

# Recovering Our Planet

Restoring Sabbath & Jubilee  
to our Heart  
Relationships, Environment, Economy

Kent & Ruth Hodge  
A Missions Autobiography

## The Journey

Kent and Ruth have been missionaries in Africa for 34 years since 1986. They first worked in the south of the nation helping to train 8,000 pastors who planted thousands of churches around Africa and the world.

Then at the end of 2006 they shifted with their team to centre in Jos, to reach the northern part of the nation. This is when their journey took on entirely new challenges they hadn't faced in the south. It began with community violence which took thousands of lives. This reoriented their theology around Jesus' call to follow him in enemy love and the new community Jesus said he was building, in contrast to the individualism that is prevalent. After this the terrorist organisation Boko Haram struck Jos for three years with attacks, daily at some points, which escalated prolonged conflict withing the city. Boko Haram spread throughout the north east regions of Nigeria, where Kent and Ruth's Christian Faith Ministries (CFM) team serve those who are suffering.

CFM learned principles of peace that must be applied to conflict and injustice throughout the world. When CFM moved to its permanent 33-acre site at the centre of Nigeria's hostilities between Muslim Fulani cattle herders and Christian crop farmers, they needed to go deeper into understanding the roots of conflict in the sub-Saharan region, where many people were being killed. Ethnic groups compete, striving for survival on degraded land. This brought CFM to learn the basics of environmental degradation and its causes, and to discover that the "solutions" put forward globally are often more profit driven than genuine. CFM embarked on regenerative farming methods that renewed its soils, greatly increasing output, and for the first time in decades brought peace between herders and farmers in their locality.

This is when the Covid-19 "pandemic" hit. Here the same monopolistic forces which dominate the degenerative farming methods that produce environmental destruction and hostility also work in the health industry. Prices are high, local health resources are relegated, rural regions remain undeveloped and the poor are left out of health care. Global aid often does not address local development issues with justice but connives with monopolistic forces that rape our nations. These forces must be dealt with for there to be peace. CFM's calling is to be a witness to a new economy, one of sharing like we see in the book of Acts, where relationships are built, rather than domination.

In this embodiment CFM brings the gospel of Jesus Christ, who suffered and rose from the dead to birth us into God's sabbath/ jubilee principles of restoration for our creation and communities. CFM trains pastors, opens churches, operates mission stations, nurtures victims of terrorism and persecuted believers in safe houses, runs schools for children, provides peace building and educative centres in computer and other vocational skills and operates a hospital. Please come on a journey with CFM in implementing the justice of Christ that renews our lives and nations.

# Contents

## Restoring the Foundations

During years of intense terrorism and global corruption

## First Twenty Years

Training 8,000 pastors

Working with Archbishop Benson Idahosa

## Transitions for the Family & Ministry

Looking for the Marginalised

Relocating to Northern Nigeria and to serve the north east and African Sahel

## Christian Faith Ministries, Bukuru – the First Years

Not knowing what was ahead

Opening an interdenominational bible college and other ministries

Reaching out into Egypt

## The Learning Curve

Learning to follow Christ

Widescale community violence: responding by building relationships of mercy and justice

## Boko Haram Terrorism 2011 – 2015

Pulling the nation back from the brink

A three-year jihad on our city. Suffering cross the whole north east

Building relationships between Muslims and Christians to overcome evil

Relaunching missions to the north east

## Wurin Alheri

The development of CFM's work – growing a Place for Kindness

Settling on 33 acres of land, reaching hundreds of thousands with the gospel

Establishing the fountains of peacebuilding

## Building Local Community

Addressing global issues locally

At the focal point of Fulani/ Farmer violence

Looking for the longer-term issues in peace

Responding to the destructive programs of Agenda 21 and the Great Reset

Rebuilding ecosystems in agriculture, overcoming global chemical monopolies, building local community wealth, restoring environment to restore peace

## Restoring Health & Development

Collaboration rather than domination

Making health affordable at local levels

Developing markets for local products

Responding to global health monopolies dominating the Covid-19 enforced crisis

Rebuilding decentralised development for peace

## The Bible College 2020

Moving the bible college to Wurin Alheri during the 2020 lockdown

During an economic crisis, a base is established to reach the Sahel in the years to come

CFM's permanent hospital is built, and schools grow

## Restoring the foundations during years of crisis and danger, years of intense terrorism and global corruption

Foundations in the gospel: learning to follow the Prince of Peace. Restabilising his reconciling non-violence as the path to renewed creation.

Foundations in relationships: through mercy, neighbourism, restoring the poor and broken, building one community table of care for all neighbours, whatever their ethnic or faith.

Foundations in agriculture: rebuilding the environment, and local wealth, restoring farming relationships that build strong community, peace, and resilience.

Foundations in health: overcoming the dictatorial rule of the pharmaceutical industry, Agenda 21, and the Great Reset, as essential to true environmentalism, local development, human development, justice, and peace.

Foundations in democracy: overcoming the rule of monopolies, of centralised power and wealth, to decentralised development back to local community from where it was stolen

## First Twenty Years

If you are looking for a book about someone's personal struggles, weaknesses, and failings, you probably won't find too many in these pages. Not because we don't have many. Like every person, we have plenty. But this story is about God's kindness, mercy, and grace despite our selves. He knows we have faults before he saves, but he is always committed to stay with us and bring us through. So our struggles are just like those that any person reading this book would face. We are just like you. It's a story about people who have nothing in themselves that gives any advantage, except the gifts that God gives variously to us all, and his commitment to get us through our struggles. And all the people we work with over the years are also normal people. No one special, no one great. Most of us are "grassroots."

Publishers may tell us to start telling a story at some exciting event, and then go back to some earlier days to fill in the details. For us, all the events are as exciting as each other. Just the other day I was thinking back to the "beginning," the days when we were young. I wasn't earnest about many things, except sport, and I mean at a social level with friends. It was probably because of my awareness of my many struggles that I became earnest in prayer and searching for faith in many different places in my late teens. I was drawn most to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and the life of Jesus. It rang true to me. I had a dream about Jesus in my earlier years, and as he spoke his words struck me as full of truth. These were pure words, with no compromise, no lie, no self-serving, no self-glorifying. But at the same time, these words did not condemn me. They lifted me. There was an enlivening power in them. I had never heard truth before that didn't condemn me. I wanted truth and I wanted forgiveness and life. I woke up having heard words for the first time "full of grace and truth," even though at the time I didn't know this was how John had described Jesus. In my later teens I looked for these words.

Ruth grew up in the church in her rural town in Australia. Like many of us, she didn't feel strong in her faith until her late school years. She then had a profound experience with God's Spirit and began to grow in fellowship. In her earlier years Ruth read a book about a missionary and then knew that this is what she wanted to be. We met in Sydney (after Ruth had completed university) at a church that was very supportive as a faith community, and also quite marginalised from higher society. In those days Pentecostalism was on the outer, very raw, but we wanted to hear scripture without someone telling us that it wasn't relevant anymore. The bible was mostly written to castaways after all, despite all our mess and misinterpretations of it. We both had very clear assurance that we were to marry and began to make plans: after a nervous interview with Ruth's father!

The beginning I was thinking about just the other day, was the beginning of the journey together with Ruth. It was two people starting out in covenant with each other, and covenant between us and Jesus. Ruth's wedding ring holds three small diamonds, which symbolises this covenant. All through the years Jesus has been utterly faithful to our early expression of faith as we walked together with him. Jesus has been a real person to us, right from the start and through every step we have taken. And he has been with us and totally

faithful to all he put in our hearts in those first years. The most wonderful thing about a walk is that it is personal. It is with a person who is true, and this builds comfort, security, hope and love, and a gratitude that we really do live in a good world, once we learn of the truth of its redemption. It takes away all cynicism.

We started out in our first year of marriage with Ruth working on research as a microbiologist at Westmead Hospital in Sydney. In January 1984, one month after marriage, we decided to enrol in a bible college in the Sydney beach suburbs and found a little “granny flat” to rent. After moving in and buying our bed we had \$200 left to begin the year. It’s great looking back because we selectively remember the good times and not so much all the challenges we pass through. A highlight of the year was an assignment we had to do, selecting one church anywhere in the world as a study. Ruth and I selected the book *Fire in His Bones*, by Ruthanne Garlock, a book about Benson Idahosa, in Nigeria. We could sense the genuine Spirit of God in his life. We prayed, “Lord, if we could just be part of what you are doing in his bible college in Nigeria, we would be so grateful.”

We finished bible college in one year and moved into a larger house to share with friends and other people who needed support. I got part time jobs, either in accounts, or working as a caterer in a hospice. Ruth and I also ran children’s outreaches, in our local church and in schools in our area. And we were pregnant with our first child. Towards the end of that year we grew unsettled and began to discuss Nigeria again and pray. One night, Ruth said, “If God has called us to Nigeria, why don’t we go.” That shocked me. I thought we were supposed to struggle and prepare for many years first. So we made a commitment to go in April 1986. We wrote to Reinhard Bonnke and told him and to Benson Idahosa. Bonnke responded that he didn’t need us. We didn’t hear from Idahosa. So we gave notice at our church and jobs we worked at, sold our car and booked our flights for April. Our daughter was born in January and we were ready to go.

It’s a conflicting time taking a step like that. The counsel you receive isn’t all that encouraging. Taking a young baby into the unknown! And, how will you be supported? Two people stood by us in encouragement. These were Ruth’s parents, Jim and Gwen Todd, and a minister in Australia called Harry Westcott. Ruth’s father worked for the Water Resources Commission as an engineer on irrigation schemes. When he was younger, he wanted to be a missionary, but God spoke to him audibly and told him not to. This wasn’t usual for Ruth’s father. He wasn’t at all given to a “Pentecostal expression” of faith, though he was filled with the Spirit and his faith was strong. So too was the faith of Ruth’s mother. They had just retired and were thankful that Ruth was embarking on this mission. They stood by us for the next thirty years of their lives, always our major support. When we were ready to leave for Nigeria, we received a letter from Benson Idahosa telling us to come.

Things didn’t go as planned on our journey to Nigeria and we arrived one evening in April at the hot and steamy Lagos airport with \$4 and no promised support from any people or churches behind us at that time. We happened to land with an American missionary also working with Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Then, there was a law we didn’t know about that required us to change \$100 each upon entry at the airport. The missionary was furious with us (understandably) and loaned us the \$200. We went through many experiences like this.

Ruth was never discouraged. She always says, “We know we have to be humble, but we don’t like humiliation.”

We arrived in Benin City at 4:00 AM the next morning, driving into a kind of slum environment and were given a room in the American’s flat. For a few weeks we didn’t have much to do. On one hand we were devastated by the harsh conditions, but on the other we felt so incredibly honoured to be part of the move of God that was all around us. The transition that was happening in Nigeria then was totally amazing. Benin City was moving from a culture steeped in strong and murderous witchcraft into Christ’s faith through the bold and risk-taking faith of the Archbishop. The liberation was so powerfully evident everywhere, every day. Open challenges with extremely high stakes were frequent. The movement of people to Christ was phenomenal. Millions upon millions of people in cities and villages all over southern Nigeria every year were turning to Christ.

Archbishop was advised to send this young family back to Australia, but he decided not to. He said the Lord told him we had given our lives and he should accept us as his children, which he did. He put us on a monthly retainer, and we worked in his office helping with secretarial duties, mainly answering his international mail. Other missionaries working there also helped us. This gave us lots of exposure, especially to the global Pentecostal church. Archbishop was well known internationally. We had frequent communication and relations with ministries and leaders all over the world. We also worked in his bible college, helping to teach young student pastors, and helping with administration in the office. Before we knew it both Ruth and I were flat out working every day and loving the total involvement.

Each day Archbishop was in town, his foyer was filled with visitors. These would be a whole range of people, from important government people, army officials, press, clergy from all denominations, educationalists, businesspeople, young people like ourselves, and villagers. They came for a whole variety of reasons and we were in his office as he dealt with them one by one. Some matters came from the nation's presidency. Some were widows, whose farms had been stolen and they needed someone to intervene on their behalf. Idahosa treated each one of these people as important as the other, giving his time and energy in prayer, calling in favours from other friends to help those who needed it, or assisting from his own financial resources. Each case mattered to him. He loved the whole nation and the whole body of Christ. Any person who claimed to have a vision from God to build the nations, Idahosa supported as best he could. He himself literally began from the rubbish heap, and he never lost focus on where he had come from and how the Lord had honoured his faith in his life.

He always said things like, “When you climb the ladder, don’t pull it up after you, but leave it there for others to climb.” “Prosperous’ is spelt ‘prosper-us,’ not ‘prosper me.” “I live for posterity, not for prosperity.” He was simple, kind, sharing and accessible to all, but also bold and direct and he expected faith. Ruth and I and our children were in his house regularly and he always honoured and respected us all. One day I ate breakfast and lunch alone with Idahosa and a former military head of Nigeria, who was calling in for counsel over the weekend, before embarking on another eight years of presidency. Other times he

took me to indoor and outdoor events in different parts of the nation to share the pulpit with him.

However, our main love in Benin City was Idahosa's bible college. This is the one Ruth and I prayed about back in Australia, asking earnestly if we could be there just for five minutes. Ruth and I began teaching and our responsibilities started growing. After some years we had the responsibility of leading the college and also raising support from friends in Australia. Our supporters sponsored the majority of our students and built extra capacity for the college as it swelled. The college grew to become 1,600 students at its height, who came from all over Africa for two to four years' study and preparation for gospel ministry. During the twenty years we served in that college we helped train 8,000 pastors, who started somewhere between ten and twenty thousand churches, in many nations all over the globe. These churches started other churches and other bible colleges. The growth was phenomenal.

