

MAY 2019



In a nutshell

A busy semester is just rounding up, with lots to give thanks for, especially over Easter—and we will be heading to the UK shortly.

‘Kagoro for Christ Campaign’

Easter was busy this year with two different ‘extra-curricular’ events. For the second year, the seminary chapel took the lead in organising the ‘Kagoro for Christ Campaign’ (for those of you who remember the older-style ‘tent missions’, it was a bit like that—but without the ‘tent’—a series of outdoor evangelistic meetings). This year Rick’s role was a more



behind-the-scenes, supportive role. One of his students, Ben Ishaya, co-ordinated the whole thing brilliantly—it ran over three days (Good Friday to Easter Sunday), with about 1,000 people attending each day. Over the three days about 150 people came forward at ‘altar calls’—about half and half new converts and returning backsliders. Please pray that the other churches who partnered in this will do well at following up those 150 people.

“

Over the three days about 150 people came forward at ‘altar calls’.

‘Fun in the Sun’

Also over Easter we led a team of seminary students who ran a family-ministry retreat (called ‘Fun in the Sun’) at Miango from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday. There were 220 people present, with kids programs, four Easter services, a parenting seminar and various fun and games. It was a busman’s holiday for the seminary students, as well as a chance to try out different types of ministry in different contexts. Asha also got very involved in helping plan and run the 3-5s kids group.

Children’s Centre

The Seminary Children’s Dept. has started using the building that was set aside for use as a children’s centre. We reckon we have about a year or so of use left out of the current building before it becomes unusable (the roof stands a reasonable chance of surviving this year’s rainy season—but in the medium term its days are strictly numbered). It will probably cost around £10,000 to rebuild the children’s centre fully but we have estimated that we could do a sensible first phase with £5,000. Donations from individuals and churches in Nigeria, Britain and Ireland have been

coming in for that past few months. Just this week they passed the £5,000 mark, so we should be able to get started soon (though we probably won't start until the rainy season is closer to the end)!

MA studies

Alanna is continuing on her Masters Course at the seminary. She has taken two courses this semester, both taught by Rick.

The first focuses on the works of Oliver O'Donovan. His three-part 'Ethics as Theology' is a difficult but intensely rewarding read. She has read it before but has found that she gains more and more each time through. God has used these books to transform the way she views all of life from a Christian perspective. The first two in the series *Self, World and Time*, and *Finding and Seeking* are currently available on Kindle for bargain prices (about £2.50). If you enjoy a challenging but rewarding read(!), now is a great time to buy them, even if you don't have the time to read them immediately.

The second course is called *Pacifism and the Use of Force*. We've been studying issues around our response to violence, with particular relevance to the situation in northern Nigeria, where we live.

It has been exciting for Alanna to take part in these classes and to join in the discussion with our Nigerian masters students. It is encouraging to see their thoughtful, reflective responses to the readings and especially how the students connect the study with their day-to-day experience of Nigerian Christians and the Christian community.

More generally, though, Alanna has found the past six months a struggle, especially in terms of energy levels and mood. She has found it difficult to keep up with the different activities and relationships that seminary life offers. She has reduced some of the things that she's involved in, and is trying to find more sustainable ways forward. She is grateful for what God is teaching her through this and is confident that in the long run it will enable her to be a more effective witness to his power. But in the meantime she would value your prayers to help her make wise decisions about what to focus on.



Some hill walking during the break

End of semester

Rick's other BA courses have gone well, ably assisted by some teaching assistants, including his new secretary, Noah Magaji. One of the students in the 'Spiritual Life' course (which Noah teaches most of) wrote last week to say how much they had learned, and how it had helped them in their Christian life. The end of semester is now upon us and exams are about to begin. Alanna and the kids travel back to the UK on 5 May. Rick is staying an extra couple of weeks to finish off exams, and marking, and will be back in the UK on 16 May.

Please pray:

- for our students as they connect what they are learning about God's word to its practical outworking in church life
- for our time in Britain and Ireland to be refreshing and mutually encouraging for us and the churches and people we visit
- for Alanna to be led by the Holy Spirit as she works out how to serve Christ in his strength rather than her own
- for the kids to be growing up with a true perspective on God's world and their place in it
- for Rick to continue to grow in faithfulness as a mentor, teacher, chaplain, husband, and father
- for the new Children's Centre(!)