



Jos Jottings, September 2024 – “Joy for Jos”

“... for God loves a cheerful giver”. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Around 180 Jos supporters gathered for the “Joy for Jos” fund-raising concert sponsored by St George’s Anglican Church Pearce at Hughes Baptist Church in Canberra on Saturday 14 September. And what we experienced was a really joyful time of music and giving to that great cause, the new Tambes school for orphans and disadvantaged kids. We were truly blessed by the incredible talents of Mike Dooley as composer/pianist/instrumentalist and Rachel McNally as an ever-flexible vocalist, not to forget the host of gifted brass, strings, keyboard, drums and bass players and backing vocalists that supported them! Not to mention the small army of helpers (30 from St George’s Pearce alone) making the whole evening such a success. It was very appropriate that we finished the evening singing “Ode to Joy” together, and in the following days were able to rejoice in collective generosity that raised an amazing \$9,590 (including \$30 that one young Sunday School child



had earned by recycling cans and bottles). What a great example of the way that joyful generosity in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus can be so gloriously infectious! And I am sure that the “Water of Life” CD launched that evening will encourage many of us in the days ahead.

[Rachel McNally and Michael Dooley in action in photo above; the brass section literally in full swing in photo to the left!]

Our evening was also graced with the presence of the Nigerian Acting High Commissioner to Australia, Mrs Mercy Clement, with Cameron Jansen of Anglican Aid Sydney present also to field enquiries. There was particular blessing of the evening also in an unseen way: just a day before Michael, Rachel and a number of others inexplicably came down with sore throats or a touch of the ‘flu. That they were able to perform at all, let alone at such high professional levels over a period of hours was nothing short of a miracle in response to fervent prayer!

The new Tambes campus of Zambiri School

As part of the evening, I was able to give an update on the situation in Nigeria and on progress being made on building the Tambes school campus (which has naturally been affected by normal wet season rains in July-August). Latest photos from late September show that the essential million litre water reservoir for the school (significantly funded by Australian donors) is now very close to completion (see photo), and construction of the connecting building between the planned two student hostel accommodation





wings is well underway. The 300kva transformer needed to bring mains power to the compound and meet its planned accommodation, classroom and industrial power needs (another part of the project specially funded by a generous Australian donor) has also been purchased and delivered, ready for installation (again, see photo). However, due to weather and rising costs, the School's opening is now delayed into 2025.

Emergency Relief: the needs continue

As well as sharing about progress on the Tambes School, I also had the task of outlining the dreadful consequences of Fulani and Islamist terrorist attacks on rural communities in Plateau State and elsewhere in Nigeria. These experiences feature in Anglican Aid's most recent supporter newsletter, which you may also have seen. The key take-away fact was, as I mentioned last month, that according to "Open Doors" 2024 World Watch List, more Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria each year than everywhere else in the world combined. And even during the Plateau State rainy season in July-August, we are again seeing reports of sporadic but targeted Fulani attacks, especially on leading members of Christian rural communities, in Plateau State and adjacent states. On 26 June, five Christians (including two

children) were killed, and one severely injured as they slept, with three homes burned down, during a Fulani attack on Hwrra village, near Kwall in Bassa Local Government Area in Plateau State (I visited Kwall in May). This was part of a pattern of deadly attacks within a few days on two other villages in the vicinity. Meanwhile, in neighbouring northern Kaduna State, two young Christian farmers were reportedly shot dead by armed Fulani militants on 29 September, with many other incidents in adjacent states (the most serious being the reported killing of over 50 Christian villagers in a Fulani attack on Ayati village, Ukum LGA, Benue State, on 8 August). The need for emergency relief and long-term protection, especially for orphaned children and destitute relatives of those killed has never been higher.

Pastoral and leadership training at the Christian Institute, Jos

Please also keep in your prayers the students who have just returned for the start of another academic year at the Christian Institute, Jos, and for their teachers and mentors. Pray especially for the practical challenges they face – worry over their families' financial and physical security in villages exposed to security threats on top of the usual range of rural farming challenges, and simple things like intermittent electrical power affecting their ability to study.

New Bishop for Jos

On 27 September, after some delay, Rt Rev Dr Ephraim Gongden was formally installed as the new Anglican Bishop of Jos. Please pray for him to have special wisdom and grace as he familiarises himself with the details of the diocese and the new challenges of ministering as bishop in a diocese which enjoys a strong and joyful missional passion in its DNA, but is not blessed with an abundance of material resources.

For prayer:

- Give thanks to God for the mission-heartedness of the people of St George's Anglican Church Pearce, for the wonderfully successful "Joy for Jos" concert, and the generous hard work of all the gifted musicians and singers and support workers that made it an evening of joyful generosity to those in need.
- 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 continue to be raised up, and construction work to go ahead quickly, enabling the initial opening of the Tambes campus of the Zambiri School by early 2025, and its completion.
- Please pray that Bishop Gongden will lead with godly wisdom and deep integrity, 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 .