

OCTOBER 2019



Family Life—Alanna writes:

We've been back in Kagoro for six weeks and homeschool has started well. Again we travel to Jos once a week so the kids can join in some lessons at Hillcrest international school. Asha is doing a day a week in middle school. She also attends an extra-curricular discipleship programme (like a youth group for the girls in her year). This has been going well. While we were back in the UK and Ireland the kids were able to take part in several social activities—youth groups, holiday clubs and camps. This was particularly valuable for Asha, as she arrives at the start of her secondary school years. One challenge for this year is that the kids' best friends are back in Scotland for eight months (we visited them in Glasgow and it was lovely to see where they are living and meet some of their friends). Please pray for our children as they adjust to this change. Pray that they develop supportive friendships this year (especially Asha).

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I need to focus more on my primary role of providing for the changing needs of our children.

Thank you to those of you who prayed about the struggles I mentioned in our last letter. While in the UK I had three weeks when I could rest and reflect. This allowed me to plan for the year ahead. I recognised that I need to pull back from some of my activities and focus more on my primary role of providing for the changing needs of our children. I had taken on too many different responsibilities and this was putting a significant strain on being able to do any of those well, and on my physical well-being. One aspect of this has been to pause my own study. I've recognised that in our time here God has, on several occasions, honoured choices that I've made for the good of the kids to bring unexpected blessings in ministry to others. I have noticed my increased energy since getting back and I am being careful to maintain sustainable day-to-day habits of activity and rest.



Asha, Conor, and Jack with Nyella doing their school work

I'm still involved in Girls Brigade and have been excited to be teaching a series from Romans on 'The Gospel—How Can I be Right with God?' Please pray that the girls would understand on a heart level that our salvation can only come from being united with Christ and sharing in his righteousness, rather than depending on our good works. As for any of us, this is difficult for them to grasp. Please ask the Holy Spirit to open their eyes.

I'm also doing the weekly preparatory class for Sunday school teachers. The book of Judges is hard, but we've been encouraged to see God use people in spite of their weakness and sin for the salvation of his people. We'll study Ruth next.

Seminary life—Rick writes:

The discipleship course I've been teaching, called 'Spiritual Life', is going well: it's been a good medium to challenge people to be serious about their Christian lives, to put their faith in Christ and not their own effort, and to confront issues in their lives that need to change. The course is even showing signs of 'snowballing'. For example:

- About 20 new students have come forward with issues they want to address (usually to do with sex, money or drugs/alcohol).
- We have been using, to great effect, Tim Chester's book, 'You Can Change'. There are many British cultural references in it that don't come across well in Nigeria—but even so, the book's been great. But it'd be even better if it was tweaked. The publisher is willing for this happen, and to licence a 'Nigerianised' edition, if we can put one together. I hope to get a team of Kagoro students/graduates to work this during the year.
- Two recent graduates from Kagoro have taken up teaching posts at other colleges nearby. Both have been given the 'Spiritual Life' course to teach at their respective colleges and they want to reproduce something similar there.
- Several of our current students want to take the ideas from the course and use them in their home churches (one student came to see me last week because he is running a discipleship course at the local Health Technology College, with about 100 students coming). However, we don't have the course 'packaged' very well—we don't have any collated resources to help people reproduce the course in their own context. Currently they have to re-create it from scratch. This year I'd like to compile some resources to make spreading the course easier.

Like Alanna, I've been reflecting on refocusing my responsibilities to concentrate on my key areas of ministry. In order to give more attention to the Spiritual Life counselling I have decided to step down from the official/administrative role as chaplain. The Provost has agreed to this and so I recently handed over to another faculty member. In some ways I'm a bit sad to be stepping down—but I'm also very excited about the possibilities with the Spiritual Life course.

I have also started to get more involved in home schooling, especially maths. I used to be a secondary-school maths teacher so can contribute easily in areas that Alanna would find hard-going.

Praise points:

- **Alanna is feeling back on track physically**
- **the Spiritual Life course is going well and spreading**

Prayer points:

- **for supportive friendships for the kids**
- **for energy for Alanna and wisdom to provide appropriately for our children's needs**
- **for God to bring the Girls Brigade girls to rely fully on Christ**
- **for a good transition in Chapel**
- **that we make the most of the opportunities for discipleship and counselling—especially through the Spiritual Life course**

Thanks again so much for all your prayers—it's a great encouragement to us.