

Dear Friends and Family,

March 1, 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of our arrival in Nigeria. What an unbelievable journey it has been. We have been blessed beyond measure, comforted in the midst of life's deepest sorrows, strengthened when we had no will to carry on, multiplied in efforts and numbers. Through it all has been God's sustaining Grace, manifested in great measure by you who have faithfully walked with us, allowing God to use you for His eternal purposes. Here's to the next exciting chapter!!

Since our last letter, much has happened. We celebrated the end of the year, blessed by the care and concern of others. The friend who gave us a goat for Christmas also sent a cow for New Years, so a double blessing for him. Others who have not been opportune to give due to the hardship of covid lock-up, once again came to visit and share. It was so refreshing to know we had not been forgotten.

A very big event for us in January was that our son Kingdom was able to go on scholarship to Lubbock Christian University. This is where Pamela and I attended in Texas many years ago. I told Kingdom from the beginning that it would take God's special Grace to make such a big dream possible. And in deed it has. There is no money budgeted for such a big ticket item, over 95 percent of Nigerians who apply for visas are denied, not many scholarships are available at a private school, etc. etc. There are lots of reasons why this should never have happened. And yet it did. Such is the power of God. Once again He has done the impossible in our lives, for reasons He will make known in time. We wish to thank the many of you, often unseen and unknown, for helping to make this happen. A special thanks to Dr. Rod Blackwood and LCU Dr. Scott McDowell. It has been both exciting and amusing to learn of Kingdom's journey so far as he has experienced so many radical changes. We are thankful for the testimony of others who witness to his character and efforts. May his walk in Lubbock and beyond continue to reflect the glory of the One who made this gift possible. I do not know how this will be sustained, but I do not doubt His ability to continue what has been started. We continue to walk in faith.

Another cause to rejoice was the instillation of a solar electricity system made possible by the kind generosity of the Massey family and others. For the past 30 years we have struggled with having electricity. Only the few of you old enough to remember kerosene lamps, fetching water from a well, staying on the porch till the house cooled down enough to get a little sleep, can begin to appreciate what we have experienced over the years here. So we are so thankful that more reliable light is now ours to enjoy. For the first time in 30 years we had our first 24 hour power supply, and what a blessing this has been. Thank you Lord for good friends who love and sacrifice for us.

We also rejoiced to witness the confession of faith and baptism of four friends and family members, Eunice, Mary, Ayo and Raymond. You always rejoice at each new birth, but especially of those closest to you. Nothing that we do here is more important than helping others to become a disciple of Christ. Please pray for their continued growth and maturity.

Also labor with us in prayer for Raymond as he has joined Obinna in nursing school in Ghana. We now have three in nursing school, two in medical school, two in a Christian college in Ghana, and one in a Christian university in America. We also have one daughter who is weeks away from finishing her university studies in medical lab science. All of this is aimed at helping them grow to be capable, active Christians in fields where they can be useful.

I would also have to say this has been a uniquely challenging time in Nigeria for various reasons. This period of February and March were set aside for national and local elections. These periods are often marked by anxiety as politics here are often marred by violence and intimidation. The elections have come and gone without major out breaks of violence, though the election results are being contested in court, especially the all important presidential election. Please pray that peace will reign and that we will be blessed with good leaders.

But the real hardship has been on the economic front. Global issues such as covid and Russia's war on Ukraine and other issues beyond local control have helped pushed people to the very brink. Common staples have risen sharply, while wages have remained stagnant. For example, rice was 10-12,000 naira in early 2020. Today it is 50,000 naira for the same 110 lb bag.

But the hardest blow was when it was decided that the naira note would be redesigned. Old notes would no longer be legal tender. Everyone rushed to turn in their old notes, but few new ones were exchanged. We were told to use bank cards, but many, especially the rural poor have no bank accounts. Merchants with no POS machines could not sell to customers who had no money. Taxi drivers lacked passengers as many resorted to walking. Some walked miles to attend church services at our compound. We were charged up to 40% to get our own money. Trips to the banks became an all day affair, and you were fortunate to get less than 3 dollars a visit, which often could not pay your transport. Then banks closed for days at a time. Payment systems did not work. Nkiru is still up often past midnight, when phone traffic is less, trying to get money transferred. Lord please hear the cries of the suffering.

We remain thankful that God has placed us in a place and time where we can help many others in crisis. Daily folks ask for help for basic needs, such as medicine, medical bills, feeding, etc. Your heart is touched when a parent comes by with their children who have not eaten in the last 24 hours. We pray for wisdom, to be good stewards of what God has placed in our hands. We know how much we need His Grace, and we try to be joyful in extending that Grace to others.

One of the things that has helped us through this period was Nkiru's cookie jar money. Monies she had faithfully saved away over a long period of time, came to be the money we needed at such a critical time. So kudos to her and all you faithful wives who juggle all the needs of your families, and still find ways to save for rainy days.

In closing, let me tell you of our plans to visit the US as from the 20th of April, if conditions here allow. We will try to visit as many as possible to thank you personally for your kind and faithful support. If you would like for us to visit your congregation, please let us know.

Again, we thank you for your understanding and perseverance. May the Lord continue to encourage and increase us all in His service.

We love you all,

Cliff, Nkiru and family