We grew up with many of the students. In 1986 we prayed with a student from Ghana. He brought the gospel to much of his country, and founded a church of 8,000 people in Accra, and hundreds of branch churches around the nation. About 1,000 students from Ghana went through Idahosa's bible college and went on to have a great impact on the nation. Earlier, as Ghana's days under communism ended, Idahosa said God then told him to go to Ghana to preach. He arrived at the airport and told a taxi driver to take him to any pastor. He explained to the pastor why he had come, and the pastor was perplexed, not knowing Idahosa or if his claim to be sent by God was true. As they drove together to meet another pastor, they saw a man painting a tall building fall to his death. As crowds gathered around, Idahosa says God spoke to him and told him to raise the man from the dead. In obedience he prayed. The man stood up and fully recovered and that afternoon Idahosa found himself in the office of Ghana's president. The president gave him the national stadium for meetings and advertised it on television. Great crowds came and there were many wonderful miracles. This changed Ghana.

In the bible college we mixed every day with people from very humble backgrounds whose faith was growing strongly. This was a great privilege for us. These were people who adopted Idahosa's maxim, "If your faith says yes, God will not say no." These were people who knew first-hand the faithfulness of God in their lives and they would not take "no" in life's circumstances or challenges as an answer. Nothing could stop them in spreading the gospel. We followed them down rivers on canoes, into jungles on motor bikes and on foot, and everywhere they went God moved. We saw miracles of healing and people come to life changing faith. We travelled throughout most of Nigeria in those days, involved in thousands of churches being birthed. One day driving home, about an eight-hour drive, the car suddenly stopped in a deserted rural area. We opened the hood and the radiator cap was missing. We had burnt a head gasket. Right then, a man appeared from between the tall, dense corn stalks beside the road. He looked under the hood and said he will return, disappearing again into the corn stalks. Not long after he came back with tools and a new head gasket. He fixed the car and we set off, reaching home on time that evening. This is

how life worked every day. What a privilege to be a part. There was always a “man there,” without fail.

## Transitions for the Family and Ministry

In March of 1998 Benson Idahosa suddenly went to be with the Lord. He had just returned from America that week. On Tuesday Ruth and I ate lunch, just us together with him. He was noticeably tired. He didn't eat that day but kept putting more food on our plate, as was his custom with all his guests. We ate with him often, normally a few times a week when he was at home, but he had never not eaten himself before. On Thursday he spent the morning in the bible college with the students. As I took him out to his car, I noticed again the car's general disrepair and thought about how he invested everything in people. He used to tell me, "People are selfish. Don't allow them make you ashamed of supporting the grassroots." He died of a sudden massive heart attack at home at lunch that Thursday, while entertaining guests from America. It was a big shock to everyone. For thirteen years Benson Idahosa was a father to Ruth and me. He brought us up in ministry. Ruth and I decided to stay on with the work, supporting the bible college.

However, our five children needed high school education and we were considering their options. We decided the safest prospect for them was a school that offered them scholarships in England. This was close to Nigeria, in terms of a direct flight, allowing me to spend half of my time in England with the family and half in Nigeria. We wanted our children to have the choice when they grew up about what they wanted to do with their lives. This is another reason why we chose this school in England, which had a very good reputation for educational outcomes. Its director, Peter Linnecar, and his wife Carolyn, supported us a lot, as did the church that the school was a part of. We also needed to move our family to the UK because our youngest child had medical needs and he was also developing reactions to antimalarial drugs available then. Ruth was given a job in the school, as the high school chemistry teacher, the biology teacher, and also as a form teacher. Ruth worked exceedingly hard all those years. Wages were low in the school to keep the fees affordable to the limited number of students. The teachers were amazingly committed to the children.

The first year we rented a flat on a main road. We were thinking of buying a house, since we were staying there for some years, until our children were through university, and we thought renting was throwing money away. But we had arrived in the UK with only our suitcases. That was all we owned. I had grown up in a relatively wealthy environment, but I had never come to terms with the idea that we must put our financial considerations first in life. The normal financial priorities for a family in a developed nation: the mortgage, insurance policy, school fees for the children, retirement policy, all intact, and then you think about what you might do with the rest of your life. That is not what we wanted to do with our lives, so our only other option was to trust in the Lord. We did this. As for our kids, God provided them with one of the best levels of education any child could hope for. What about the house? (Forget the life insurance: insurance actuaries didn't like our chances of staying alive, so we had to settle instead for God's *assurance*.)

At the end of our first year in England, Ruth and I had a break at Bath for two days since the other teachers were managing the annual children's camp. We sat at a small coffee table (during the half-hour break in the rain) discussing our goals. What did we want to do in

England? Education for the children as they grow in their faith. Some formal education for me as one of the directors of a bible college would be useful. Most of our informal education is done together, as Ruth and I study and discuss themes daily. We also said a little money at the end of our time in England to help the ministry would be useful. We had no idea how this would happen. It's easy to talk about these things, but the pressures you go through as they unfold is another matter. We all know about these, one way or another. We even thought of giving our children a nice holiday experience one day. Amazingly, a couple of years later a friend told us he was sending us on a family ski trip to the French Alps. We stayed in a lodge on top of a mountain for a week. We have never experienced anything like it.

During that first year in England we had a call from another friend in Australia, who said he wanted to help us buy a house. I wasn't one for counting chickens before they hatched. On the contrary, I am of Irish stock and given more to negativity than wild and prolonged periods of optimism. So I put the phone down and forgot about it. We looked for a house. We had no deposit, no personal income, and no funds for stamp duty. Houses we saw were very small, especially for Aussies used to wide spaces. As we looked, we thought, "How could we fit a family of seven in here?" Then someone told us a lady was selling her house down a lane just beside our church. We accepted her price and she agreed. We waited for her to be ready to move so we could exchange contracts and pay the deposit.

A friend went on a holiday to Canada and offered us her place, a tiny terrace cottage, while she was away. The seven of us piled in on top of each other and stayed for months. The owner of the house we hoped to buy wasn't ready to exchange contracts. Our friend came back from her holiday and, to help us, moved in with another of her friends, temporarily. Life was all very embarrassing, again! Months went by. We heard that the lady selling the house we had agreed on was getting jitters about selling and we had no assurance she would go through with the verbal agreement. She never spoke with us. We also heard she had said, that because we were missionaries, how could we afford to buy a house? We thought that was a very good question, but we didn't say so. It wasn't looking good. But the potential for embarrassment and the shame that goes with it was the worst of it: one doesn't like looking the fool, at least not too often!

I was sitting in a chair in our friend's small house. Suddenly the Holy Spirit spoke to me. I have had some very clear experiences like this over the years. He asked me, in regard to buying the house, "Are you in?" I answered from a faith very clear in my heart, "This is your will, not mine. I am willing to go ahead as a sheep to the slaughter (to suffer the embarrassment of failing.) I am in." That afternoon we had a call from the lady. She said she was ready to exchange contracts the next day. She asked to meet us at the lawyer's office. On our way to the lawyer's office, we stopped at a local branch of our bank to check our account. We discovered that our friend in Australia, who had said about one year earlier that he wanted to help us buy a house, had just deposited the exact amount of money we needed in our account. We went to the lawyer's office behaving like we did this kind of thing every day. Another bank agreed to provide the mortgage to buy the house, without

me having personal income. Peter Linnecar, who worked in the industry himself, was stunned that we had been given the loan.

By God's grace, we owned that house from 2001 till 2013 and never once defaulted on a monthly payment, even during the financial crash of 2008. It was a lovely little house and garden, down a gravel rural laneway, leading to public woods, perfect for the children to play. It was surrounded by trees and moors. In 2013, when Ruth and I left England, we sold the house at a tidy profit, and were able to give AUD\$300,000 into building the ministry site called Wurin Alheri in Jos, Nigeria. This is the way God's finances work. He is able to shift money around for us, putting it into areas where it is needed at that time, so we can pass it on to others without needing to hoard it for our own future. It's an economy based upon trust, the trust that the lilies of the field and the birds of the air have. We are wrong to be embarrassed if we are truly serving God and other people. The embarrassment should lie with those who hoard. Our world is in trouble today because most of its wealth is hoarded. This is why we head towards war.

During our stay in the UK I completed a master's degree in theology and our church in England also financed me to complete a Doctor of Ministry, for which I travelled often to America. Later on, professors at the University of Jos and University of Benue collaborated to grant me the title Professor of New Testament Theology. When I was in the UK, I taught theology at our church's bible college in England, that was an adjunct college to the University of Wales and to Oral Roberts University in America.

In January 2006, eight years after Benson Idahosa died, Ruth and I decided to leave the college in Nigeria we had worked with for twenty years. We started to pray about our next step, while visiting graduates we had supported, who now led ministries in various nations. We were looking for a new place to work, where mission was needed and where large grass roots or marginalised communities existed that needed support. We felt drawn to Jos, which was a base from which we could access north east Nigeria. Even though this was in Ruth's heart and my heart for many months we knew it would be a very difficult mission to embark upon. I was afraid of the costs involved in building a new bible college and of the intense poverty and life-destroying conditions in the wider region. We didn't have the support base needed. I knew we didn't have the resources to embark on a mission like this. We really had nothing at all.

Ruth and I and our children had frequently travelled to Jos during our years in Nigeria, and to the north east region, to visit graduates and to vacation. We had a love for the region. A passage of scripture touched us in the early years, where Abraham's son Ishmael, and Ishmael's mother Hagar were thrown out of Abraham's house. It says that God loved Ishmael and revealed himself to Hagar, which is rare in scripture. This was something most in Israel never understood: God loved Sarah because she was barren, and he also loved Hagar because she was despised. Tradition says Hagar was the mother of the Arabic and Muslim people. Islam dominates in the north of Nigeria. We told the students in Benin City, that we wanted to take the gospel and serve these people in northern Nigeria, and also in Egypt, as a door to the Middle East. We had no idea then of the conflict and ruin to many

lives that was coming to these nations because of the geopolitics, nor of all the things we would learn.

We decided on the north east of Nigeria and launched out in December 2006 to become planted in that region. We worked with a team of men we had known for many years by that time. They contacted Ruth and me and told us they would like to join us in the new mission. So in December 2006, just before Christmas, this team arrived late at night with a truck load of their household goods in Bukuru, a large town in Jos South, part of the city of Jos. They slept in a building they had just rented to start Christian Faith Institute (CFI) a new grass roots, inter-denominational bible college, to help serve and reach the north east of Nigeria.

We had no apartments for our team. Our landlord was a Muslim Alhaji. The building was large but used as a dump and hadn't been occupied for quite a while. But it looked like gold to us. The book of Acts was about to start another chapter. Our team set about cleaning the refuse out, repairing the broken roof, reinstalling electrical wiring and fittings and painting. Together there they ate their Christmas chicken dinner, sitting on a few bits of broken furniture. All of them were embarking on a mission by trusting God, not having any strong plan for what we would be doing, not knowing how this new work would be provided for, how it would succeed, or where it would take them and their families. Our only plan was to use Jos as a base to reach the north east. They can all write their own story about their faith walk and how the Lord has led them. We bought tables, chairs and beds for students, and CFI classes started January 2007 with 1 student from Cameroon. Soon another 32 students joined to be part of our first semester.

From 2007 till early 2013 I continued to interchange between northern Nigeria and England. Ruth's parents in Australia were aging, needing her care. Ruth resigned her job, dividing her time between England and the rural Riverina area of NSW, Australia, helping her parents, caring for our youngest son with special needs, and sharing about the work in Australian churches. In 2010, in England, Peter Linnecar helped us launch Christian Faith Ministries International as a tax-exempt UK registered charity, and until today friends we came to know at our church in England serve on the board. In 2013 we sold our house in England, shifting our personal base to Ruth's parents' town, to care for them, and eventually inherited Ruth's parent's small house, when they went to be with the Lord. However today this house is rented out while Ruth and I base at Wurin Alheri in Nigeria.

Over the years we have seen the perfect timing of God. Ruth's parents retired to help just as we started. Ruth's father could no longer help just as the internet allowed us the flexibility. Ruth's parents' health gave out just as Ruth was free to help them. It was the best time for Ruth's aunty to help with our youngest son. We have seen the Lord's timing constantly caring for our family in difficult decisions. Here is an example when it looked like Nigeria was going into civil war. We were about to return to Nigeria from Australia with our five children. All the newspapers said Nigeria would be decimated. A stranger threw a Time Magazine on my lap as she walked past on a bus. The cover read, "The Bottomless Pit of Nigeria," referring to its soon destruction. "Leading prophets" agreed. I didn't sleep that night, but tossed and worried: How could we know what the future held? As soon as my

foot hit the floor in the morning the Holy Spirit told me Nigeria was not going to war. That day we began to pack our bags. We landed in Zimbabwe and stayed with a friend for two days. On our way to the airport to continue the journey to Nigeria, we heard on the radio that Mr Abiola, who contested the Nigerian leadership in an annulled election, was returning to claim his presidency and he would arrive at the Nigerian airport at the same time as us. Trusting God (in trepidation) we went to board the plane, as our friend called out over the partition saying that Mr. Abiola had cancelled his flight. Ruth and I and our five children would land in peace. Every time we decided to do God's will, there has always been a lot of "very good reasons" not to do it. God's timing has been consistently perfect in our journey.

