



## Recent News

Sunday 30 November 2008

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From Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We have heard foreign media report that about three hundred Muslims were killed by Christians, this is an old propaganda tactic against Christians in Jos using a carefully calculated system of reportage to always put the Christians on the defence.

1. This morning the government has reported an arrest of about 500 persons with dangerous weapons, some of them dressed in police and military uniforms. The government further confirmed that these people did not have to be provoked: the attacks began at the same time throughout the city of Jos and by 6am on Friday damage had been done to a lot of Christian businesses, homes, lives and Churches. When government was trying to take control of the situation, the carefully planned attacks moved to next level.
2. This became the worst for because as we were now sure government was in control we urged members to go out and take stock of losses. This was when more lives were shot at and killed; we have heard of a few pastors and many members killed. We were therefore unable to continue with our assessments yesterday, we are hoping that today Sunday 30th will hold, for us to be able to know exact figures and so on. I was to be in Trinity Church Naraguta today, to dedicate their new instruments and bless the youth group; all that is gone as the Church is razed to the ground and my priest David barely escaped. Another of my priests Rapha also escaped but lost his house to Muslim arsonists.
3. We thank you for standing with us at this time. We know we have lived this long only on the WINGS of praying friends and partners like you.

The Lord be with you,  
+benjos

From: Deaconess Susan Essam

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008

Dear Friends,

Greetings from all in Jos.

Thank you again so very much indeed for your prayers, your messages, your love and concern. A few facts and figures may help your prayers. (We have still to finish our own compilation of details)

1. The Governor of Plateau State has stated very clearly that no Muslim was killed in a mosque in Jos. Please pray against the adverse effects of untrue propaganda in the international press.
2. Amongst the several hundred people arrested are many foreign muslim mercenaries who were well armed. NB These have killed both Christians and Muslims because, being aliens, they do not know who is who.
3. Government figures last night gave nearly 26,000 displaced persons in 20 camps across the city. This number does not of course include the many homeless who are being cared for by family and friends.
4. The State authorities have begun to get some relief to these persons but the task is big and the need for water, food and medicine is becoming urgent.
5. The State authorities have also begun to clear corpses and debris from the streets.
6. Many people have started to go out and look for food etc. but with no banks and little movement into the city both cash and supplies are tight.
7. The situation is therefore easing in one sense but there is still the very real possibility of further violence. Please pray that God will wash away anger, rage, retaliation and lust for bloodshed.

God bless and keep you.

With my love,  
Susan

## **ADVENT & CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM JOS!**



**From Deaconess Susan Essam  
Principal, Christian Institute, Jos**

I sometimes wake up confused not just about what day of the week it is, but even what month of the year it is! How it can almost be December I simply don't understand! They say that time goes faster as you get older (touché!) and they also say that time goes faster when you're enjoying yourself! I certainly still love my work here and find it exciting, challenging, fascinating – and way beyond my wildest dreams. In the UK I would certainly never have the chance to do what I do here, particularly as it concerns the Christian Institute. At the Diocesan Board meeting on Saturday the Bishop said, "Everything to do with the Christian Institute can be put in one sentence: The Christian Institute is a miracle!" True! Growing numbers of students, and of young committed staff (even though we never advertise); developing courses; continual building work; a three week Holiday School in August which attracted 40 children from our local area; the Clinic beginning to serve the wider community; . . and the vision and hope to start our own Nursery / Primary School for children of students, staff and the local community in September 2009! The way in which God has brought the people, and the manner in which the funding has appeared is simply his miracle. To those of you who know any of the inside stories there is nothing we can say other than a huge "Thank You"; may God himself bless and reward you. It is a humbling and exciting privilege to be involved with this work!

In June this year I was also privileged to go to Jerusalem (at the instigation of GAFCON and Jos Diocese) to assist with the administration for the GAFCON gathering. That was a remarkable experience with over 1000 people from more than 25 countries in attendance. I had never been to the Holy Land before, so a day pilgrimage to the Sea of Galilee and a service held on boats in the middle of the Lake was a highlight!

Next year I am due to come to UK and I am thinking of coming at Easter time rather than summer, largely because it will be better if I am here for the turn of the academic year. So my provisional dates are 5 March – 7 May. It would be most helpful if Link Churches would kindly contact me directly (email is best) about suitable dates for me to visit. I look forward to seeing you again!

Meanwhile, however, please note that Jos Diocese is now building our own website! Look us up on [www.anglicandioceseofjos.org](http://www.anglicandioceseofjos.org)! The site is still under construction but is growing daily and I hope that there will soon be a short video about the Christian Institute (click on Seminary). Should you wish to find out more about the Anglican Church in Nigeria, the provincial website is: [www.anglican-nig.org](http://www.anglican-nig.org).

