

Nigerian Christian Children's Home



November 2020

Dear Friends and Family,

This simple but heart felt salutation has gone out for so many years now that it seems a worn and welcomed part of my life. I hope and pray that those words also warm the hearts of those who read it, as we share a small time together. You are truly our dear friends and more importantly...family. I cannot imagine how our life here would have even been possible without your prayers and support. May you continue to witness the grace of God upon your lives, as He has promised that not even a cup of water given in His name to these little ones will not lose its reward.

I guess the biggest news of the month is that school has started back for all our kids. For children who had not been out for some months now, this was big news. Our nine high school students got to start back first, and then suddenly came the announcement that all levels of students were to attend. Little Olivia, the queen of the house, started pre nursery school for the first time. Others were glad to see old friends and teachers, and life seemed more normal again.

Since we were not really expecting the small ones to start school again until the new year, we had a lot of preparation to do in a small amount of time. Tall David, (as opposed to Fair David), one of our older boys who has trained to be a tailor, worked day and night to sew new uniforms to replace the old out grown ones. Shoe shopping for twenty something little ones took up a whole day. It was a heartwarming moment to see the joy and pride of the younger ones as they got their "new" second hand shoes.

Please share with us a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, knowing that your love helped provide a school shoe for a child that would otherwise have none. You helped buy the school bags, and the covid masks they are required to wear. By the way, it took my brother in law most of one day to shop and find masks for the little ones, such was the unexpected demand. Kudos to him as well. May the love continue. How thankful we are for that love, a love that has transformed the lives of our kids and so many others here.

We continue to try to share that love with as many as possible. A number of children from the slums near our house gather in the evening to share our evening meal. It is amazing to see a growing line of children, each in great need, stand patiently for a small bowl of whatever we have to share for the day. For many, it is the only real meal of the day. The other day I counted almost thirty children in a line that went from the dining room past the front door. It is a ministry that has grown without thought and planning, as in most aspects of our life here. It provides a way for us to share and to teach, ourselves as well as those who gather for food. When someone said the "insiders" should eat before the "outsiders", it gave a chance to remind us that we are all "insiders" in God's family. For those who want to complain that the amount of food they received was not enough to "belly full", it is an opportunity to teach them the joy of making do with what you have, so that others can also have a little in life. And as for me, it is a chance to be reminded that God is the Great Provider, and He will continue to amaze in His provision.

I hope many of you had a good Thanksgiving celebration. For many of us, it was not the celebration we were used to or would have liked. Out of safety concerns, many families could not gather. With so much going on, I initially thought of just quietly letting go of the tradition once so loved and cherished. I sat on the bed's edge and cried as I remembered my mother's turkey and my grandmother's pies and my late wife Pamela's spending all night cooking and working so that things would be "just right". But then I dried my tears, realizing that life has to go on and that new memories have to be made and traditions have to be passed on. I invited Mr. Brooks, the only other American I know remaining in town, to come and help us celebrate along with his family. The cooking, as tiring as it is, is the highlight of these festive meals for me. It is the deep connection I feel, not only with those in the kitchen sweating with me, but with those of blessed memory. We wound up with hot dogs on the grill, a favorite of the kids. Mr. Brooks, being from Texas, made a great big pot of chili. We had a sheet pan full of cottage pie with all the goodies inside. A big bowl of coleslaw went well. All of this and more went alongside the normal rice and stew. The really special treat were soft drinks, ice cream and something most had never eaten, strawberry jello. What a feast. In the midst of want and need, God provided us a chance to really celebrate. Uncle Brooks said it was the best Thanksgiving he had had in many, many years.

I hope, in the midst of all the tears and struggles, all the needs and uncertainties, that you will continue to celebrate and give thanks. Not just on a special time or day, but every day may your heart find a moment to be thankful when you reflect on the Goodness of God. May His peace guard your hearts and minds.

I will need to be reminded of this a lot over the coming days. As many of you already know, my dad was diagnosed and hospitalized with covid 19 a few days ago. What

was thought at first to be a light stroke turned out to be the dreaded disease many have had to struggle with this year. His condition has quickly worsened and modern medicine does not offer much hope. We had delayed returning, thinking our presence might be more needed later. However, we have made the difficult decision to rush back to Mississippi, hoping to provide some measure of relief and comfort to my sister and others. My dad is in the care of the Great Physician. If God wishes to grant our prayers for a complete recovery, He is more than capable of doing so. What is impossible with man is always possible with our Capable God. Even if my father takes leave of us at this time, after a life lived for others, he still remains in the care of a loving God. Please continue to pray with us, for our earthly father and family, for our journey mercies, and for our large family here.

I do not worry about the family here, though we will miss them and all the celebration of the Christmas season. It will give them the chance to grow without us, and to learn so many valuable lessons. Here is the time when our older ones step up their game, to become the leaders and givers that can make this family grow. I know they will do well, and along with your continued support, will continue to be a reflection of the love of Almighty God.

We love you. We appreciate you more than you can know or than we can show. Keep pressing on.

Till we meet again,

Cliff, Nkiru and family