This life is a story of faith and service, with so many people sharing support and their kindness with us; Ruth and I supporting our team; our team supporting us and supporting so many thousands of individuals we meet every day. In all of this God's love and commitment to each one of us shines through. Life is meant to be a display of the cross, where God gave himself for us, and of the resurrection, the new communities and lives that spring from God's way of living for others. We move from the old to the new, from self-focus to one-another, and new creation grows around us. This is what most of us want in life. Nothing else we have satisfies. This is the rest of the story we tell below.

## Christian Faith Ministries, Bukuru – The First Years

If we were hoping that the Lord was writing another chapter of the book of Acts, it would take us a long time to understand some of the aspects that entailed. Back in the first century, the church in Acts brought healing to the bitter divides between Jews and gentiles (even if she suffered turbulence for doing so) and she addressed with justice the harsh social and economic segregations of Rome and Jerusalem. It would take years, but we would learn that this was the purpose of the Spirit, in exalting the Lordship of Christ over the whole creation, in displaying our unity through his power given to all, and in the tongues of all nations united in one family. The witness of the church in a broken and self-centred world is that God has made us our neighbours' keeper. This was the kind of world we were being planted in, back in 2007.

Our new mission kicked off in humble circumstances. Our support base had dwindled in our year of transition. It was hard to see how that could change. The task ahead seemed daunting. As we made plans towards the end of 2006, a friend we went to bible college with in 1984 sent us \$5,000 to help get the team to Jos and started giving Ruth and me \$500 every week for personal funds. It was encouragements like this that showed us the Lord's assurance that he would meet all our needs. We had one old vehicle when we started in Jos, which belonged to one of our team members. We depended on that old car to move around when it was operational. Later in 2007 we bought our first vehicle for CFM, which was a small minivan. Our method is to buy second-hand vehicles and then keep them forever, constantly maintaining them. Today we have 30 vehicles with a fleet of buses, trucks, an ambulance, and our own registered police car. The youngest vehicle is over 20 years old, but they are all in good working condition and in service every day.

My office was a desk in the library. We had 15 books and it was always enjoyable discussing themes from the books with staff and students between classes. At night I was dropped off at my room in a local guest house. I remember lying on the bed at night and the only prayer I could pray was "Lord, help." He has always been our Rock. When there is no way, he is the way. That isn't a just a cliché, but something we depend on always as the truth. Only this knowledge steadies the heart and gives us the anchor we need in the storm. As we look back today, we see he has answered that prayer and is still answering it. Whether it's with our personal weaknesses or with the massive and various challenges we face together, he has constantly been our one and only answer to them all.

The bible college began with a full-time two-year diploma program. Our students are female and male, who mainly live on our campus. These predominately come from the northern states of Nigeria, especially the north eastern region. The heart of our college is missions. If we can train those from remote regions, they will return there and plant new churches and mission centres. This is one reason we focus on the grassroots. These are the people who go back to their villages: they don't neglect these often-despised regions.

One of the issues we always face is our need to see our education less in terms of being for our own career opportunity (to provide for our way of life) and more in terms of preparing us to serve the marginalised, to heal the creation. Whether it's medicine, law, gospel

ministry, or any other field, our career has to be seen as the role we each have as a care-er of others. If the medical, educational, and legal industries were built this way, we wouldn't have billions of people left out in the cold as we do today. It looks like we collude to build our industries with the wrong goals. Martin Luther King Jr said that unless we move into our future together, we don't have a future. Our current global instability is showing this to be true.

Among students have been former gun runners, former terrorists, and a former Malam, chaplain for the Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram, all gloriously and miraculously transformed from horrific darkness to crystal-clear light. Girls who were kidnapped but escaped from remote terrorists hideouts have been our students, along with army officials, politicians, government workers, businesspeople, and other professionals. Students come from so many different backgrounds, many from opposing groups, formerly sworn enemies. CFI runs its classes in Hausa (the trade language in this part of Africa,) in English and in French (for students from neighbouring French speaking nations.) We added a four-year degree program, a master's program, part-time programs, correspondence, and online programs. All these services take a large staff faculty base and these courses are offered at full scholarship to every person who needs it. We have graduated over 1,000 students, most of these serving in missions today. They come from most church denominations of Nigeria and we happily help these churches by training pastors for their rural growth. In 2020 we have 539 students enrolled in our bible college programs, and we raise support every year to cover most of the costs for all students in training with us.

Our immediate impulse in starting out in Jos was to begin mission stations as outreach centres. The first of these was in Bauchi State. There, a son of an Emir (king) came to know Christ through a personal encounter. Soon afterwards there were two attempts on his life, and he fled to a different part of the nation, where he worked for many years. He later came through CFI as a student and then headed up CFM's work in Bauchi State. The outreach began in 2007 with many people coming to Christ. So many of these have come through our schools in Jos. Today they are leaders with us or with different ministries or work as professionals or work for their home region. These were illiterate, mainly pagan or folk-Islam in culture. Each year major pagan festivals are held, where the people cut themselves in ceremonies, take underage brides and practice many other things that severely work against the wellbeing of the community.

In the early days, that first centre was burnt down, and the lives of our pastors were threatened. But they decided to stay, rebuilt a centre twice as large and have never looked back. Then we bought land for a school and started building, but the king stopped us. Our pastors could have taken him to court and won but they decided to honour the king so the community wouldn't be divided. They declined a battle of egos. After a year, the king gave his permission and now the school is built, and all the children can share in what it provides.

We now have mission stations in several regions of northern Nigeria, where fellowship centres and schools are built, and people work together, utilising local resources and skills, in developing their communities along peaceful and inclusive lines. Missions training is an ongoing work of CFM today, with a growing number of families working as leaders to raise

up and develop new centres in the most remote regions. We are very proud of these leaders and what they teach us. These leaders have a lot more to teach us than we have to share in our support for them. Missionaries who have graduated from CFM have been imprisoned and have suffered to get the gospel to hostile and remote regions, with great results.

As part of our mission outreach, we started to air weekly television and radio broadcasts to Jos and our wider region. This became important in the years that followed, as we were able to speak widely into the situation that our part of the nation was going through, to counter the heart of vengeance and by God's grace build a heart of mercy and neighbourly restoration. Our phone number list for pastors and other neighbours grew into the thousands and from this we were able to speak into many pulpits in the time of crisis. Even the mosques in our regions followed our messages as we walked in love with them. This was a walk of love that began with the relationships that grew between our Muslim neighbours and staff team. But that story is for the next chapter.

In 2006 Ruth and I wrote a book about our first twenty years in Africa and Ruth's parents printed and distributed it to friends in Australia. Somehow a copy of this book found its way into Helen Blake's hands in Australia. We don't remember ever meeting before that time. Helen invited Ruth and I to visit her and her husband, Steve. They live in the Newcastle area of NSW, Australia, heading a great mission ministry that reaches several nations. Helen felt strong conviction for the work of CFM in north eastern Nigeria and she wanted to give it exposure to her friends and to churches in the Newcastle region. This was one of those early encouragements that would very much help CFM in years to come.

This kind of exposure really helps CFM's work, so if you have it on your heart to invite us to your region please let us know. We would love to hear from you. Churches praying, supporting, and communicating with us strengthens our whole team and outreach to many thousands of people, and through them hundreds of thousands more. It also enables us to get our message of encouragement back through churches in your region. That way we share our experiences and message and we all share the benefit as we grow together.

2007-2009 were years in which some parts of CFM's foundations were set, but we were yet to better understand why the Lord had placed us in our wider region. We were establishing a base, in many ways replicating what we had done in our first 20 years in Nigeria. The most important lessons were still ahead. But in these first years people were beginning to learn of our presence and we were looking for land to establish our permanent site.

We could sense tension in the city. There had been explosions of violence in certain parts of the north in the years preceding this, and many had suffered as a result. This had even happened in Jos, but no one expected it to happen in our part of Jos, where we had rented facilities for the bible college. At that time we didn't understand the tension, except on a superficial level. And we didn't know how it would develop, so we just pressed on to see what the Lord would do.

In mid-2009 our team launched out into northern Nigeria through our first pastors conference in Jos. The governor and deputy governors of our state heard about it and asked if they could attend. We had 2,000 pastors attend from all the major church groups and

missions organisations and pastors came from almost all parts of the nation. Meetings went on for five days. The state governor spoke for two hours encouraging pastors to “Love God, love his word and love people.” The deputy governor spoke on loving our enemies, which was about to become very important in the turmoil soon to hit our region. We were shocked how the Lord blessed this conference and provided for all the costs, and how he drew so many people to the event. None of us expected this blessing. It put CFI bible college firmly on the map and allowed us to serve these many denominations as a training arm of support.

Immediately following this conference, one of our team members took off for Egypt. We prayed before his departure. We knew no one in Egypt, but only had the phone number of one pastor we were told about. Our team member arrived in Egypt and met with the pastor. Doors were opened all over the nation and many came to Christ. There were wonderful miracles of healing in the meetings. In the years that followed, CFM held two pastors conferences in Egypt, with guests joining us from the UK and Australia. Pastors and local missionaries from other Middle Eastern nations came together with us in Egypt. Before the first of these conferences we reached out to Brother Andrew for advice. He is the Andrew of the famous book, *God Smuggler*, about taking bibles to communist Eastern Europe and Russia. Brother Andrew’s book *Light Force*, about his meetings with Palestinian Hamas, showed us a new perspective on the complexities of the Middle East. We loved it. We were so blessed to have Andrew phone us personally! He spent a long time sharing about the region, advising, and praying with us.

These were turbulent and dangerous years in Egypt, with two revolutions, and widespread severe economic disruption. It was termed the “Arab Spring,” which is a Western misnomer for the suffering that comes from global injustice. It is no spring. We are now seeing similar riots in the West, that stem from the growing economic injustice, the rule of the 1%.

We have seen wonderful miracles in Egyptian families, with many couples growing as group leaders, who are now discipling and nurturing new believers from nominal Christian and Muslim backgrounds in many parts of the nation. The basis of the work in Egypt is similar to that in the Gospels, where it was those whom Jesus touched and healed who loved him and become his disciples and then disciplers of others. CFM’s Egyptian head pastor is one of those miracles, a lady who came to know Christ, whose life was slowly put back together, and now has the love and support of the whole team she works with. Our leader from Nigeria has exercised such patience and wisdom with his faith family in Egypt, and now they are sharing this with many others. It goes out like ripples in the nation. Our Nigerian leader’s wife is pivotal in the ministry, as she pastors their home church in Nigeria and looks after their lovely family in her husband’s periodic absences. It always amazes us how God brings exactly the right people together for exactly the right situations. He has blessed us with so many wonderful people, great gifts.

Children’s schooling has a rough history in Nigeria. Western education began here with the missionary movement. Missionaries provided free education and good schools to all people and this united the nation, building leaders for the future. These schools were later nationalised, and they have suffered through the economic devastation that has happened

in the developing world in recent decades. One response has been the rise of private schools run by churches in Nigeria. These churches have been challenged economically, and some have used schools to make money, setting fees too high for lower income people. These schools are often selective, segregated on religious lines. They usually are not open for all who need them, and this has been dividing the nation along religious and economic lines. Today, more than 10.5 million children in Nigeria don't attend school at all, according to UNICEF. This adds to the disunity and disintegration of the society. So when CFM started children's schools in 2009, we hoped the Lord would enable us to address some of these issues within our regions.

When visitors from England came in 2009, they rounded up the children from the estate where we rented premises for the bible college. They held daily classes with these kids and after the visitors left, we took the leap and kept these classes going as Christian Faith Academy. Like always, we never know how we are going to do these things when we start. We never have the resources needed. But again, the Lord provided just the right leadership team and today the schools have in total 1,300 children in junior and secondary level classes. We are always stunned at the faithfulness of God. He provides absolutely everything. A lady heads the team (married to one of our team leaders, with children,) while also studying at masters level herself, and while her house is filled with guests, some long-term and others short-term guests: young people, extended family, and family friends who are being disciplined. Discipling is the main gift of our leaders. All of them see their main task as sharing with others and discipling their growth. Their lives and houses are always open. What they have is for everyone. This must be one of the main ways in which God provides us with so many great leaders. We are thankful for this grace he gives to us all.

During these first three years we were looking around for land for CFM's permanent site. The team eventually decided on 33 acres about 15 minutes' drive from our rented facilities, towards Jos airport. This area has not yet been built-up, but the city is encroaching slowly. Buying land: another challenge for which we were looking for the Lord's help! We were allowed to pay in instalments. A friend came from England and walked around the land and asked a few questions about why we believed this was God's will for us. He went to be with the Lord not too long afterwards, but in his will, he gave us a sizable sum towards the purchase. One of our children's school sports group (house) teams is named after him. Another couple in Australia sold their coin collection and that helped with another payment. Eventually we got there! One of our team leaders then made a scale model for the proposed development of the site and put it my office. I felt like putting a sheet over it so I wouldn't have to look at it. It was impossible. There was no way we had the support base to achieve such a thing. But the bible is filled with stories of those who had nothing, and God did it for them. Has God changed?

The biggest joy about the location of the land was also our biggest challenge. It is right between two communities who were at loggerheads. It was one of the main hotspot regions of violence between cattle herders and farmers in the nation. One period soon after buying the land the township right next to us was occupied by army tanks and other armoured vehicles to quell violence and maintain peace. I say this was a joy because it would enable us

to build the relationships that overcome challenges like these. These kinds of new relationships always enrich us. Running from them ensures tomorrow's conflict that our children will face. This is what suburbia does. It allows us to separate. Separation builds estrangement and estrangement builds injustice. The results of this is always bad for everyone.

