



Jos Jottings, July 2025

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus the hope of the oppressed and broken...

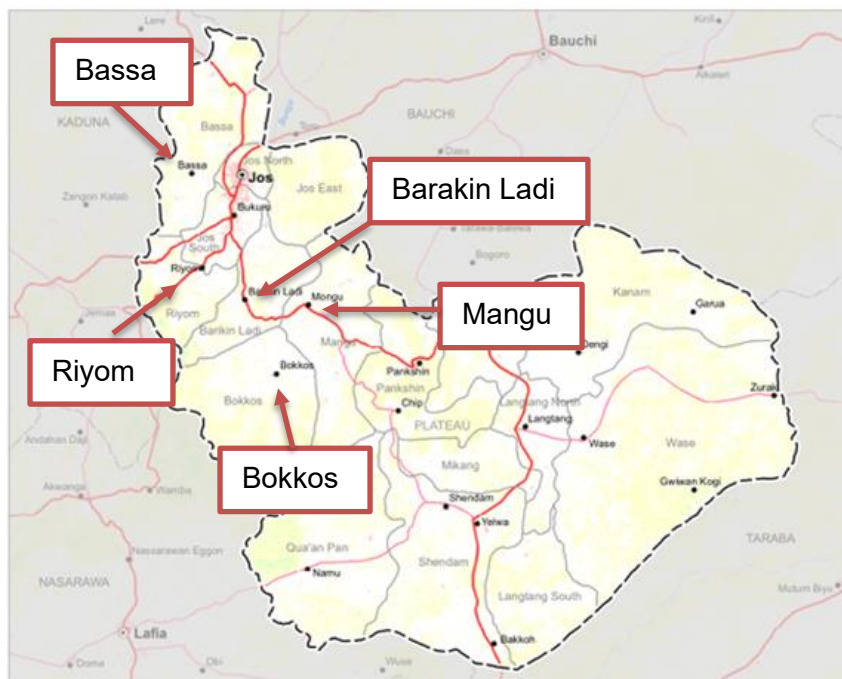


The above words of Jesus at the start of his public ministry, recorded in Luke's Gospel, formed the theme of the recent 7-12 July 23rd Baptist World Congress in Brisbane, a key focus of which was the persecuted church, in particular in Nigeria. This followed Pope Leo XIV's public condemnation of ethnic-cleansing religiously-motivated violence last month, after the massacre by Islamic militants of over 200 displaced villagers sheltering in Roman Catholic facilities in Benue State, Nigeria. There are thus encouraging signs of growing international attention to this crisis. As a Diocese, we are awaiting responses to Bishop Mark's letters to the Nigerian Acting High Commissioner in Canberra and to our Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong calling for meaningful Nigerian and international action.

This is all the more important because significant attacks by reportedly ethnic Fulani radical Islamic extremists have continued in Plateau State around Jos over the last month. After late June/early July attacks on Jol and Rim villages in Riyom Local Government Area, aimed at burning crops and homes, in an armed night attack on 14 July on Bindi/Jebbu village in the same LGA, reportedly more than 32 (including a 3-month old infant) from the predominantly Christian village were murdered or burned alive. The well-armed attackers, in a planned assault starting around 3am, surrounded the village and set fire to dozens of homes, destroyed farmlands, and reduced the local church to rubble. Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang in a subsequent visit to the village (photo above) condemned the attacks as "organized violence against innocent people." What is worse, according to multiple reports, Nigerian Army soldiers stationed nearby did not intervene during the assault.

"The soldiers were close by, just a few meters away from where houses were burning," one resident reported. A situation which unfortunately is not an isolated case in reporting on the ground.

In the meantime, Jos Diocese and my friend Archdeacon Godwin Makabi in Bassa (just northwest of Jos itself) continue to deal with the aftermath of previously-reported late-June killings in and around Kwall and Miango villages in Bassa LGA. Others are seeking to support displaced and persecuted communities in Riyom, Mangu, Bokkos, and Barakin Ladi LGAs, all nominated as special focuses of ongoing Australian assistance under our Diocesan Missional Partnership Emergency Relief project. Thank you so much for your generosity, and especially your prayers!

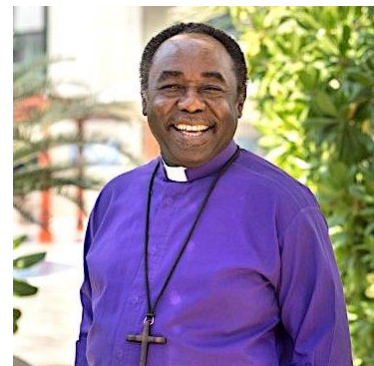


The Christian Institute, Jos – looking at expanded support

The Christian Institute continues to go through some staffing and governance adjustments, but we rejoice in the Institute's calling to help transform rural communities through raising up self-sacrificial and capable Christian leaders who will proclaim the good news of Jesus in word and in community-transforming works. On the basis of thorough and most encouraging reporting on student lives being transformed with Partnership bursaries, and of sorting out some minor hiccups in the international financial system, we are preparing with Anglican Aid to open a discussion on possible expansion of this part of our assistance programme, made possible by your generosity enabling a greater missional vision. And as I have said before, this is good news not only for Jos Diocese, but also for even less well-resourced Anglican dioceses around Jos to the north, east and west, to raise up the locally-recruited people they need to lead and expand gospel ministry in even more needy and persecuted parts of Nigeria, and beyond in sub-Saharan Africa.

Please keep praying for healing for Archbishop Ben Kwashi!

Archbishop Ben continues to undergo cancer treatment in the United States. In a note to me on 26 July, he told me that he was enjoying a break from his therapy, while his treatment continues steadily and healing is in sight. He is due to see his oncologist during this, the first week August, for a review which he trusts will bring good news and a clear path ahead to full healing. Dependent on that, his and Mama Gloria's return to Jos might be possible in late August or early September, hopefully ahead of a wonderful 70th birthday celebration in late September. Please keep praying fervently and confidently for this deliverance from cancer, for his physical and emotional endurance of any treatment, for a good report from the oncologist this week, and protection of the Zambiri School in Jos and the new Tambes campus during his and Mama Gloria's absence from Nigeria.



Zambiri School Pankshin/Tambes Campus



With the medical leave absence from Nigeria of Archbishop Ben and Mama Gloria, work has been largely paused on the new Pankshin/Tambes campus of Zambiri School, aside from a sustained mud brick-making campaign (see photo!). We continue to work alongside other international donors such as the UK Rock Foundation (whose chairman is Anglican layman Richard Borgonon, of insurance industry and The Word One-to-One ministry fame). As we move steadily towards residential occupation of the site, and Partnership-supported construction of hostel and classroom blocks, please pray that rural disturbances associated with attacks by Fulani Islamic extremists do not spread to this part of Plateau State.

Points for prayer:

- Please keep praying for the Lord's protection of the many Christian rural communities under deadly attack, and justice, comfort and restorative support for the families of victims in Benue State and Plateau State, and that this violence may not spread to the vicinity of the Tambes School site.
- That international attention will move the Nigerian Government to take decisive action to end violence.
- Full healing and a good oncologist's report this week for Archbishop Ben, so that he and Mama Gloria can return quickly from the United States and see the Tambes Campus of Zambiri School rapidly completed.
- Thanksgiving for the raising up of bursary-supported of future pastors at the Christian Institute.
- That our Mission Partnership emergency relief funds will continue to be used strategically to bring hope, healing, comfort and restored livelihoods to persecuted and displaced communities.

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 .