



## Jos Jottings, July 2024

*“Whoever welcomes one of these children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.” (Mark 9:37)*

As promised, this month is dedicated to reporting on the assistance we are giving under the our Diocesan/Anglican Aid Missional Partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Jos in Nigeria to the Zambiri school and hostel for orphaned and disadvantaged children, in particular to the new campus being established south of Jos at Tambes, close to the town of Pankshin. I was privileged to visit both the Zambiri and Tambes campuses during my 8-16 May visit. Once more, a reminder that this ministry is vitally important because children are probably the most significant group affected by the Islamic ethnic-cleansing violence targeting predominantly Christian rural communities. Many have been completely orphaned or lost one parent. Many belong to displaced and impoverished families which can no longer support them. Thousands are at risk of child-abuse, exploitation, emotional starvation, lives of relentless grinding poverty and disadvantage, and the loss of any opportunity for a positive life trajectory. Our loving Lord has strong words of encouragement for us in helping our sisters and brothers in Nigeria to hold out life-changing practical support and love to these children, the good news of Jesus’s love for them in word and deed.

### *The new Pankshin/Tambes campus*

In April, ahead of my May visit to Nigeria, I reported on progress being made towards the planned September 2024 opening of this new school and hostel campus, designed in particular to enable teenagers who might otherwise be at risk in the Jos urban environment to thrive in a learning family-like community in a rural setting. A number of Australian and international donors are generously supporting this initiative, and the inspiring vision of Bishop Ben and Mama Gloria Kwashi that lies behind it.



At the time of my visit, I was able to see that great progress had been made on construction of Ben and Gloria’s new family residence (photo), and the foundations of the abutting two new student accommodation/ classroom wings. Work was also well-advanced on a solid concrete and mud-brick compound perimeter

wall, an additional (and prudent) security measure in light of ethnic Fulani terrorist attacks on rural communities to the northwest of Tambes, and on the construction of the main (1 million litre!) water tank for the school community. The student accommodation/classroom facilities and the water reservoir are particular targets of Australian fund-raising. Reporting from July indicates that reinforcing rods were in



place for casting the water reservoir base and walls (see photo), a vital part of site infrastructure needing completion ahead of the school opening in September.

Reliance on simple but robust locally-sustainable technology and resources was highlighted dramatically to me when I was asked (as a rank amateur) to operate the mud-brick press and personally produce a robust mud-brick from clay gathered on-site (see photo!). These mud-bricks are compacted, identically-shaped, sturdy and mutually inter-locking blocks, not some crude, soft and fragile mish-mash of any old clay in a wooden mould, or expensive concrete blocks. And (as side benefits) they are said to be far better weather insulation, and to resist bullet impacts far better than cast concrete blocks! Construction work at Tambes is proceeding well, if slowed by rapidly-inflating building costs and the need to construct the new mud-brick and concrete perimeter wall.

### *The Jos Zambiri School campus*

Meanwhile, Bishop Ben and Mama Gloria's great work continues at the Zambiri campus in Jos, where they are in residence pending the move to Tambes in September. Just before I arrived, Mama Gloria added another 19 disadvantaged children to their personal household, having been asked to do so by a Christian community in Pankshin! Can you imagine doing that yourself, out of love for the least, the last and the lost? The re-furbishment of buildings and equipment at Zambiri, in the suburbs of Jos, continues (including after thefts and external vandalism experienced during Bishop Ben's extended cancer-treatment trip to the United States 2 years ago). Ben has recently written expressing his joy at being able to act as chaplain at the school, as well as being a parent to some attending. He is seeing children progress from disadvantage to academic, social, emotional and spiritual thriving in response to the love and nurture extended to them. He writes: "Please pray for us because each one of the children has a dream of what they believe God wants them to do in the future. Some have already gone into the mission field as graduates of theology and are ordained; others are studying sciences, or arts, or music or drama. For these and for all that God has done and is doing every day we are grateful and give him the all the glory."



***"Joy for Jos" fund-raising concert 7.30-9.30pm, Saturday 14 September, Hughes Baptist Church***



If you're in the Canberra region, don't miss the chance to join other friends of Jos for a "Joy for Jos" fund-raising concert sponsored by St George's Anglican Church Pearce (with venue support from Hughes Baptist Church) to help build the Tambes school for orphans and displaced children! Vocalist Rachel McNally and pianist Mike Dooley will launch their new gospel album, "Water of Life", backed by top musicians, including Eric Ajaye on bass, Con Campbell on sax and Luke Glanville on drums. Followed by refreshments!

**Venue:** Hughes Baptist Church, 34 Groom Street, Hughes.

**Cost:** \$35 adults. \$25 concession. Family ticket \$80

**Book through** TryBooking [www.trybooking.com/CTKHO](http://www.trybooking.com/CTKHO)

**Any questions** email: [office@stgs.org.au](mailto:office@stgs.org.au) Phone: 6286 6466

#### **For prayer:**

- Keep praying for persecuted Christian rural communities in Plateau State, and especially for the many women left widowed and children left orphaned and destitute by this violence.
- Pray for the resources to be raised up, and construction work to go ahead quickly, so as to enable the completion and successful opening of the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School by September 2024.
- Pray in this context for a successful and fun fund-raising evening at the "Jos for Jos" concert on 14 September.
- Please also continue to pray for God to raise up quickly one who deeply shares his own Good Shepherd heart for the flock and for the lost as the new Anglican Bishop of Jos, succeeding Bishop Ben.

**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](mailto:pandncole@bigpond.com) .**