But these land payments weren't achieved until the end of 2010. Back in 2009, we were nearing Christmas. I was about to leave Jos for England to be with our family. One of my last stops before leaving was a church very close to our rented bible college facilities. The rise in tension in the area was noticeable throughout that year. Back then, we didn't understand the underlying reasons and we couldn't have addressed the situation helpfully. We were just drifting into what lay ahead. After the service I ate lunch with the pastor and his wife in their little room behind the church building. They shared their concerns. I thought about their courage, and then left for Christmas in England.

## The Learning Curve

The day after Christmas Ruth and I were in England when we had a call from one of the team leaders in Jos. He said our suburb in Jos had erupted into violence. In the next few days he drove around taking photos and sending them to us. About a hundred houses had been burnt down and many people had lost their lives. These houses were situated all around the site we were renting for our bible college and children's school. This went on into the new year. Three times Christian youth came to our site to burn it down, because it was owned by a Muslim man. Our staff pleaded that they should not burn it. The team was on watch, patrolling all night every night because of the terror that was all around, watching for the safety of the students and their families: their wives and children.

I returned to Jos in the new year as the violence continued. It had spread to other parts of the city. Pastors came to visit me to describe events that were taking place. Christians and Muslims stood on opposite hills, proclaiming their faith, and then rushing upon each other, like the Philistines and Israelites in Old Testament scenes. Pastors and church elders were involved, not only "nominal Christians." It was terrible from both sides. Appalling crimes were committed by Muslims and Christians, atrocities that cannot be recorded here that resulted in the deaths of many innocent people. Just to mention one: a large group of unarmed Muslim men were praying in an open field when a group of armed Christian men attacked without warning and massacred them.

The church I preached in just before Christmas was burnt to the ground, destroyed. The Muslim house next door to the church also was destroyed. The old Muslim man who lived there sat on the steps of the church as the angry Muslim youth approached. He told them they must not touch the church. They ordered him to leave because they would kill him to destroy the church, but he refused. They killed him. His widow still lives in the ruins of their house, burnt by Christians. Another Muslim man took his children for protection to a Christian neighbourhood, to Christian relatives but Christian youth broke into the house and dragged the children out to kill them. An old Christian woman grabbed the children and said they must kill her first. The youth were afraid and left her alone. She refused to leave the Muslim children, whom she had never met before, for days, protecting them with her life.

Many died. Many more lost their homes and businesses. One night, Christians came to our site to kill a Muslim man, an elder, who lived in the apartment next door to one of our team leaders. We might say real Christians wouldn't do such a thing. Then why don't we say the same about real Muslims, laying aside our propaganda? Our team leader hid the Muslim man in his house and told the murderers that he had fled the area. The killers left. Our leader risked his life saving the life of a Muslim friend. This was one of the acts that would open doors and relationships to rebuild from the ashes in the years ahead.

One morning we woke to the news that overnight about 500 Christian villagers had been massacred, not far from our site. At this time, our bible college students were on the site with classes going on. The students were kept away from the trouble outside, most of them living on our campus. We heard rumours that truckloads of Muslims were being driven in from another city to target us and others around us. This showed us first-hand how this kind

of violence often escalates. The terrifying rumours create fear and the fear instigates preemptive acts of violence in “self-defence.” The cycle of retaliation just continues. We have all heard about terrorism on the news media. These situations happen around the world, but we had never passed through one on this scale before. It was when this rumour struck that we realised the first thing about this kind of situation: we did not know anyone we could call to confirm or deny the rumour. We had no way of ascertaining the truth. We didn’t have relationships with our Muslim neighbours. And this was our own fault. We realised these relationships with “the other side” were the most important asset in this kind of situation: and we lacked this asset completely.

In the weeks that followed we continued our classes each day. Families of our team from other parts of the nation called their relations working with us telling them to flee the area. They offered plane fares, bus fares, begging them to leave. We told our staff that each one should do what they believed was the will of God and we would honour it completely as God’s will for them and pay for costs to travel. But not one staff member left. They all said this is where the Lord wants then to shine, and they stayed with their families. So, when others ask Ruth and me why we keep going, we say we are inspired by our team, who lay even more on the line than we do. And as we stay, we find that our team are inspired also. A cycle of inspiration builds that overcomes the cycle of fear.

At night attacks came around the house where I stayed with a staff member and his family. The house next door was burnt down. One man in another house used a gun to defend himself. The attackers waited until his bullets were finished, then moved in and killed him. They didn’t touch us. We decided not to bear weapons. You cannot predict how things will go. The best policy is to defuse violence. People have asked, what would you do if attackers came to kill your family? Would you be armed to kill them first? Guns are heralded by many people and many nations as their hope of freedom, but as we experienced it, they provide no guarantee of safety. The best answer is that we would pray. God is far more able to keep us safe, and we decided we would accept God’s reply. We are people of resurrection to eternal life. This might seem strange in the modern world. For missionaries of older times it was commonly accepted: they prayed for God’s grace to have the honour to serve with their whole lives and with their deaths if necessary. Without this grace we cannot build true self-giving communities, the way of the cross of Christ, as was built by the early church.

Each day in class our students and staff asked what the early church did during days of violence and persecution. So we searched the Gospels, Acts, and early church history together. The clear answer from scripture and from history was that they loved their enemies. They never rose in retaliation against anyone. Nowhere in Acts, or in any of Paul’s letters, did the church or Paul say, “Enough is enough, next time we will be ready to deal with them.” Paul’s writings were pacific. They were completely empty of violent self-defensive language. Same with all the apostles. “Follow Jesus,” Peter said, “He did not retaliate, and he answered not a word.” All the early apostles died this way (I believe this included John.) This pacifism was the tradition of the entire church for the first 200 years at least. It was the apostles’ doctrine: God came in human form and suffered for his enemies. Likewise we are to humble ourselves in serving our enemies. (Philippians 2:5-11) This is

essentially the gospel, as least how the early church lived it out in their love for one another. "Pacific" doesn't mean passive. It means actively and earnestly striving to "overcome evil with good."

When the violence died down, the team leader who saved the life of his Muslim neighbour visited the family and ate a meal with them as they celebrated Salah. This was deep in the "forbidden zone," the Muslim neighbourhood where a Christian risked his life just to go there. Joining in the Salah meal is a neighbourly act. It in no way gives the message that we are attempting to merge faiths. These family occasions are morally upright and not offensive. They are not offensive as are many of the secular entertainments Christians often participate in. There is no greed, no violence, no immodesty, but humility. So our leader visited, right inside the Muslim district, where no Christian would go, and ate a meal with his host, just to say we are neighbours. In the years that followed, the situation around holy days in our city completely transformed from this beginning. From these days being occasions of tension, fighting and bombings, they became occasions of sharing and expressions of kindness towards the others. Now holy days are occasions where you see families walking the streets in joy, visiting households, and sharing their food with others, the way it had been in the childhood memories of many of CFM's team.

After that first visit into the Muslim community, we invited the Muslim elders of a large Muslim community to come and visit us in my office. About 15 came, mosque leaders, other Islamic group leaders and professionals in their community. After the introduction we all sat down. As I looked around, the scene was so far removed from anything Ruth and I had grown up with. We grew up in monocultural societies. They were safe and nurturing for a child, but we had no idea about other cultures or peoples. I looked around at the beards, the fez caps and long Muslim robes, listened again to the names, and the names of organisations they led, organisations you hear about on the world news in our home culture. I was out of my depth. I knew nothing about my neighbours. My book knowledge about Islam from a "Christian perspective" didn't help here.

So we began to talk with them and said we at CFM wanted to apologize to them. We had not visited them in their joys or sorrows: we had not mourned their losses with them or celebrated their joys. We had not treated them as neighbours. We hadn't obeyed Jesus, our Lord, who told us to love our neighbours. For the first time, we could see that we had been doing what the Jews and Samaritans had done, and more than ever before we understood the message of Jesus. The Armageddon the New Testament said was coming, that Jesus warned about, was the consequence of the way they lived separatist lives, caring only about their own group, and not about the others, the sick, poor, and "unclean," from whatever tribe or affiliation. We were facing an "Armageddon" in this nation and we could now see what our true role was as followers of Jesus. We could see the Sermon on the Mount, the taking the log out of our own eye first, as an act of atonement, dispelling the evil in a community. Soon, self-correction was to become the new culture of our wider community, instead of finger pointing.

If our lack of relationship was our first lesson during this crisis the state of the youth in our nation was the second lesson. More than 50% of the nation's population are youth. They

have borne the brunt of global corruption. This is by no means simply local corruption. The youth lose out in education, in health and job opportunities. They simply have no future. They grow angry at the injustice and the injustice is real. So, instead of blaming them, we tried to become better fathers and mothers to them. It was our fault, as the elder ones. We hadn't built the community. We hadn't healed relationships, so that the economy would heal. We could see that the violence was very largely youth driven, and we could see the reasons for this. Those who have no future don't mind losing everything in war, because they don't have a future to lose. This must genuinely change.

The Muslim elders and CFM talked about initiating a computer training centre for Muslim and Christian youth to come together and learn for free. While they learnt skills, they would build their relationships. Before this time, there were no relationships between Christians and Muslims. We didn't greet on the streets. We didn't even walk on the same streets! We didn't care for the other, no matter the other's loss or pain. We didn't buy or sell in the same marketplaces. We were totally separated, just like the people in the Gospels whom Jesus addressed. This is a recipe for disaster. It's hard to know how we can read the Gospels and not see this as central to the message of Jesus: the necessity to pull down walls and build bridges, locally and globally. The way we build up national boundaries to secure our own safety, no matter the suffering of others, calling them bad people, is exactly what Jesus was addressing. And we will bear our own Armageddon as a result, unless we "repent," as Jesus put it. That is, our faith is not just a private, spiritual matter, but also a social building and healing matter. This is the love God brings to our new heart, to be practiced in genuine daily deeds towards others. We were Christ's enemies when he died for us, so are we following this Christlikeness towards our enemies?

So CFM agreed with the Muslim elders to work together, for the good of our youth and our social healing and cohesion. We rented a building in the Muslim neighbourhood of Bukuru, not far from the big mosque, and provided computers and staff. At first only Muslim youth came. Slowly Christian youth joined. The commitment, authenticity, and honesty of the Muslim community in this venture has not lacked on even one occasion. Our relationships in our wider communities have totally changed as a result. This new relationship opened the door for many acts of care between our communities. These new relationships would be seriously tested in the years ahead, in all that would transpire in our nation. But so far, we have come through the greatest tests, the most violent international terrorism, as one cohesive community each day fighting the evil with the weapons of unity. This is for the next chapter, but these kinds of relationships that began to build in the nation were a large reason for the failure of the terrorist organisation, Boko Haram, that followed.

Members of our staff came during this period to our office with an Imam. He stood there with his long black beard. We said to him, "We heard that your car spare parts shop was burnt down in the 2009 – 2010 violence." Christians had burnt his shop down and since then Muslim youth had mocked him as not being able to provide for himself. Treating ourselves as one community means we feel for this Imam as we would for ourselves. I wouldn't want this done to my father. We said to him, "Here is a little money. Buy some spare parts and restock and open your shop again. The Imam immediately began to cry. I have never seen

such tears flow down the face of a grown man. They filled his beard. He said, “No one has ever loved me like this before.” His heart was so soft. And this is how the Muslim community also treat us. Today, our biggest advocate trying to raise support in Nigeria’s capital city to build and run CFM’s proposed permanent centre for women victims of violence is a Muslim elder from this community.

## Boko Haram 2011 – 2015

The Boko Haram terrorist organisation had been building for some years and by 2011 had become strong in the north east of Nigeria. Part of the background story to this is the marginalisation of the regional economy and the affect upon the people. This isn't just a story of local corruption, but also of global economic structures that transfer large sums of wealth from poorer communities to the wealthiest. Added to this was the downfall of Ghaddafi of Libya, as an act of international terrorism by NATO, bringing massive instability to the wider region. This is still bringing suffering to millions of people and it has greatly impacted outcomes across the Sahara in many nations like Nigeria.

Jos had for 100 years been a centre of missions to the Islam-dominate north of Nigeria and this may have been one of the reasons why Boko Haram publicly announced its next move: a jihad against Jos. It announced that Christians in Jos had two choices: to leave the city or die. This began a three-year onslaught against the city. It started with suicide bombings in different parts of the city. A church near where I lived with a team member and his family was struck and about 80 people were killed. Muslims were randomly killed along the streets and in their houses in revenge attacks any time a bombing happened. In this local fighting, more people were killed than by the initial Boko Haram attack. We would drive to the office each morning around 6:00 AM, through deserted streets filled with debris from conflict and burnt-out buildings and the eerie presence of military. We never knew what was coming next.

Churches were bombed or their meetings scattered with machine gun fire, killing many. Local bombs shook our house and my office. Cars were banned near any church building, due to suicide bombers driving into church buildings. Until this jihad was over, we had to walk the last 500 metres to our meetings.

We could soon see the strategy of Boko Haram. They weren't large enough to take over things. They had to create the chaos with the help of others. They had to spread their hatred. The suicide bombings were designed to spread this hatred and chaos among the general population, greatly escalating Boko Haram's terror-causing capacity. CFM's team went into overdrive to build and strengthen community cohesion. This would be our weapon against the evil. We visited hospitals and supported those recovering from bomb blasts, whether they were Muslim or Christian. One of our collaborating team members was a Muslim barrister, highly respected in the community. Every day we promoted forgiveness, care of our neighbour and love towards one another. We prayed that God's grace would fill our hearts with mercy towards others and not revenge. And God answered this prayer. People began to see who our common enemy was.

