

Dear Friends and Family,

Once again I am thankful for the opportunity to share a brief moment of time with you. The month seemed to zip by, with different things happening. And can you believe it, I am back in the same hotel where I wrote from last time. We are again in Lagos, this time to try to get a visa to allow Nkiru to travel to the US. It is always a stress to go through the visa process, and made much worse by the COVID restrictions. We had given up hope for any visa soon, when in unexpected ways, a door opened for us to apply. Weather or not we get a visa, the fact that our application was accepted when for months the nearest date given to us was sometime next year, gives us reason to hope that God has once again done something unusual in our lives.

The reason that we desire to travel, in spite of the unrest of the world at present, is that we have been invited to attend the annual meeting of an extra ordinary group of people who are involved in medical missions and other good works. Christian doctors and nurses and others of similar interests meet in Dallas annually to encourage each other and share news and ideas of how to use their talents as medical providers with places that need their services and the Gospel. This meeting, which has held annually for many years, is chiefly sponsored by the International Health Care Foundation. This group, known formally as the African Christian Hospital Foundation, was the group that invited us to work at the Nigerian Christian Hospital over 29 years ago. Dates have been shifted because of Covid to the 17-20 of March of this year. We hope to be able to travel, visit with as many of our friends and supporters as possible, and be able to share with more people news of how God is using us here.

Even though we have not worked at a hospital for many years, we still are asked often to meet medical needs by those who God brings to us. Just today a sister came to us at the point of collapse. She was vomiting profusely and needed urgent attention. On Sunday a regular visitor to our congregation showed Nkiru her leg which had swollen to several times the normal size. Women often come to Nkiru and share their medical and other burdens. This often leads to the opportunity to share God's Word with them, which will have its intended fruit.

Another thing we do from time to time is help with an NGO we helped to start many years ago, now titled Professionals of Humanity, or PRFOH. In my last letter I mentioned Dr. Lawrence Adu, who was then serving with us at Nigerian Christian Hospital. He had been touched by the many volunteer doctors and nurses that came to NCH, and lamented that not many Nigerians did the same. We brainstormed together, and believed that many people here would also volunteer if they were only organized and challenged. Out of that tiny kernel of a conversation, Dr. Adu started an NGO called Doctors for All Nations. Before it could grow wings and fly, Dr Adu got a chance to go to America, as I mentioned in my last letter. He handed it over to another friend, Dr. Prosper who saw to its inauguration and take off.

No sooner had we had our launching than an opportunity to serve came to us. The Jesse Fire Disaster took the lives of over a thousand persons, as they gathered to scoop up fuel from a leaking pipeline. Desperate people do desperate things, and the

lure to make quick and easy money lured a big crowd to gather the leaking fuel. A random spark ignited a huge fireball, and many died on the spot. The survivors were in terrible shape, overwhelming the local health care system. Our NGO was able to carry a team of doctors and nurses and gather donated materials and supplies. I will always remember the sights and smells of that event. You could smell the burnt and rotting flesh well before you entered the hospital. We tried as we could to bring urgently needed relief, and two patients remain in my memory. One was a young man in his early twenties who latched onto my hand with his burnt one and begged for assurances that he would live. Sadly, he did not. Another was a young lady we found in a village as we rounded up people to carry them to the hospital. This young mother had been knocked over into a pool of fire. Her legs and arms and front were badly burned while the baby tied on her back was spared. I have wondered through the years if she made it.

After this medical mission, Dr. Prosper also got to move to America, leaving the organization in the capable hands of our friend Kama. Kama has been the engine behind the growth we witness today. He changed the name to a more inclusive Professionals for Humanity, attracting volunteers outside the medical profession. Today this organization is registered in a number of countries, gaining international recognition. Years of effort by so many has brought relief to literally hundreds of thousands of people, and the chance to touch many with the Grace and Gospel of Jesus.

