support "the poor". Alongside charitable good works locally to care for those in need around them in their towns, and within their church communities, those early small communities of Christians gave selflessly and generously specially to support "the poor" in the Christian community in Jerusalem. A community threatened by famine, subject to particularly intense persecution under King Herod Agrippa I, and destined to suffer further with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It seems to me that those twin messages remain particularly relevant to us today, as Australian Christians who enjoy relative wealth and security, *not to despair* at the power of evil we see in our world, *to raise our heads in positive expectation*, and *to share generously* with our Christian sisters and brothers living in dire earthly circumstances.

### ***Nigerian persecution snapshot and emergency relief: thank you!***

Thank you again for your prayers for our sisters and brothers in Nigeria over the Christmas/New Year period. As I reported last month, it looks like concerted action by Nigerian army and police, responding to strong representations by church and political leaders, largely headed off Fulani extremists making good on their threats to replicate the horrific series of Christmas 2024/New Year rural killings. But that does not mean that the situation was peaceful, much less that displaced and traumatised largely Christian rural communities have been able to return home or recover their livelihoods.



Aside from the horrific Fulani attack on a Plateau State village on Sunday 22 December and the even worse series of coordinated Fulani herdsman attacks on five predominantly Christian villages in Benue State (south of Plateau State) on Christmas Day (both reported last month), sporadic localised attacks have been reported in January. On 6 January, Fulani militants foreign to the local area and to Plateau State reportedly attacked Sha village in Bokkos Local Government Area, killing three Christian residents (funeral service for two of those killed in picture). On 1 January, Fulani herdsmen reportedly attacked, burned and looted Unguwar Rogo village in southern Kaduna State (west of Jos), burning down the church and many homes. Meanwhile the 5 January reported

release of two Brethren Church ministers from apparent Fulani kidnapping-for-ransom from Song LGA in Adamawa State (east of Plateau State) emphasised the deliberate targeting by terrorists of Christian church leaders in rural communities. Faithful gospel ministry puts at serious risk the lives of those who go out to serve rural communities by word and deed: it is personally especially costly to take up Jesus's call to minister!

But thanks to your compassion and generosity, \$20,000 was transferred on 4 January by Anglican Aid to Jos Diocese to provide much-needed essential relief and support to the persecuted communities in Plateau State

and beyond! Thank you again for being faithful along with the early church to that call to “support the poor”!

### ***Christian Institute, Jos: adjusting to change ...***



The Christian Institute is experiencing some turn-over of staffing as it awaits the appointment of a new Rector and fine-tunes its missional training vision in consultation with incoming Bishop Ephraim. Please pray for the Bishop and for the Board for wisdom in new appointments, and the minimisation of any disruption to the formation and training programs. And as the Institute farewells Canon Rotshak Daniel Lar (pictured) from his role as Registrar and lecturer (as well as liaison officer with Anglican Aid), please pray for him, his wife Lilly, and their family as they move to Daniel taking up the curacy of a church in Jos City.

Together with Anglican Aid, we are looking forward to conversations in coming months with incoming Bishop Ephraim, the new Rector, and the faculty of the Christian Institute, on how our Diocesan Partnership arrangement with the Christian Institute might be expanded and develop (in line with the 16 December conversation between Bishop Mark, Canon Tim Swan of Anglican Aid, and Bishop Ephraim).

### ***Zambiri School and the new Tambes campus***



When the latest update report on progress is received by Anglican Aid, we will be able to provide full reporting on building work at the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School. Informal advice indicates that work at Tambes (now in full swing) may have been delayed some months by local conditions and availability of supplies. Archbishop Kwashi and Mama Gloria have also needed to focus on urgent provision (with the support of other donors) of substantial extra student living and dining facilities at the existing Zambiri School in Jos (see photo above). This has meant that no hostel student at the Zambiri campus is now sleeping on the floor of the bishop's living and dining room! We are assured, as noted, that building work at the Tambes campus is now proceeding at full pace, using the 80,000+ mud-bricks already manufactured and stockpiled on-site.

### **For prayer:**

- Praise God for the opportunity to support our fellow Christians in Plateau State and surrounding areas in facing the heavy personal impact of persecution, providing practical comfort as we with them confidently wait for the coming of Jesus to wipe away every tear and put an end to death and suffering.
- Keep praying for God's continuing protection of impoverished and displaced Christian rural communities in Plateau State, and for the more proactive role of the Nigerian Army in bringing perpetrators to account.
- Pray for construction to go ahead quickly at the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School.
- Pray for quick appointment of the right person as Rector to lead the work of the Christian Institute, Jos, and for faculty and students to thrive in preparing women and men for faithful, effective and likely costly “good shepherd” servant ministry in the name of Jesus in Plateau State and beyond. Pray also for Canon Rotshak and family as they move to new ministry in Jos City.

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](mailto:pandncole@bigpond.com) .