Then, in 2014, I flew into Abuja airport from England. It was a Sunday. I was picked up by Emmanuel Razack, with 4 of us in the car. We had worked together with Emmanuel (who grew up as a Muslim) since 1991 when he joined Benson Idahosa's bible college as a student, and as he grew and became staff. He became one the founding members of CFM in Jos. As we were taking the four-hour drive towards Jos that morning we were in a rural area when we noticed what looked like a military check point ahead. Checkpoints along the road

are common. The men ahead were dressed in military camouflage fatigues. But when they began to fire on another car, we then knew these were not the military. Emmanuel was driving that time (we usually alternated in driving) and he stopped the car and made a very hasty U-turn. But more men came out of the bush on our other side and we were ambushed. They began firing on our car, repeatedly. I thought escape was impossible and we were all going to be killed. I just waited to be hit by one of the bullets ripping through the car. Then the car went off the road, into the ditch and stopped against some trees. Emmanuel had been hit by one of the bullets and was killed instantly.

The militants ordered us all out of the car. They searched our belongings, took what they wanted and threatened to kidnap me. I told them I was a missionary, not a businessman. They were angry, but after about half an hour told us to walk into the bush. We expected to be shot in the back, but the bullets did not come. We kept walking without reaching a village and after half an hour we heard traffic on the road, so turned and headed back to it. Soldiers arrived and we waited for an ambulance.

At times like this all your ambitions seem pointless. Ruth and I had often discussed these dangers. We thought, are we doing the right thing, being involved? If Jesus is our model, then we see that God came down into our mess and showed us his love. He didn't stay far away, telling us what to do. God had com-*passion* (to suffer with) he suffered with us. There is nothing more beautiful than this love: the passion of Christ, God in the flesh showing us his rule of self-giving to restore his creation.

The soldiers took us to the local police station. The policemen cried with us, and told us how they were sitting ducks, the targets of militants with much superior weapons. We found ourselves encouraging these men. We so often hear complaints in the international community about these police, but the majority of those we meet are very good people, who lay down their lives. They have families. We saw the vulnerability not only of these men, but of all the villages around. Defenceless. We only tasted a bit of the insecurity people live with all their lives.

This heightened our learning curve. Ruth and I looked back over the years. We had helped train thousands of missionaries and pastors. We had raised much support for these and others, all in a bid to stem the chaos, to bring the love of God. But the chaos grew worse. As we came up against evil face to face on the road that day, our biggest question was, how do we overcome evil? All our efforts seemed vain. Evil was mocking us. We didn't feel any anger towards the aggressors. It is the evil that is overrunning them. We thought of our own good parentage and nurtured childhood. We felt for these aggressors. We thought they needed a good spanking and telling off from their mum, followed by a warm meal and caring home. This threw us more into the journey of seeking how evil could be overcome. It wasn't to be by "fundamentalist missions," by which I mean a counter "jihad" against our enemies. It was the way of the cross. This is where Jesus met with evil and defeated it. We would have to follow Jesus.

It's a strange feeling living through an experience like that, something I have never had before. Shaving in the morning being shocked to see myself in the mirror, having been

certain of my death. That soon passed but the abhorrence of violence (I mean in my own life, ego and attitudes) just grew stronger. I mean violence in all its forms, even economic violence which kills far more, or social violence that refuses hospitality towards strangers. People may say Jesus was violent when he cleansed the temple, however he harmed no one, but called them to serve the stranger instead of enriching themselves and he took away their religion of sacrifice of others.

Three days after the ambush we were driving into Jos, with our dear brother's body in the ambulance in front of us. He was greatly loved by all our team and this was a severe blow to every one of us. He had risked his life often for the cause of CFM. He always said he would die serving the Lord. He embodied the heart and mission of CFM and served all neighbours in our community, as one of those leaders who laid the foundation of CFM's gospel character. He was loved by our friends in England who brought him there to gain a master's degree from Wales University. Our own children loved him dearly. His body is buried today on the CFM's permanent site, but I believe he is already in the resurrection: the new heavens and new earth, in which evil has been utterly banished.

Even Einstein could see there was something about time we don't understand. We live in the miraculous cross over between two spheres: heaven and earth. For us, this body and the whole natural order of this creation shall be changed, shall put off its bondage to corruption (death) and be completely transformed, but in God's kingdom it is already a reality where our departed live. Isaiah called it the veil of blindness over the nations being taken away, death being swallowed up. It's like the dam walls breaking and heaven rushing in, in a flash overrunning and filling the whole creation, the two becoming one.

Driving into Jos, we neared our rented facilities where my office was, we passed by the church building I referred to earlier and the Muslim widow's house next door that had both been burnt down. Both still lay in ruins. The Christians had asked the Muslims if they could return and rebuild their site, but they were denied. As we passed in our cars, a Christian leader of our city called us on the phone and gave condolences for our loss. We thanked him. He then asked, "How can we respond to this evil?" I answered, "Rebuild this widow's house next to the burnt-out church building, and the Muslims will beg us to return to share the suburb with them." Isn't this old widow like our own mother? Aren't we to treat others as we want them to treat us? Is this new behaviour to start with us, or with someone else? I explained the church building I was referring to, which I think he knew about. If only we could build together then we could remain together, and we would show the gospel while doing so. This is how we overcome. Sadly, the church leader did not respond.

In the days that followed hundreds of well-wishers visited us in CFM's offices to give their condolences and pray with us after our loss. It's a very encouraging culture and these visits always help a lot. Among those who visited were the Muslim elders. After we spoke and they mourned with us for the loss of a brother they loved, I asked if they could take myself and another team leader of CFM through their community ruins. This was about two kilometres from our rented facilities. We had never been to this area. No Christian would venture into that area. But I had recently heard a bit about the damage done there during

the first community youth-led violence starting back at Christmas 2009. The elders agreed and we started a stroll around the area.

Our CFM leader and I were shocked at what we saw. I am used to poverty, but I have never seen it on this level. This was a marginalised community. We didn't count them, but we saw hundreds, maybe even up to 800 buildings that had been destroyed in that earlier one month of rampage. In one ruin we saw a widow and her little children cooking under a makeshift lean-to of corrugated iron, the rainwater dripping down on to her pots and fire. Other children joined us, and we played a little football. We saw hopeless drug users. No one had told us about this destruction. It was in none of the reports that circulated in Christian circles. We came away from there knowing that if we want Christian minorities to be cared for further north, then we must care for Muslim minorities near us.

To this day destroyed communities all over our region remain in ruins and the global elite have no genuine interest in their restoration. Norway was the one nation that apologized for its weapons being used in Boko Haram atrocities but did not rebuild the region or restore the widows. Turkey also apologized for the same. No other nation, as far as we are aware, confessed, although they make billions from the international arms trade, through which people in Nigeria, Yemen and many other nations constantly suffer. They walk away from nations like Iraq, leaving them to rebuild themselves, while also demanding they repay war costs to the army that destroyed their country. Just as legal slavery was stopped, when this seemed impossible due to business interests, the arms industry must be brought down. Nations like Australia continue to support the ruling business structures and the propaganda of fear that encourages billions to be handed over to this weapons elite, instead of using it to restore poor and marginalised communities. No wonder peace evades us. If we fear the rise of other nations, our propaganda and injustice only ensure it. The Torah and the Prophets constantly cried out for us to move our security strategy from the military to justice. This is God's sabbath/ jubilee rule (rest from oppression) for restoring our neighbour and the creation. This was the centre of Jesus' ministry, teaching, and passion. This is what the world refuses to hear.

About one week after our walk through the Muslim neighbourhood a student of our bible school came to our office grieving. He said Boko Haram had just attacked the church in his township in Borno State, near the Cameroon border. They killed three church members and three Boko Haram militants were also killed. We prayed together. A couple days later we heard that the people of his township had gone to three neighbouring Muslim villages, burnt houses, and killed Muslims at random, because they recognized one of the dead Boko Haram boys as coming from one of those villages. When we heard this, we were deeply troubled. We said this is very wrong, and as a result much worse things will happen. Two days later we heard something terrible. Boko Haram had returned pretending to be the army. They said they had an announcement from the government and all the men of the town should gather. When the men gathered, they were all gunned down, and almost all killed.

Suddenly we discovered that we had six students from this remote town in our bible college. They all came into my little office crying. They had lost fathers, brothers, and uncles.

Two of the students were married but couldn't make contact to hear about their wives and children. The women and children had fled into the mountains of Cameroon where they trekked for weeks, losing more lives.

I had no idea how to console the students. Thankfully, our other leaders are much better at this and they did an excellent job, as always, helping to put lives back together. All I could think of was Job, how his counsellors just mourned for one week without saying anything. So we just mourned with them, giving no trite encouragement. They had to go through the mourning. Then later we began to slowly encourage them about their future and why God had saved them to help restore the region and people.

Missions agencies around the world reported on these events, just like they did for the Jos community wars that started in Christmas 2009. But in none of the reports that we saw did they mention what the Christians had done. Only half the story was told. It was the same with many Muslim groups, only telling half the story, from their own side. This was a very sad situation, because unless we tell the truth, unless we have compassion for all the people, and recognise what we have done (or had not done to serve others around us in need) then we have no hope of rebuilding a peaceful nation. There is only one way to save the nation and that is to rebuild relationships by truth telling and not by driving more wedges between us as separate groups. Denial of complicity can only increase the injustice and bitterness and push us all over the precipice.

Attacks like the one on the township above happened in region after region, with the same intensity and many of our staff had families and friends involved. One man working for a state government was targeted and his brother was killed in a case of mistaken identity. He fled to Jos and joined CFM as a lecturer. Many others came into Jos and looked for accommodation or stayed with our staff members in their houses, until they had recovered and were later able to go back home. Millions of people were displaced from their homes, towns, and villages.

About this time we were ready to open the first youth computer training centre in our local Muslim township. The elders said they had planned a great ceremony of gratitude. They would block the streets, erect marquees and the dignitaries would come with all the common people to give thanks and cut the ribbon. The week before the event we had a suicide bomb attempt in this Muslim community, just one block from our computer centre. So we said we didn't need the opening ceremony but could quietly go ahead and start training the youth. "Boko Haram" means anyone having anything to do with modern political or educational structures must be killed. The "haram" is similar to the word used in the book of Joshua for "devoted to destruction," and abominable thing. It is a sacrificial term, to do with cleansing "evil." So the elders were at risk, and the whole Muslim community, for coming out against the aims of the terrorist organisation. But they replied us, "No, we will go ahead with the full celebration. We utterly abhor the terrorists. They have nothing to do with Islam. They are destroying our youth. We stand with our Christian neighbours as one community. We will not be splintered by these killings and threats." So, the ceremony went ahead, and it was a great event for the whole community to see.

Boko Haram was not part of a Muslim plot for Nigeria. It is simply a criminal gang wanting power and wealth for themselves. Their methods and practices are entirely irreligious by all standards and un-Islamic. It was clear that after a year or two of Boko Haram's escalated activities, almost all Muslims in the nation stood against the terrorist organisation. They refused to cooperate with it. Now, when a suicide bomb went off in Jos, or any other part of the nation, there would be no reprisal killings. Only those who died in the initial blast were lost. The blast was where the violence stopped. We had turned the corner. Suicide bombings were now failing to ignite the nation. From this time onwards Muslim and Christians in the danger regions would almost always stand together. The community became one and isolated the criminals. They were then seen plainly for who they were. The terrorists were on their own. Story after story continues to unfold of Muslims and Christians who served each other at risk to themselves.

And for this the Muslim community would pay dearly. When Boko Haram saw the Muslims had rejected them, they turned on the Muslim people. During subsequent years, about twice as many Muslims were killed as Christians. Mosques became the targets of bombings. And their suffering must be recognised by Christians. If the Muslims stood with and protected us in the days of Boko Haram, at great cost to themselves, and then we forsake them in the aftermath and care for only our own, we are rebuilding exactly the same nation as we started with: one of injustice, not from the government, but from ourselves.

This is why CFM doubled up its care for the suffering. The Lord helped us wonderfully. We served those who were cast out of their towns and cities and left as refugees, whether they were Christian or Muslim. We opened and ran a school in a displaced persons camp. We paid the fees for orphans in other local schools, both Christian and Muslim (because we had killed each other's parents,) hundreds of orphans for many years. We visited many displaced persons camps with support for Christians and Muslims. We served widows, brought food to the poor in Muslim communities, rebuilt water supply to their homes. At the same time, the Belgium government was helping us to rebuild water availability in destroyed communities in the far north east. Whole townships there were totally destroyed. We started a safe house for persecuted Christians, so they could flee from danger and be nurtured in their faith. We opened two crises homes for children who were the worst affected by the violence and loss. Today we have 300 children in these homes, receiving care and love, health care, and education. We stopped building on our permanent site for 12 months: not one block was laid. All our funds were put towards restoring the peace by caring for the suffering, building a new community where the lion and the lamb care for one another, overcoming evil with good.

Earlier, while our relationships were building, we had two reports of serious potential hazards ahead. One was that the USA had offered to "assist" the nation with drone strikes. Look at any nation America has "assisted" in this way, and where is that nation today? For our own little part, we strongly rejected this. Drone strikes would bring much more suffering. They would splinter the community beyond repair. This is what the terrorists wanted. The only way evil could be overcome was to build grassroots cohesion and hearts of service towards each other. The problem must be fixed at the grassroots. We must build

the cohesion, not tear it down. Only justice at the grassroots can do this. The American “solution” would push us over the precipice. We prayed. Thank God it did not happen.

