



Jos Jottings, November 2023 Live in hope, love in hope, give in hope!

As Christmas approaches, we look forward no doubt to sharing joyful time with family and friends, rest and summer holiday refreshment, exchanging of presents, and above all the celebration of the coming to earth of Jesus our Saviour as a fragile and vulnerable human baby. It is precisely now that we need also to remember the millions of our sisters and brothers in Christ who face this season without the material security we enjoy, and who live under the well-founded threat of persecution, deadly violence and destruction of their meagre possessions, some in internally displaced persons (IDP) refugee camps. On previous years' experience, some of these precious sisters and brothers will actually not survive attendance at their Christmas services.

That is the lived experience of many of our Christian sisters and brothers in Nigeria, including in Plateau State (the focus of our Diocesan mission partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Jos). In 2023, scores of peaceful mainly Christian rural villages have been attacked, looted and destroyed, with many residents killed, injured or driven out. Tens of thousands remain in tents and under tarpaulins in regional IDP camps, with hundreds of children displaced or orphaned. *(Zambiri school kids pictured)* Yet because of this, they yearn more passionately than we may do for our loving Saviour Jesus, whose birth we will soon celebrate, to return quickly in power as Lord of the earth, our Deliverer, and the One who will put an end to all evil and suffering on his earth. The more they see of broken humanity and failed human dreams, the more they trust in the promises and beauty of Jesus, and place their hope in him!



May their hope in Jesus inspire our hope in Him this Advent! And as I said last Sunday, as we looked at Isaiah 64, may that confident hope in our loving Lord cause our fears to be transformed, so we reflect and live out that love, trusting its power to transform the most hopeless situations. Finally, as our confident hope in a Saviour who will return soon frees us from any anxiety about our "daily bread", may we be those who give generously to those in need, strengthening their hope!



A warm "Thank you"!

In this context, a very warm Advent "Thank you" to all you Jos Mission Partnership supporters! Thanks to your generosity, in October \$66,000 was transferred to the Diocese of Jos for the initial building stage of the Pankshin/Tambes campus of the Zambiri School (water supply, plus classrooms and dormitories). Construction of the initial core group of school buildings is well under way (*see photograph from September*).

As I mentioned last month, your generosity has also enabled 10 students from a range of Anglican dioceses in northeast Nigeria to start theological, pastoral and community development studies at the Christian Institute, Jos, in September. And funds are steadily being received and flowing to meet immediate emergency relief needs for villagers who have been attacked, displaced, or put in hospital by terrorist attack. Grace is indeed abounding, and Archbishop Ben (now returned to Jos) specially thanks you for your prayers!

Ongoing persecution and attacks on Christians

Fulani and Islamic targeted terror attacks have continued on local-level Christian leaders and rural communities in Plateau State, as well as neighbouring states of Nigeria's northeast, particularly targeting Christian church and community leaders.

- After midnight on Thursday 30 November, according to Morning Star News, armed Fulani herdsmen and bandits killed 7 and injured many other Christians in Puka and Dinter villages, in the Mangu Local Government Area, just 40 kms south of Jos (the scene of significant and brutal ethnic-cleansing attacks in mid-2023);
- In the early hours of Wednesday 29 November, a pastor and two other Christians were kidnapped from predominantly Christian Raddi village in Bassa Local Government Area, just northwest of Jos City in Plateau State (later set free by police in the neighbouring state of Bauchi, responding to another incident);
- On 15 November, one Christian was killed and one injured in a Fulani tribesmen attack on Hilltop, a suburb of Bassa township, Bassa Local Government Area, 60kms due south of Jos;
- In an upsurge of incidents in other neighbouring states, Fulani tribesmen and other terrorists are blamed for attacks on communities in **Taraba State** (24 November, 10-20 killed in attacks on 5 villages in Takum and Ussa LGA's; 17 November, pastor's wife shot dead on the Wukari-Jootar highway); and in **Kaduna State** (17 November, pastor shot dead and wife abducted in Damakasuwa, 30 kms due west of Jos; and, after a 31 October Fulani raid on Ungwan Baka village, Kachia LGA, 80 kms west of Jos, one dead, two wounded and 25 others kidnapped).

Christian community and church leaders are working together closely, pleading in particular for more effective Government protection (police and army).

For prayer:

- Pray for special protection for our Nigerian sisters and brothers, especially in rural communities in Plateau State, in the run-up to and over Christmas, that they and their Christmas church services might be preserved from attack, and be a great witness to the love of Jesus, including to those who seek to attack, kill and destroy them.
- Pray for quick and high-quality completion of the first group of buildings at the new Pankshin/Tambes school and hostel for disadvantaged and orphaned children.
- Pray for God's blessing on Archbishop Ben and Mama Gloria Kwashi as they move into their new home on the Pankshin/Tambes site and give shape to this new extended ministry.
- Keep praying for the new intake of students at the Christian Institute, Jos, funded by Diocesan Partnership bursaries, and for Archdeacon Makabi and the staff of the Christian Institute, that they may all be kept safe, and that the students will grow in Christian character, leadership skills, and love of handling God's Word with wisdom and power.
- Pray for wisdom for the Nigerian Anglican House of Bishops as they move to select a new Bishop for Jos in early 2024.
- Keep praying for Nigerian Government leaders at federal and state level to be convinced of the need to act to bring peace, safety and effective protection to the ordinary people of Nigeria, as well as non-corrupt government.

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 .