

*Deaconess Susan C. Essam*  
*Anglican Diocese of Jos, P.O.Box 6283, JOS, Plateau State 930001, Nigeria*  
[cijos2010@gmail.com](mailto:cijos2010@gmail.com) Tel : +234 806 876 9443  
December 2018

Dear Friends,

November / December is THE time for weddings - I've lost count! In fact this weekend we had weddings on Friday, Saturday and Monday! However, as we gathered on Saturday morning we heard the sad and totally unexpected news that one of the Christian Institute part-time students had suddenly died. He had been married in November last year and leaves a wife with a new-born child. He simply was not well on Friday, was taken to hospital and died in the early hours of Saturday. There was a similar case the week before with a teenager who came home from school with a head-ache and died the next day. Post mortems are not the rule of the day here, and the cause of these deaths may never be known. But events such as these, together with the ongoing attacks, give everyone pause for thought. What if . . .

As I look at the BBC news on the internet I must say I am sad and concerned about UK, especially the increasing violence and the furore over sexuality and transgender issues. These, together with what comes over as a clampdown on Christians being able freely to express their religious convictions, leave me wondering where we are going as individuals and as a nation.

All the above situations serve to increase my concern about the very many people around the world who have no Christian commitment, and who give no thought to Jesus Christ. Obviously I would not be here as a Christian missionary if I did not believe in Christ, and certainly I would not have stayed here through all the violence, the problems, the killings, the burning, and the horrors of one kind and another, if I did not believe that Jesus is Lord. He has brought so many people - including me - through all manner of situations. Thank God that this year we have not had bombs in Jos, but the attacks on the vulnerable villages all around us have been bad with many people killed, villages razed to the ground, farms destroyed and livelihoods lost. The last weekend in September also saw violence within the city. I was stuck at the Christian Institute but eventually just managed to make the ten miles home safely before night and curfew fell.

But it is not all doom and gloom! We have had some great times and some astonishing things are happening. The Christian Institute is flourishing: I now just go in to teach when needed.

At a vast diocesan gathering in November, 183 young people (mostly under 30 years of age, some still at school) covenanted with God that they were prepared to go anywhere, and do anything for Jesus and the spread of the gospel! I was put in charge of this group, and it is one of the most exciting and challenging programmes I have had the privilege of helping with: the potential is huge. We meet at diocesan level every two months and local meetings are held at least once a week. There is study and discussion, but everyone must also be DOING something, both as part of a group project and also as an individual. So as well as groups going for outreach, evangelism, and to visit orphans, IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons - we have several camps in and around Jos), those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or sick etc., individuals are expected to open their eyes, look around and see where help is needed, whether it's sweeping someone's compound, washing clothes, running errands or whatever. We call it Making A Difference for Jesus, which gives us the wonderful name of M.A.D. groups! Remarkably, they are growing in number, and they are not just talking, but they are going out, Doing and Living - for Jesus. Here is a fantastic open door: please pray for all of us.

So if you don't know much about God, please think carefully. It is God who gives life; it is Jesus Christ who truly knows us and loves us, no matter what the present situation. Whatever may have happened in the past, he will forgive - if we trust him. Michael Ramsden came to our Diocesan Synod this year: a brilliant speaker. He grew up in the Middle East and so can shed fascinating new lights on New Testament stories. He works with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, RZIM, (based in Oxford), one of whose mottos is "Helping the believer think, and helping the thinker believe". Their videos are challenging, interesting and on the mark. [www.zachariastrust.org](http://www.zachariastrust.org).

May the peace and joy of Christmas be yours now and in the New Year.  
With my love, Sue/Susan

Cathedral choir members say  
Goodbye to two National Youth  
Service corpsers who have spent a  
year in Jos



While their parents rehearse  
the under-5's have their own  
version!

Trinity Chapel - the church in a [temporary] tent. Their church building has been attacked and destroyed several times, but the church has a great ministry to University students.



My latest godchild - just a few hours old.