It often shocked us when we heard the attitude towards Muslims in the Western church. After speaking in some churches and drinking coffee, members would say things like, “We are in the end times and God is going to use America to wipe out the Arabic nations with pre-emptive nuclear strikes.” Don’t we know that Muslims are just like us? They put their children’s socks on for school each morning just like we do and send them off with great love. Don’t we know that Western greed has destroyed the Middle East since the aftermath of WWI, and ruined so many innocent lives? Then this suffering spills over in political movements that fill our minds, divide our communities globally, and we justify it with religious sentiments, completely misconstruing the nature of Christ, whom we claim to follow. And when the victims of terrorism spill over on to our shores for help, we lock them in refugee camps, as an additional act of inhumanity. If we don’t want a flood of refugees, we must repair nations, not bomb them: we must stop the political manipulation for economic hegemony. People love their nations. They don’t want to leave them.

We visited one church and one of our main supporters at that time was there. He asked me, “What do you think of Jerusalem?” I avoided the question. He pressed me on it till I had to answer. I said, “We believe it isn’t about Jerusalem, but Jesus.” Oh, the suffering we perpetuate in our sacrificial religions. This is what killed Jesus. Many who hold these views are dear Christians, greatly loved by God and they love and support the gospel and the lost in the world with all their heart and substance. I wouldn’t at all want to measure my faith against theirs. I know I would come up short. And there is much good in their view, much foundational truth that is so important and we can never judge ourselves as being better, throwing away the baby with the bathwater, deciding not to learn from those we need so much. These people are my family, whom I love deeply and support against any who are cynical against them. But we must stand by the Prince of Peace who entered Jerusalem on a donkey (not a war horse) and refused to take sides in our wars for land, power, wealth, or position. He became a slave for us. This is our call towards all other people.

The one we must learn from in history isn’t Constantine but Francis of Assisi. This will revive the church. “Constantine’s” promises to defend the church today are a sham. They only implicate us in his sins. When we try to fix things with power, the power we use destroys our souls, relationships, and witness. “I am not ashamed of the gospel (the cross of the naked, weak slave, in the face of Roman might and boasting), for it is the power of God to salvation,” to fix things. “The weakness of God is stronger than men.”

The second report of potential hazard ahead was when the private jet of a Christian leader (who at that time officially represented Nigeria’s Christians) was caught in South Africa with \$21 million in cash on board and international arms dealers, to purchase weapons for Nigeria. This leader had already called on the government to arm Christians for the “battle ahead.” Many pastors in the nation were preaching in favour of such things. Many were using their money to buy personal weapons, instead of helping the wounded and hungry, unwittingly ensuring mutual destruction. They misquoted the books of Joshua and Esther, ignoring the words of Christ. Joshua did not achieve salvation. Christ parts the Jordan River

and leads us into the true promised land by the giving of his life. We were devastated at the report. Some such pastors would be safe, but those living in the Muslim-dominated north would become fodder. This happened in church history, as Christians in one area took weapons to defend themselves, this hardened enmity against Christians in other territories. See the demise of Christianity in the Middle East over the last century, stemming from oil colonialism.

This misinterpretation of scripture requires a strong theological response. A violent God is too commonly posited, who demands blood and visits his wrath by the destruction of many. Not that God doesn't have wrath. His wrath means handing us over to our own pride and destruction, which we bring upon ourselves in our own blindness. All scripture must be infused with the true Christ. We wrote, taught, printed books, held pastors' conferences in different states, and released videos. We had to show Christ by our actions first.

Ruth and I knew this Christian leader whose jet was impounded. A bishop (whom we knew when he was a student in bible school) in the far north east, in the centre of the danger zone then, asked us to contact this leader and plead with him to publicly change his position. Our efforts to contact the man were not successful. We prayed. Muslim elders came to us and said, "So this is your real agenda, while you fatten us by kindness for the kill." (I have paraphrased here what was the very strong sentiment that was aroused by this action to bring in weapons for the Christian community.) We replied, "No, we are genuine in our words and actions. We have no part in such things and we publicly renounce them." They believed us and our community cohesion continued to grow. Nigeria was on a knife edge at this time. This report almost pushed us into full-scale civil war. Thank God, he allowed mercy and grace to win in our hearts. This is the gift of God, the most valued gift we must cherish. We later discovered that the Christian leader's jet had been chartered by the government in a legal arms purchase arrangement.

The violence died down in Jos before it did in the regions further north east. After about three years it was ok for children to return to school. Driving to the office in the morning we would see groups of children walking on the side of the road, older ones holding the hands of younger ones, with backpacks looking like tortoise shells on their backs. This site was more beautiful to us than any mountain range vista on the planet. We shed tears for months over the beautiful daily event. How valuable our schools are, our education, our freedom, our children. I think this is why I hate lockdown and social distancing. It is evil. We would never take our education and our social relationships for granted again.

By mid-2015 the Nigerian army had turned the tide on Boko Haram. The arms Boko Haram had, their financial backing, their brand-new vehicles, were mind boggling. But that was before we understood how the global financial systems work. Billions of dollars are siphoned off from developing nations into offshore accounts set up by Britain and America. This money is secretly owned and pumped back into Western society through fake companies. It can't be traced. No one knows what is being done with it and who is doing it. With all the political platitudes we get globally, what a corrupt world it is! What a complete lack of consideration for the welfare of humanity, for the most vulnerable people! The world

knows what to do to change, but doesn't do it, because the corrupt ways make some of us rich.

Once the Nigerian army got abreast of things the job was swift because they had the full cooperation of the whole Nigerian community. An undivided grassroots population brings the end of war. No army can establish peace. It isn't the government that brings peace. It is us and the relationships we all build together. We don't vote for this; we decide to live it every day. If we don't have peace in our hearts and actions the government can do nothing.

Boko Haram still terrorises on the margins where development is lacking, where people aren't cared for. This lack of care still enables interests supporting terrorism to grow in splinter groups in sectors of society. The only way to defeat it is through bringing down the corruption of the elite everywhere, to restore lives at the grassroots level. This requires genuine change at the global level, which at this stage is not at all on the horizon. Instead, global offshore secret banks continue to funnel away billions of dollars of global funds. This is what is killing the multitudes.

Emmanuel Razack had planned to hold a conference to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of Ruth and I in Nigeria, so we went ahead with this in April 2016, but with a change. Since Boko Haram had claimed their jihad was to eradicate Jos as a Christian centre for missions, we invited missionaries from around the north to encourage and help restore them after the atrocities. 2,000 missionaries from northern Nigeria and the surrounding nations came. We paid their travel costs to and from their mission station to Wurin Alheri; we paid their accommodation and feeding costs during the conference; gave out books to help them in their work; and practical help to many, like generators, grain grinding machines, bicycles, audio bibles in the Hausa language and other tools. We invited leading mission speakers from around the country, fathers and mothers of missions who have done so much for Nigeria over the years, who have also helped parent Ruth and I during our stay in this wonderful nation. It was challenging, but the Lord paid for it all and all the missionaries made it safely back to their stations and continued their work encouraged. It was our "fingers up" to Boko Haram after they inflicted so much pain on so many.

## Wurin Alheri

Wurin Alheri is CFM's permanent site, just outside Jos. The name means "place of kindness," which we thought was appropriate, given the unkindness in the world. Our first task was to build a low fence along the road boundary of the land, about 800 metres. We made our own cement blocks. The other three perimeters have no wall. We still occupied our rented facilities in Bukuru, and team members would go to and fro each day. On one occasion our team members were caught in a battle between our two neighbouring communities, the townships on either side of our land. A soldier was caught in the middle and would surely have been killed. Our team rescued him and were able to get him out in their truck. They came to the office to tell us, as though it's all in a day's work. We built our first main block of four flats and staff members began to move in. After the ambush described in the previous chapter, Ruth joined me, and we moved into one of these flats. We now live there, also with Daniel, our youngest son. Our son John and his wife Michaela (Kay) and their two small children live in the flat above us. They joined CFM in Nigeria in 2016.

For some time we had been concerned about the vulnerability of our staff living on the site. In recent years there have been major battles between Fulani cattle herders and local farmers in northern Nigeria. I attempt to describe the nature of this conflict in the next chapter. Wurin Alheri was the exact centre of this conflict in Nigeria at the time we began building the site, stuck right between the Muslim Fulani township of Bisichi and the Christian farmer township of Du. Du is where the Jos South local government area ends, and Bisichi is where the Barkin Ladi local government area begins. The nature of this battle has taken us a long time to understand, and it has also taken us a long time to learn how to help. The Fulani vs. farmer conflict has taken many thousands of lives in Nigeria in recent years, and still rages at the present time. Our attention was for some years on the more pressing Boko Haram issues. But when our staff moved on to the site, we had to do something, since they had no armed protection and no police presence.

Our relationships with the Du community have been good, since we earlier negotiated to buy the land from them as the traditional landowners of the region. Since that time, one of the chiefs of Du has served as a staff member of CFM, always helping out around the Wurin Alheri site. We went to the Fulani township of Bisichi on the other side of our site and met with the Muslim leader and some of the other leaders. They received us with warm hospitality which was genuine. We spoke together about how we could counter the logjam of violence with a different way of rebuilding relationships.

The story here is pretty typical. The main instigators of violence are outsiders. These criminal elements come and take advantage of the aggrieved youth, recruiting them into brutal violence. The army major stationed in Bisichi visits us regularly and tells us that certain people, on both sides of the dispute, profit from the fighting. They are like politicians, using division for their own purposes. They rule through creating chaos. It's not a new story. The world elite do this. This is a major obstacle to overcome in building peace. These stratagems need to be exposed so people know how they are being used and understand a better life can be had by working as a whole community. It is more simple

exposing these at a local level. When we deal with the same issues on a global level, people are much more resistant to hearing about vested interests, hiding behind phrases like, “It’s just another stupid conspiracy theory.” Change on a global level is more difficult, for the public to see how we are being used. We are divided so corrupt interests can keep us blind and rule us. This is the rule of greed, as opposed to God’s rule of sabbath restoration.

We spoke with the Bisichi Muslim leaders about serving the youth with a computer training centre that would draw youth from both sides together to learn. The leaders were thrilled and gave us their second mosque in Bisichi as CFM’s centre. This was a big risk then because Boko Haram was a very dangerous threat to such collaboration. I am just highlighting the risks Muslims took to build peace and, as I said earlier, almost all Muslims in the country would have been in this camp given the opportunity. As we left the Muslim leader’s house that day we walked back past their main mosque. We could hear children inside chanting the Quran. From my background, this is an eerie sound. But we heard it with new ears that day. We had just visited with one of their grandmothers and saw her love for the children. They were giving the children all that they had to try to educate them for their future, just as our parents did for us. Listening to these children sitting in dust brought tears to my heart. “We must help them to have the best, like we have had it ourselves,” I thought.

Later in 2014 Ruth joined us in Nigeria. This is when our 15 years of frequently being apart as we crisscrossed from England to Nigeria to Australia came to an end. Then we started CFM’s second computer centre, in Bisichi’s second mosque. It had an immediate impact. Youth from both communities, Muslim, and Christian, joined in. At our first graduation the local army commanding officer, keeping peace in the Barkin Ladi local government area, spoke. He said, “Those who give you guns don’t love you. Their children are in safe places, abroad, studying. They want you to fight for them. The people who give you free training in a computer centre are the ones who love you. This is your future. If everyone built centres like this the army would be off the streets, back in the barracks. We would no longer be needed.” He said all this with tears in his eyes and in his voice. The children lined up outside, some of them only in dusty underpants. We handed out schoolbooks and writing material and mathematical instrument sets, which they loved. The violence in the township stopped. The tanks and armoured vehicles left the area. Fulani and Hausa Muslim school children came to Wurin Alheri to donate and plant mango trees together with the children living on our site, whose fathers had been murdered by Boko Haram. The trees signifying our growing fruitful relationships. One of the elders asked for 100 copies of a book we printed in their Hausa language showing how Jesus is the Christ, using the major portions of the biblical texts Muslims like the most. He distributed this book in households where Christians could never visit.

We visited local villages almost destroyed in Fulani conflict not far from Wurin Alheri. In some places we teamed up with the local government education department to help rebuild local schools. We handed out thousands of exercise books for children. These are hard places to visit. They are the places worst hit by our global economic system. They are totally marginalised, as is the case for so many millions. Children normally sing heartily when you visit them, but here it was lacklustre: their hair was tinged with red, evidence of

malnutrition. The region had been devastated by the violence. They asked us why we would care about them? Why would we come out of our way to visit them, down long dirt roads? In each place we went to like this we would find one person or a married couple living there as missionaries serving the people. These are Nigerian missionaries. The Lord has his people! He is the best missions director. They are in so many places, unsung, unknown, saying God sent them there to care for others. It reminds us of Jesus' saying, "There are many that are last now, that shall be first. And there are many that are first now, that shall be last." Sobering. We want to reach regions like this with medical care: hundreds of thousands of people on our doorstep. When the medical industry isn't tailored for this, how can we do it?

