

Nigerian Christian Children's Home



October 2020

Dear Friends and Family,

We thank God for allowing us to have this chance to visit with all of you. Even though this is a time where there is a lot of activity and tensions, it is good to be able to visit with those we hold dear, those who have been so kind and loyal to us over many years. We pray this finds you all well, and that you continue to enjoy your service to the Lord.

This has been a very busy time for us, with extra tasks and tensions. Some of the struggle we were glad to see, and some was regrettable. But in all things we thank God, knowing He is the one who provides and sustains. Always and in every circumstance He is the one who makes things possible.

The big news of the month is that we had two weddings. Jodie Rebecca was one of the first children to come into our lives when we came to Nigeria in 1993. She was the drama queen, full of life and passion. She has a beautiful voice, which in part is what led her to her current destiny. Several years ago she made the bold step to move into another country, at first just to try to take Spanish language classes. This led to her staying in Malabo and eventually meeting her husband. She came back to renew her passport and to arrange for her fiancé to come to join her for a wedding here in the presence of her parents and family. And then covid hit, closing borders for months. In fact, there is still no direct link between EQ and Nigeria, though it is only about 50 miles offshore. Finally, unable to be apart further, the groom flew to Ethiopia and then back to Lagos, it was almost 13 hours of flight time, versus a normal 45 min flight. And landing in Lagos, he met a curfew and lock down due to unfortunate riots, forcing him to stay 2 days in an airport hotel. All this was part of the price he was willing to pay for love.

The wedding itself I thought was beautiful. It was a simple court wedding due to covid restrictions, and then on the house for a lovely reception. I was so proud of the giant effort made by so many to make this happen. To name them

individually risks leaving out important contributors. Just to know that everyone pitched in to make things happen made me proud. And the kids donated out of their allowances to give them a gift of cash. Times like these gives me a sense of hope and accomplishment, as I see family enjoying one of the greatest milestones in our history. We just wish them all the best, and pray that their marriage will reflect God's glory, and be a blessing to themselves and others. Those of you who have seen your daughter leave your house with her new husband, know the bitter sweet joy we felt as we took them back to the airport.

We didn't have much time to rest, for we had another wedding to support in the same week. Louisa and Paul are a young couple that have come into our lives in recent years. In some respect, they mirror many young people in our world, full of hope and dreams, yet facing huge challenges of this current dispensation. Many of these young people are open to the influence of those of us who may have already traveled down the road a bit further. Nkiru, my wife, spends a good deal of time sharing God's love and wisdom with young couples. Many young couples today simply move in to start living together, without the benefit and blessings of marriage. In part this is due to finance, as demands on the participants are large, no matter how you try to curtail and reduce. We were happy that this couple listened to God's Word, and made things right by doing the things necessary to establish a home as a legally married couple. They have huge challenges ahead, as they currently have no jobs or prospects. The truism of "living on love" is now being put to the test. But we believe, and so advised, that by honoring God with obedience, He will make a way when there seems to be no way.

These were not the only two that spread their wings and flew away, even if only temporarily. Wisdom left to go to Ghana, a two day bus ride, to enter a Christian university there. We pray there will be Godly men and women that will continue to shape and guide him as he grows in the Lord. He joins his big brother Joel, who is a final year student in the same university. Japheth chose to go a more vocational route, and we were able to send him to Abuja for a six month culinary school. He has already had some schooling and experience here, and we hope this will make him fully employable in a career he can enjoy. He joins Robert, who is a fitness instructor at the nation's capital. Hopefully the two of them can help each other in this important phase of their lives. James, the first baby who came into our lives here, is currently serving offshore on the high seas as a marine

surveyor. Hopefully this will continue to help train him in a job that will be able to allow him to finance his own wedding one day and a start in life.

Promise is now in barbering school, and we all need barbers. Hopefully he can find his niche. Jaleena took a job offer to work in the admin office of a new school. The pay is less than three dollars a day, of which almost a third goes into getting back and forth to work. Jemimah took a job as custodial staff for two dollars a day, which is not enough for a person to live on. It discourages many young people who, even after getting a degree, find few jobs that can sustain life much less offer hope for a better future.

This frustration is a part of what triggered a lot of violence in many parts of Nigeria this month. It began as a peaceful protest against a particularly oppressive police unit. It led to the tragic loss of life in Lagos of many protesters, which in turn caused riots to spark in different cities, which in turn caused a response by the authorities. In the end, everyone wound up losing. Northerners, who produce much of the nation's foodstuffs, vow not to sale to our state in particular because the violence led to deaths not even related to the initial issue. This has caused a huge upswing in food prices. Pre-covid and riots, garri, which is a starchy staple here, sold for around 9,000 naira a bag. Now it sells for 30,000 plus. Beans have more than doubled to more than 40,000. Onions have gone up to an unbelievable 80,000 a bag, when you can even see them. Rice was 12,000 a bag and now sells for 28,000. These staple foods are quickly reaching an unsustainable level, with all of us struggling to adjust and do without. Nkiru's answer to lack of onion was to find imported onion salt. Lacks the texture and many of the nutrients, but the taste is there.

All of this is against the back drop of worldwide tension and unrest. The election drama that is playing out in America, the Islamic gunman that killed people near the old neighborhood I lived in while a student in Vienna, the various storms that have done so much damage, all cause us to lift our eyes in faith to the One who holds it all in His Hands. Many of us are struggling with issues that are new and severe, as well as chronic conditions that never seems to let up. My prayer for us as a family and as friends is that our hearts and minds will be guarded by the peace that only Jesus can give, and that passes our earthly understanding. May we continue not to fall to the trap satan lays for us to cause us to be anxious and fearful, but that we will be able at all times to approach our Father's throne of grace, and with confidence and thanksgiving, let Him know of our requests.

He knew us even as we were being knitted in our mother's womb. He knows even the number of the hairs on our head. He knows the plans He has for us, and has promised to work all things for good for those who love Him. This is the faith that holds me, though it shakes at times when I look around at the huge task surrounding me. May we continue to lift each other up in faithful prayer. Even when things around us seem to crumble God is still on the throne.

Thank you all for your love and concern. We try to pass it on to as many folks as possible. May the Lord continue to give us grace and wisdom, as we try to convince a dying world that God still cares.

Love,

Cliff, Nkiru and Family