So in continuing this effort, we followed Kama and his wife to the city of Kano in northern Nigeria. Northern Nigeria has become in many places hotbeds of killing and kidnapping. Whole villages have been torched on a regular basis in recent years. Yet here we were invited to serve, at a 600 bed hospital that has a back log of scheduled surgeries 3 years long. We started a process to bring in a volunteer surgical team, which we hope will mobilize later this year. We were warmly received, surrounded by a special squad of soldiers day and night, and felt we had made a contribution to a much needed service. We also go to visit the Emir of Kano's palace, which is 500 years old, something of a rarity in Africa. Please pray God can use us in such difficult places, where His light needs to shine.

Our trip back was longer and more winding than planned. But we were able to visit with our sons Japheth and Robert who are living in Abuja, plus spend the night with Tessy and Obinna and their 3 children ages 5,6, and 8. What a joy it was to see them, and to remember when Tessy was just a young girl in our house. I got to do grandfather things, like tell stories and show them how to make and throw a lasso, and answer dozens of questions. Questions about why my hair is so soft and why my skin is so white, etc. Then we flew to Uyo to express our condolences to Sis. Mkpog who just lost her mother. This also gave us the chance to briefly visit the 68th Founders Day for Nigerian Christian Bible College. We were useful to the school in its darkest days when missionaries had all left and its future was unsure. It was good to see real progress on campus, with growth in so many important areas. We hired a car and driver to carry us for the last leg home, only to have the car break down on the way. Fortunately, a team of police were quickly dispatched to stay with us until a car could come and pick us back

to Uyo. The car broke down at the area known most for kidnapping and robbery, but in the midst of danger, God provided security. His ways are past understanding.

Another example was a “chance” meeting with a young man who helped us get an interview date which seemed impossible for months now. And so we are here at the same hotel in Lagos a month later. What seems impossible with man is definitely possible with God. We continue to pray for wisdom and strength to follow where He leads.

I experienced another episode of vertigo, this time requiring me to spend overnight in a hospital, the first time in 47 years. I could not get the vomiting and nausea to stop. Finally Nkiru begged me to go to the doctor for her sake if I wouldn't go for my own. I do hope I am not to follow the footsteps of my father who was plagued by imbalance problems the last years of his life. Like him, no one has been able to tell me why this comes and goes, but it does defiantly affect the quality of life.

We were shocked to learn of the death of our friend Paul Alain. He was a lively 69 year old who took care of his health with diet and exercise. He was one of only three long time missionary families in this entire region. In an area which once had dozens of missionaries, now only three families remain to my knowledge. Paul was once a firebrand atheist, whose world views brought him to the brink of suicide. A believing mother challenged him to pray, and he was filled with a peace and comfort and never looked back. He was a missionary for 48 years in Europe, India, Japan and including 25 years here in Nigeria. They say one measure of a man is his funeral and what is said about him when he is gone. So many good things were said about a man who was in love with Jesus. One of his accomplishments here was 95 medical missions he helped organize with the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders, where 300,000 people received much needed health care. To me a greater measure is a man's family. Paul's family remained resolute in serving together, with three adult children still living and working together in the same house with him and their mother Maria. Four of our children helped usher at the simple funeral, and we hope we can be of further service in the days ahead.

I am thankful to be able to report that two more young people put on their Lord in baptism. Our young brother Divine came to me requesting baptism. I asked him several questions about motive and understanding, and was amazed at his understanding. We read the examples of conversion in the Book of Acts, and he remained resolute in his desire. So as we prepared for his baptism, 17 year old Joy came also requesting baptism. She said she needed Jesus in her life to help her overcome the many temptations she faces. Please pray for these two young souls, that we can help point them to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He is faithful in all that we commit to His care.

I thank you for taking time to read this note, and pray as always it will help encourage you and you learn of how God has blessed and used us. May He continue to hold all of us in His Hands. These are desperate times for many of us, especially those under

attack in Ukraine. The Lord knows His own, and may His will be done always. The darkness of evil seems so strong at times. But our eventual victory is secured. In all things God will have His Glory.

I must also mention the passing to his reward of Br. Grady from Hillcrest congregation at Baldwin, Mississippi. He was an elder in that congregation and a long time supporter and friend. He has made the inevitable transition we all must make one day. May the congregation he served and his family take solace in the hope Br. Grady shared with them.

We love you all,
Cliff, Nkiru, and family