As we were building Wurin Alheri we wanted every building to be simple and to serve people every day. The chapel was the first building to go up after our main staff apartment block. We walled in the area under the balcony inside the chapel and made rooms for children. CFM had previously opened a crisis-care home for children in 2014, in a rented facility close to our bible college at Bukuru. With the chapel completed in 2016, we moved 40 children from this facility to Wurin Alheri. Eighty more children arrived from Borno State, one of the regions devastated by Boko Haram. These had lost their fathers and other family members in attacks and their towns had been destroyed. More children came. Then we opened a second home in a town about one hour from Abuja, Nigeria's capital city. Here we have 100 children. These facilities are not orphanages, but crisis-care homes. The children remain closely linked with their extended family. CFM serves as a family support, a go-between to help them rebuild by relieving families of some of the load, while they recover from devastation. If some of their relative's children can be educated, it gives more hope for the future of these regions. Today we have 300 children in our two crisis-care homes. The staff team do an excellent job, 24 hours a day. We have the best leaders of whom we are very proud. We also work closely with our local government social welfare departments, with dear friends there who care much for the welfare of children and families. We work with global agencies as well, who help support some of the costs of running the homes. Together we work to maintain the best standards for the children and are extremely thankful to the Lord for his watching over this work every day.

If we didn't reach out to serve these children, they would face great risk where they were. We try to serve children in their home situation, but often this is impossible and that is why we need crisis homes. One of our girls thought her whole family was killed when Boko Haram hit their town. Many people were murdered, all farms were destroyed, animals taken, and most of their township was burnt to the ground. The girl was separated from her mother in the fighting and her mother was driven into the mountains, where many of those already weak died of exposure and hunger. The girl's six siblings were killed. But her mother survived and six months later met up with her daughter with us.

Some children come to us with bullet wounds. In recent weeks (August 2020) we have had 46 new children join us from terrorised villages in southern Kaduna. This is part of the Fulani vs. farmer conflict. A CFM trained missionary who works in the region speaks of the hatred on both sides: "all armed to the teeth." This region is in urgent need of biblical

peacebuilding. CFM has begun training peace building missionaries for that area. CFM's bible college graduates are committed to regions like this despite the danger. The children now at CFM's crisis-care home from southern Kaduna have gone through years of conflict, with one loss after the other, but have survived. They receive trauma care at CFM, but the best healing care is the love from staff and friends they make. In time, the place is filled with laughter and playing. They are the best-behaved children we have known, not because they are covered by their experiences but because, knowing destitution, they understand the value of the care and education they are receiving and are determined to make the most of the opportunity, not just for themselves but for their whole extended family.

We had to build classrooms for these children on our site. The West Flanders Province, Belgium, Government helped with some rooms and the Australian High Commission in Nigeria helped with some. The Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria visited with his deputy in 2016, looked at the work and visited the computer centre in the mosque nearby. They ate lunch in our flat. They loved to be part of the giving, to be doing something good. We enjoyed meeting them and thanked them for the support. The Australian government doesn't help Africa anymore. Apparently, they need more money for the latest weaponry they must buy from America to maintain most favoured nation status relations. This is sad for many reasons.

Some say the West has given enough, but the West is a net receiver from Africa, by a longshot. It has never been a net aid giver. The wealth it extracts from the continent is far more than it gives back, especially today: in corrupt business deals, and massive interest payments on loans, where the loan principal has often been stolen and returned to Western banks (with "bank discretion for the client" of course;) and in resource extraction that often contributes to regional wars. The mining of cobalt, coltan, tantalum and other rare minerals in the Congo, oil, gold, diamonds, gemstones, and other rare minerals in Nigeria are just some of many examples, where terrorism and wars, extreme poverty, and widespread death, are the silent background providing the world with resources for digital goods and other products. China also conducts extensive timber and mining operations, robbing the environment and people. Foreign companies avoid paying proper market prices for resources. Proper prices would rebuild the local regions. Why don't modern business-philanthropists address these issues, not just with lip-service and good intentions? Our Western economies are dependent on the exploitation of millions of people. It is the West that receives aid from Africa.

We continued building classrooms with the gifts of friends. Children began to fill our schools, which operate in different parts of the nation. Almost all our children have been impacted by terrorism in one way or another. Our number of school children grew to over 1,300, needing a large staff team. People sometimes speak of "sustainability." But no nation runs sustainable education for its citizens. It has to be heavily subsidized or it stops. How much more for those coming through terrorism? It is not possible to give such people, from the villages I described above, an education, without gratuitous support that is constant. Ongoing, month-in, month-out support to pay the teachers who maintain good standards is essential. If not, then aid doesn't work. Aid must develop and stay with the task till it is

done. It isn't completed by building structures, but by building the people daily. If we don't build people, the children we leave behind will be the next terrorist organisation. To paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr again: "If we don't move into our future together, we don't have a future." How true! The riots in America show this today. The wealth of the richest 1% must be brought to serve, not to exploit the population. It is largely stolen wealth.

Missions agencies and friends also helped CFM to build its discipleship centre at Wurin Alheri. As stated earlier, "disciples" in this context means those who have recently come to Christ but are in danger from persecution and need shelter while they grow. Most of these were previously from the Muslim faith. Some people ask how this works out with our Muslim neighbours, so here are a few stories. The disciples may come young and can be immature while they grow. One became angry at CFM and wouldn't submit to simple discipline, so he reported us to the head of the mosques in Bukuru, the heads of the police and the military, near our rented facilities. The police chief summoned three of our CFM leaders to answer serious allegations. When our leaders arrived, they found three Muslim elders from the local community defending CFM, vigorously, for one hour. This included the head Imam of a large Muslim community. They concluded by saying that "there is no compulsion in religion" (quoting from the Quran). They said any person has the right to choose their faith. They added that CFM has the right to disciple any convert to Christ and should be encouraged to do so. As I said earlier, self-correction rather than finger pointing was becoming our new culture.

Then the Muslim elders said to our leaders, "arrest these youth who tried to burn down your college." Our angry disciple had rounded up local Muslim youth, but the plot didn't gain traction. Things had changed a lot since the 2009 – 2010 community violence. At this point our leaders spoke for the first time, "No one loves these youth. The Christians don't, the government doesn't and you, their own elders, don't. They don't need to be arrested but they need fathers and mothers, mentors, help and hope. They need a community in which we care for each other. Give us access to all your youth and we will help them." The elders were shocked and asked, "What kind of people are you? Everyone wants to arrest those who want to do them harm." (All my training told me Muslims would not respond in this way to Christians, about arresting their own people. But both of our communities had begun to take responsibility for our crimes, not covering them because our own people were involved. We were no longer relating by the "rules of social or political religious competition," but as neighbours.)

CFM's leaders replied, "This is how God treats us through the cross of his Son, and he asked us to treat others the same way. Jesus told us to pass on God's reconciling nature to others." The elders responded, "We have never heard this gospel before." "We had no idea this is what the cross of Christ meant." One wrote on public Facebook the next day, "The almighty wall destroying power of the cross of Christ!" Who said Muslims don't believe in the cross of Christ?

Another of the disciples later did a similar thing. He went to the head Imam of the community. He told him how wicked CFM is and said, "I am coming back to Islam." The

Imam asked him, “What discipline are you running from?” and told him to return to CFM and finish his studies. He came back, submitted to correction and did well at CFM. Two others ran to Bisichi, adjacent to Wurin Alheri and made all kinds of allegations against us to the Muslim leader. The Muslim leader came to our house and sat down and discussed it with us. He then returned to Bisichi and called the pastor of these two Muslim converts and asked him to collect these youth and take them back to their churches for correction. This is what I spoke of in an earlier chapter. When we have no relationships, miscreants can cause trouble, people can divide us, rumours can fly. This has changed. As the African proverb says, “Children are for all of us.” We now see all our neighbourhood youth as our joint responsibility.

Relationships like this spread during the height of the Boko Haram insurgency. One of our students went with his wife to a northern city and 200 Muslim and Christian leaders met with them. They spoke from the book of Isaiah for one hour on the kingdom of God. After this, Muslim elders, Imams, and others who claimed to have been “Boko Haram generals,” stood crying, spoke of their atrocities, and expressed how sorry they were for how they had treated the community and asked fervently for forgiveness. The Christian pastors stood and confessed their faults, in retaliating and in shunning their Muslim neighbours, in refusing to care them as people. When the meeting finally ended, they said they would gather again, for CFM to share more on the kingdom of God.

Another of our bible college students was sought out daily by a Muslim security chief of a notoriously violent community, Kafanchan, on ways to bring peace. This student was a converted Muslim who returned to Kafanchan and served those who had formerly persecuted him. The hearts of the whole community changed during a very volatile time in Nigeria, and peace came and has stayed.

One of CFM’s staff members formerly killed Christians. He had a miraculous change of heart. He first became a disciple and then attended our bible college. He now goes around the north preaching to those of all backgrounds, with miracles and he disciples thousands of believers. He leads hundreds of women who own shops in the Bukuru market. Many other disciples are youth, hopeless, in camps in and around Jos, who used very cheap and very dangerous drugs, driven there through terrorism, forgotten by many. Death is common. CFM staff members serve in these broken communities, including one staff member who was previously notorious in Barkin Lardi for his behaviour: nicknamed “Ossama.” When he came to Christ that all changed. As well as being a pastor in CFM he heads our fleet of buses, making sure the drivers deliver our children to school safely every day. He is now married with one child.

Every day someone’s life is changed, and they start growing, being restored, gaining health, learning vocational skills to contribute to community building, and then reaching out to serve and love others because Jesus loves and restores them. Some from remote regions come to our discipleship (safe house) centre and when they finish that program, some of them enrol in the bible college and become pastors, some missionaries, others training in various professions, or enrol in our senior secondary school, even though they may be well above the usual age.

The next building to go up at Wurin Alheri was for free vocational training. This again is to help youth, and to rebuild relationships between Muslim and Christians. It also serves women who have suffered sexual violence, who come to Wurin Alheri for recovery, sometimes having been raped, and are pregnant, sometimes with serious diseases that need treatment, for which there is often stigma in the society. Our staff and female bible college students serve them and help care for the babies, restoring the mother's hope. Sometimes they are termed "mad" and abused in society, and our students take them in to love, to wash, dress and look after them. This is such a good part of the students' training, learning to love those we are normally too busy to care for. Like Paul said, "The weakest members teach us the most," not the boastful "super-apostles." We learn that Christianity is the journey. When our journey is flourishing (meaning our relationships of responsible care for one another) we reach the goal of being Christ followers. The journey is the goal.

Our bible college students, disciples and older teenaged children from our crisis homes learn practical vocational skills to give them income earning power, to help them stand on their feet back in their home communities. We desire our bible college students to spread the aptitude for vocational skills in their churches and communities. We want them all to take with them both the forgiveness and love of God towards our enemies, and the aptitudes to rebuild lives vocationally. These rebuilt lives will rebuild local communities and rebuild the nation. Hundreds enrol for 15 different vocational skills, from building, to steel and aluminium work, electronics, carpentry, fashion design, shoe making, catering, computer and mobile phone repairs, hairdressing, and others.

A university in Belgium is currently helping us to design a wind-turbine built from locally available recycled materials, to generate electricity for village homes. Our vocational centre will train many people in this skill. We are training women to repair borehole handpumps. Thousands of these in village communities are left broken. Being able to fix them, and make these wind-turbines, will give many people jobs as they spread the love of God in these regions. Already many hundreds have graduated from our vocational college, and we have many wonderful stories of not only them making income, but also spreading the message of reconciliation to their communities, bringing people together, serving the weak.

Always, our students, from whatever college or school in CFM, seek to build relationships, to share what the Lord has done for them. One Fulani student in our bible college was kidnapped and while being taken away, she struggled and escaped, but she received a head injury in her struggle. She was able to return to the bible college but after some time she went totally blind. We took her to all the specialists, and she had CT & MRI scans from the best hospitals. They could not identify damage. The bible college students cared for her day and night. Staff said her condition healed us all; turned us into servants. After six months she says the Lord spoke to her: "Go to three lecturers and ask them to read this passage from the scripture and pray for you." She obeyed. Nothing happened. That night, at 2:00 AM she dreamt Jesus told her to get off her bed and walk. She replied, "How can I, I am blind?" Her eyes suddenly opened, and she could see perfectly. The next week she summoned all to the bible college to give God thanks. Muslims and Fulani came at her invitation, all praising God together for her healing.

In Christmas in 2017 we invited townspeople, traditional leaders, and religious clerics from several communities near Wurin Alheri, and near our rented facilities in Bukuru, to have a meal at Wurin Alheri. There was a mix of ethnic and religious groups. While we were eating, people stood one by one and shared about their new relationships, all quoting from the teachings of Jesus. The Muslim leader of Bisichi and a traditional leader of Du now serve together on an agricultural cooperative CFM set up to help our region. CFM has three tractors which plough land for small farm holders at a discount, especially for widows (Muslim and Christian) to help them recover after the violence. These formerly opposing leaders (representing their communities) have literally “beaten their swords into ploughs.” Others shared on how much farming yields have increased. This gathering of the groups together hadn’t happened for decades. Two years later hundreds filled our chapel for a Christmas meal, from all backgrounds, all identifying with CFM and with each other.

Infrastructure that had to be built into Wurin Alheri included roads and power supply. Roads would require extensive drainage for the rainfall that frequently deluges the site during wet season. It seemed daunting, but we began and were able to complete it. This brought down the rate of malaria for our crisis-care children living at Wurin Alheri, since the fast water drainage reduced the mosquito population. The electric power issue was a bigger problem. The nearest supply was more than 3 kilometres away. But then a retired government minister built nearby, and he asked CFM to share the costs in supplying power lines for the first two kilometres. So we had 1 kilometre to go, and the power infrastructure and transformers around the entire Wurin Alheri site. The power company pays for none of the infrastructure for the three kilometres, or for the site plan. Very thankfully, before we knew it, we were able to complete this project.

