

Nigerian Christian Children's Home



August 2019

Dear Friends and Family,

The Apostle Paul began his letters to various congregations of the Lord's Body with the same greetings. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ". The older I get the more I appreciate this greeting, and care to share it with others. The more I live, the more I know of my need for Grace. Without it I cannot take the next breath, without it I have no hope. And peace is something we all long for, especially in these troubled times, that our hearts and minds may be guarded in Christ Jesus. Thank you for allowing yourselves to be an expression of God's grace to us and those we serve, and helping us to have peace of mind in the face of many challenges.

The month of August was marked by two short trips for us. The first was to Ukpom for the annual lectureship at Nigerian Christian Bible College. The second was to Lagos, to be a part of a medical mission. Please let me tell you a little bit about them.

The trip to Ukpom was to allow us to be a small part of the annual meeting of Christians at NCBC, an event almost as old as I. It is always a joy to see such a large gathering of people dedicating time to praise God, to learn from His Word, and to encourage one another. The theme of the lectureship was to help enable us to rise above the vanities of this earthly life, I had the task of sharing from the Book of Ecclesiastes the central theme that all in this life is but a vapor or vanity, and the conclusion that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man. It was a sober reminder of the brevity of life, and that much of what we do here can be of little lasting value. Only those things that we commit to God are of eternal consequence. As I reach the latter stages of my life, and call to question much of what I have done, my prayer and hope is that God will forgive me for wasting time on things that did not really matter. After we spoke a considerable number of young

people came out to be baptized. Please join us in prayer that these young ones may have the guidance and encouragement to grow in their walk, knowing that one day we will all give an account of the deeds done in this brief space of time.

While we were at Ukpom, we were encouraged by seeing brethren we knew and forging new bonds of fellowship. We had a brief time to visit with two American brethren who had come for this lectureship. It is always amazing to see someone for the first time, and find you have so many common links. One brother had been the student of Br. Jim Massey, brother to Dr. Fred Massey who has so loyally supported us over the years. It is encouraging for me to know that we have such ties that network and expand and keep us connected. The other brother is commissioned to serve as the President of African Christian Schools Foundation, with the huge task of helping such schools as NCBC continue to train. He spends much of his time visiting congregations, asking them for their support for such works. We are thankful for such faithful brethren.

While in the state of Akwa Ibom we also dropped off Carlos, a young man staying temporarily with us from Spanish speaking Equatorial Guinea, to study at Nigerian Christian Institute in Uyo, He is like so many in his generation, from parents that divorced, struggling to adjust to a new blended family, neglected by a father that loves him but is too busy with an important job to face the most important job of being a father, without a sense of direction and with too much sense of entitlement. NCI is run with a strict discipline and we hope this environment will help him find his way in life. We also hope to send 7 of our middle school students, if they can pass their entrance exams, so that they may benefit from the demanding academic program, cast in a Christian environment.

Our second trip was to Lagos, where we spent two days helping in a massive medical mission spear headed by the sister of the current governor. In February of this year we had attended a similar effort by the same persons. This effort was expanded and touched so many lives. There were teams operating from 7 government hospitals, and almost all were focused on helping children. We saw many cases that would not have been treated had it not been for the charity of this woman and those who support her. It is not so common to see those endowed with great wealth to be so personally involved with deeds of mercy, and this was an encouragement to us. We were invited in part to discuss with her plans to establish an orphanage in Lagos. We do not know what will evolve, and if we will have any part to play, but we were happy to make suggestions gleaned from our 38 years working with children. Our 7

years working with church and state sponsored homes and our 5 years working in a psychiatric hospital in the states, plus the 26 years of laboring for children here, have helped us to have ideas about what an orphanage should strive to be. We still have a strong desire to see such a home come into existence, something that can grow beyond our small beginning here.

One of the centers were volunteers operated from had an orthopedic center. Many children were brought in with severe deformities, much like Treasure Jaja, the 10 year old girl being helped by the great congregation of North West in San Antonio. Had we known much earlier, she could have benefited by this medical mission, but we are thankful that others have stepped in to share God's love with Treasure. She is settled in Enugu, site of one of the three national orthopedic hospitals, her braces have been ordered and paid for, as well as her surgery which is to come up very soon. There are still expenses such as transport, feeding, etc. which one can donate to if desired.

We came back to find our car engine had spoiled, creating another unexpected burden and expense. I have spent too much of my time working on old cars and old generators and old houses, and now added to the list an old body. But we are thankful to have had all these things. The old saying about not missing water until the well goes dry certainly holds true.

James has left this month for his youth service in Lagos. He injured his tendon just before leaving, but we pray he will do well in his next stage in life. If he does well there over the next year of national service, he would like to settle in Lagos. Jeleena is in Imo state, where she will spend the next school year teaching. This is the usual assignment for youth corpsers. We hope all will go well with her and that she will be a good influence on those she serves. Julie is serving in Calabar and Joshua in Abuja. It is the rite of passage and time. Our memories are mixed with sadness and joy as we look back on the long journey, from their infancy to this stage in their lives. We pray they will move on to bigger and better things. Thank you for helping to give them life and hope.

Jemimah, Wisdom and Japhta all got to go to a Christian youth camp, and we are thankful for that brief period of encouragement for them. This is the 10th edition for the youth meeting in Rivers state, and we are thankful to see it grow. Our young people need so much encouragement and more time with other Godly influences.

Hopefully they will also be led in such environments to a life partner, one whose walk with Christ matches their own.

We continue to be encouraged by our weekly worship services, which hold under a canopy in our frontage. We hired 80 chairs this past Sunday, plus the many chairs and benches from the house but we still had people who had to stand outside the tent under the sun. We are aware of the danger of folks coming just for the loaves and fishes, but we also know that they have the opportunity to hear the Word of God. Each week brings new faces, and we appreciate the effort many make to come and share the day with us. We are thankful for those in the house, especially for my wife, who serve to make such gatherings possible.

Let me share in closing a note sent to my wife recently. This is typical of the appeals we get every day. We can do so very little among so many with need, but we try to use your gifts to help as many as possible. Here is the note..." Aunty, gudday, hope this message meets you well. I just want to let you know that my mom is very sick and down and she is admitted here in UPTH. (local teaching hospital) Please Aunty, I really want you to come to my aid at this point because I am really down now. I don't have money to get drugs or do the required test for my mom any more. All my money is finished. Please help me financially, physically and spiritually. I don't want my mum to die, please ma,, I can't live without her, please have mercy. Please, I have been the only one suffering alone here without nobody and you know that I am her only child. Please Ma, help me, have mercy. I beg you in Jesus name." This note is on behalf of someone who has a condition where fluid builds up in her abdomen until she seems ready to pop. They drain gallons of fluid from her body to give her a temporary relief, only to repeat the cycle again and again. There is so much naked suffering around us. Thank you for being the tool God uses to ease the pain of so many others.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rm 15:13

We love you all, and stand amazed that you love us in return.

God bless,

Cliff, Nkiru and Family