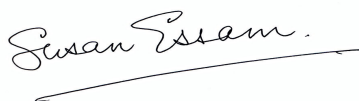
This December I shall mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my first arrival in Nigeria! Amazing!! Some of those now being made Bishops were “small boys” when I first knew them, and we can laugh together at stories of rural (very rural!) evangelism trips we did years ago. In those days there was no internet and no mobile phones – and fewer cars and motorcycles. The world has moved on in so many ways. The question is: in which direction are we moving!

For almost all that time I have not had to concern myself about where the money for my living allowance etc was coming from, but recently there has been a change of policy at CMS and in order to try and meet their budget, mission partners are asked to encourage churches to do all that they can to help cover the “running costs” for “their” link missionary. In my case it is reckoned that about £16,000.00 is needed to keep me in Jos for 2009 (this includes living allowance, international travel and CMS administration overheads). So as we round up the year I should be most grateful if you could prayerfully consider or re-consider sending to CMS – with my name clearly attached to it! (CMS, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ Tel: 01865 787400). To those of you who already do this so very generously I can only say another very big “Thank You”.

May the God of peace, of joy and of hope bless you with his love, his encouragement and his strength this Christmastide. May he lift you up and gladden your hearts

Happy Christmas and New Year!!

With love

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Essam". A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

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## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM JOS! (2)

Dear Friends,

Peace and greetings from Jos!

I had written my "Christmas Epistle" some three weeks ago, in good time for distribution, I thought. However, we never know what each day holds in store, and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November brought all prepared plans to a halt. From where I live at the Diocesan office (on the edge of Jos) the sky over the city that day was brown with rising clouds of thick smoke. Houses, shops, businesses, vicarages, churches were being destroyed and hundreds of innocent people brutally slaughtered.

The previous day had seen the Local Government Elections pass off peacefully despite much apprehension about the Jos North area. Then, in the early hours before the results were even released, evil struck. Cries of Jihad were heard. Buildings were set alight and citizens who could not escape were either burnt alive, shot or hacked to pieces. Plans had obviously been laid well in advance and Muslim mercenaries brought in from outside Nigeria, together with guns and other weapons. The non-Muslims were caught unprepared and had to defend themselves with whatever they could lay their hands on. This they did with remarkable effect. Anger brought retaliation, however, and Muslim property, businesses and mosques were also destroyed, but please note that contrary to some reports in the foreign media NO Muslim was killed in a mosque. The carnage continued on Saturday, but the government had by now brought in troops and a curfew was in force. One young pastor told me how he spent hours on the streets on Saturday carrying people on his back - either taking the wounded to whatever small clinic they could find, or moving corpses off the road. Safety was nowhere except in the Lord. Tension remained high all week, and is still tangible. Some areas remain no-go areas; in other places we are counting our losses and seeing what can be done to help the homeless and the injured. Nearly 30,000 are in camps for displaced persons, and hundreds more are being cared for by families and friends. The problem is: the markets (if they still exist) are running short of supplies, but in any case the banks have not operated for over a week, so from where do you find cash! Hunger is no respecter of persons!

Where do you go? Where can you find help? Who can you trust (many fake uniforms are in use)? Who will save you? Who will save the city? We have had to trust totally and absolutely in the Lord God. He does not fail; he does work miracles; he does go through the fire with you. But it's a tough lesson. I pray the church does not forget it when the going gets easier.

Now, as people gingerly test the ground and wonder how to begin again, there is a huge job of reconstruction to be done, not just in terms of buildings, but above all in terms of lives, families and communities. What can continue does so; what cannot continue stops; much will change and Jos can never be the same again, but just as God brought totally out-of-season-rain on Friday to wash to blood off the streets, so we pray that he will wash out the corruption, sin, wickedness, cheating, malpractice, robbery and murder which had so dominated life here.

The Diocesan Ordination Service was held as planned on Sunday, but with a big security presence, and the service began with a minute's silence for all who had died, before continuing with many prayers for the current situation. Schools have closed early. The Christian Institute has also closed: thank God the students, staff and school are all fine, but access to the Institute is not easy and in any case the students are needed to work in their churches at this time. Evening services and activities such as Choir Practices cannot hold at present as we still have curfew, but weddings (this is a prime season) and other services continue as they are able.

To everyone, we all say the biggest possible THANK YOU for your prayers - but please, please do not stop praying as this is where our strength, our hope, and our life lie.

Please note that we now have our own web-site, so you can find out more about us on [www.anglicandioceseofjos.org](http://www.anglicandioceseofjos.org). A note to my churches: I will still send the original Christmas letter which has a special note for you!

God bless and keep you all. May the peace and joy of Christmas be yours.  
Happy New Year!!

Susan / Sue