In mid-2018 I had to travel for one week to speak at a missions dinner in Australia. Ruth stayed with the rest of the team on our site. I went through Istanbul and while changing flights I heard there had been an outbreak of violence at Barkin Ladi, about 45 minutes from Wurin Alheri. More than 500 people had been killed. Some militants wanted to spread the violence and they came to Bisichi, next to Wurin Alheri, to stir up the region and recruit fighters. (We have no walls between our land and Bisichi, the three perimeters open.) Militants against the Fulani tried to recruit fighters in Du, the Christian township on the other side of Wurin Alheri. Once again, we were right in the middle, and before forming these relationships in recent years a situation like this would have been catastrophic.

However, militants were rejected in both Bisichi and Du. The people said they would have no part in violence, and they sent the militants away. But the violence spread to the outskirts of Jos, about 10 kilometres from our rented bible college facilities. Christians lined up on the street and pulled Muslims randomly from their cars and killed them. Even one pastor pulled from his car was murdered because he was wearing traditional northerner clothes, the attackers refusing to believe he was a pastor.

Back in 2009 – 2010, this would have ignited our whole area around our bible college. But this time, Muslims came out into the streets and insisted vigorously that no Christian’s blood would be split in Bukuru. They demanded strongly that there must be no retaliation for the Muslims who were killed. The Muslim and Christian youth who had attended (or

were still enrolled in) our Bukuru computer centre, patrolled the streets at night with the police, as one unit, to ensure peace was kept. What an amazing change had occurred in recent years: from strongly divided to strongly united, for the peace of Bukuru, Du and Bisichi. The head of police in Bukuru wrote CFM an official letter thanking us for our peacebuilding work. He said there was no longer any religious violence under his commission.

Our first two computer centres in Bukuru and Bisichi have today grown, so now they are six centres, with 220 computers. We set up more computer centres in hotspots, other places where there has been violence, including Barkin Ladi (the focus of the 2018 violence) to bring training, relationships, and hope to thousands of youth. When we have a graduation these Muslim and Christian youth fill our chapel at Wurin Alheri. Over 800 students enrol in these computer centres every year. These, as well as the vocational studies, are accredited, and people go on to many jobs, further education, or self-employment. All students in the vocational or computer centres do ethics classes, in which the principles of biblical peace are taught, of community love and cohesion. We have Muslim staff and Christian staff in these computer centres. The head of the whole computer centre division of CFM is a dear Muslim brother. He and his team have made the centres the best in the north, with full CISCO capabilities and have built the centres to cater for 880 students per year.

CFM staff members formed Vanguard for Peace, with the objective of rebuilding relations within communities. They hold seminars in town halls, calling together stake holders from all levels of the society. They set up clubs in high schools, that call together teenagers to teach them the ingredients of a cohesive community. These are schools where teenagers previously held extreme views, on either Christian or Muslims segregated political positions. Now, they are students of community. Imagine this being done in the Palestine/ Israel region. The Vanguard for Peace runs sports days, where they invite teachers and teenagers from different government, Muslim, or Christian schools, and mix them into teams, so it isn't one school against another. Events like this are very successful in community, and they work only if we care for each other and build genuine justice in sharing relationships. We don't do "faith dialogue," we don't try to come to a "common faith," we don't have talks to agree on peace terms. It's the grassroots that matter, the sick, the hungry, the widow and orphan, the neighbour in need. We treat every person the same because this is the command and example of Christ. We are brothers in the community, but in faith we are in Christ.

All arms of CFM work in collaboration between biblical teaching and local cultural understandings. The biblical revelation is interpreted honestly and with faithfulness into local settings by local people who understand it best. We do this in all our nations and cultures. Sometimes it is drawing out of local culture the common grace that is actually Christlike and bringing that to the fore. This is a theology of the Word, the *logos*, by whom all things were made: Christ is the light of general revelation in creation, in the human conscience, though it has been marred by sin. One local term for peaceful cohabitation in many parts of Africa is *ubuntu* which is often translated as "I am because we are," or "humanity towards others." This philosophy can inform many aspects of our social and

political life much better than our modern forms of politics which can be draconian, individualistic, and centralised rather than community orientated: discussions and relationships of justice between all the parties. *Ubuntu* concepts well known in local cultural traditions have often been merged very fruitfully with biblical teachings from Christ, bringing peaceful transformation. General revelation, which may even stem from a cultural connection to earlier biblical periods, may point to Christ as the fulfilment.

By the way, the idea that Muslims are offended at our Christian holidays like Easter, and faith traditions in the community, is not at all true in our regions. If you love them, they will easily come to church and hear the message with you. Nigerians grew up sharing meals at festive seasons with Muslim neighbours. This was normal life in northern Nigeria some decades ago, before recent geopolitics. The idea in the Western world that we mustn't have "Christmas" because it offends Muslims has never been thought of in our renewed relationships with Muslims in Nigeria. It's only the radicals and they are few. As our relationships grow the radicals have no voice. Even radical Christians might feel the same way about Muslim holidays. But Muslims expect Christians to be genuine in their faith, to express it fully. They do not respect Christians otherwise as genuine. In secular nations, the opposition to Christmas (and I am not supporting the commercialisation of Christmas) is propagated for secular reasons. "Muslim offence" is just an excuse. We use Christmas to do what Jesus did: he incarnated into our sufferings, to give to those who didn't know him.

So many activities combine to serve widows at Wurin Alheri. They come for vocational and business training and then CFM connects them to microfinance loans, and they start businesses, with a close to perfect success rate in loan repayments. We bring in Fulani and local farmers for agricultural seminars, linked up through WebEx to global vets and other experts. But more on this in a subsequent chapter. Every day these things are going on at Wurin Alheri, "Place of Kindness." And every day God provides.

We asked a dear brother in Belgium if God could provide a print press industry to our site. He got on the train that morning to go to Brussels and the one empty seat was next to a representative of a government funding agency whom he knew, who signed on to build the necessary facility. That week our friend had looked up "printers" in the public phonebook and contacted two previously unknown non-Christians, who signed on to provide the print machines and other equipment and gave a large donation to support the project. These friends and our brother came to Wurin Alheri to launch the completed printing factory, which is turning into a business for our site and also becoming a part of our vocational training for others.

In 2019 Christian Faith Hospital opened at Wurin Alheri. A health worker had joined the CFM team several years earlier when we started a small clinic for our CFM's crisis-care children, and then a nurse joined. Each step we took was way beyond our financial ability, but the Lord always provided. Then a doctor joined our team. He was a student Ruth and I helped train in Benson Idahosa's bible college. He was from the north and we sponsored his studies for two years. Later, he became a medical student and after qualifying he practiced under a highly qualified international doctor. He found us in Jos and offered his services. Today he heads our government registered hospital. Many other doctors join to offer their services as

needed, especially for onsite surgeries. The hospital has inpatient wards, a diagnostic laboratory, dentistry, and maternity facilities. Hundreds of babies are born here. In emergency and outpatient services, Christians and Muslims from communities near and far are treated every day. It is becoming a community meeting centre. Our motto is, “None shall be denied basic health care.”

Currently, a larger hospital is being built on the Wurin Alheri site. When that is completed, the present building will be handed over to the vocational college as a boarding hostel for students from other states. When we occupy the new hospital building our desire is to also offer x-ray services to our region, as well as diagnostics and treatment for HIV and Hepatitis B. The villages I described further above, and towns throughout the Barkin Ladi local government area have some of the highest infection rates in the world. There is no other facility for treating these diseases in this L.G.A. These diseases also carry a strong social stigma, so our desire is to love those affected and see their restoration. Like I mentioned with education above, the question is, how do you sustain a medical outreach to the areas in this world that need it the most? Our health industries in the world are not designed for this. Yet, it must be done, not only for the sake of the individuals, but for human justice and peace. This is part of what God meant in Genesis when he told us to have dominion: dominion over that which destroys the creation, wholeness, and peace. This is our commission. But more on this in a subsequent chapter.

One of the more recent endeavours CFM has launched is the legal assistance team. This is located in a rented office in Bukuru. For some years, our bible college students have reached out to inmates of the Jos prison. We often see people languishing in this and other prisons without legal representation. In other places we see people persecuted without legal redress. We see plagues of sexual violence, like other nations, especially during this recent Covid-19 lockdown. So we work with social services to spread awareness in communities and to bring mitigation and restoration to individuals, families, and communities.

CFM’s barrister heading up this department previously served as the Director of Civil Litigation of the State Ministry of Justice and is highly respected for his integrity throughout the profession. His aim in CFM’s legal aid department is to implement redemptive and reconciliatory remedies in communities for crimes committed, pathways to alternative dispute resolution, which bring restoration and healing, working with the Sermon on the Mount model. He found the government had seen the importance of this for a long time but lacked the ability to carry it out. This dear friend is the Muslim man that one of CFM’s leaders rescued in the 2009 – 2010 violence I talked about earlier. His assistant in our legal department is also a lawyer, wife of one of CFM’s pastors.

Our concern is to model the things that build peace into our nation’s future and these things are all structured around justice. We don’t mean justice in the sense of legal retribution. That is the human sense of justice, upon which our sacrificial religious systems were built. But Jesus spoke of the justice of God, which is mercy based. He demonstrated, that in laying down our lives to serve the broken, healing and atonement come into the retributive heart of human society and bring peace. Peace starts from this atonement in our hearts, which is

essential for our relationships. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Go and learn what it means, I want mercy and the (true) knowledge of God, not sacrifice (finger-pointing and retribution.”) This could be taken as a lynchpin of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus moved atonement from being the sacrifice of others to springing from our communal self-giving mercy. This is the basis of true justice flowing.

In our response to the earlier Boko Haram jihad on Jos, CFM launched Healing Justice back in 2011, as the avenue through which love would be used as a weapon against fear and hate. Widows and others in misfortune, from any background, could come to CFM’s office for prayer and support, as we looked to the Lord for supply. This touched many thousands of lives. It built the foundation for peace in many places. Today, CFM’s legal assistance team builds on this foundation. As reconciliation comes to communities in which there is offence, as those who have not received justice are released from prison, then society begins to heal. This is the gospel: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to set free those who are in prison, to heal those under oppression, to proclaim the good news (Exodus, return from captivity) to those who are poor...” For Luke, this wasn’t just spiritual, because for the Jewish people the spiritual flowed out of the social relationships, into which justice must come.

Some ask us how this works in a society of sharia law, as we encounter in some northern regions. To start with, there are more incarcerations in America for the population than any other nation, so “Christian” justice systems aren’t working too well. Coming back to sharia: there are positives, such as stopping exploitive interest rates, like those common in Western societies for low income earners. An extensive study would reveal many other interesting points for discussion. But, in regard to some of the more harmful parts of sharia, we find this often comes down to local implementation. Our cultures and own minds determine how we interpret our religion. When light comes to our minds, especially through renewed relationships, our cultures, and viewpoints change. In interpreting our faith, we look for the inner story of scripture, which is about God’s love for and redemption (healing) of his creation. It’s a story of pro-life. Any theology that mitigates against life is destructive. This story of scripture is contrary to a humanistic view where we try to please the individual as the centre of all things. We have had at least one very positive experience with sharia courts, where the judges annulled a force marriage, stopped the abusive rule of others, and set a young woman free to serve God according to her conscience, and to have full access to education.

We estimate that around 20% of CFM’s donated funds have been used to build at Wurin Alheri and these buildings are all used every day in restoring lives. All the rest of CFM’s donated funds go into daily programs for the people we serve. We prepare 18,000 meals per week when all our bible college boarding students and disciples are on site, including our two crisis-care homes. Wages are paid for almost 300 staff members monthly. We supplement their wages by paying for their professional development, and by assisting in the education and health of their families, their accommodation, and transport. We have built two houses owned by CFM’s two main leaders, whom I will introduce later. We have a gratuity system to give land to staff members after “long service.” We run a staff cooperative that helps with other needs, and supplement this with profits from CFM’s

agricultural businesses. CFM's vocational businesses are already helping to support the free training of vocational students and we hope will soon also contribute to CFM's staff cooperative.

Everything we do serves as a model, so it can spread and rehabilitate communities. The model here is cooperative businesses that bring justice between leaders and staff members, while integrating ethnic groups and neighbours as participants and beneficiaries. Businesses, environment, and community flourish much better this way and this is what CFM is seeking to prove in the days ahead. More on this also in the next chapters.

We have wonderful support from Christians, some of whom have supported Ruth and I from our early days, when we were working with Benson Idahosa, right up to the current time. I had a dream once that a brother drove up from Melbourne and handed a cheque to Ruth's father for the work. Soon afterwards he gave a large gift. (Unfortunately, I cannot dream such things at will.) We have seen the Lord provide in such a variety of ways: small donors, those who pray for us, large donors. Like Jesus and Paul said, each according to their ability. Sometimes those who have less give more, that is, more from what they have. Like Moses said, "Gather the manna and share it, so he that gathers much and he that gathers little all have what they need."

Once we visited the far north of Queensland and after a breakfast meeting a man asked us to come to his farm and pray for his friend. We saw the friend, just skin and bones, lying there. I don't recall the illness. I do recall feeling somewhat intimidated by the severity of the situation. But we prayed. Ten years later we were back in a church in the region. The man who owned the farm and his friend drove six hours to meet us. After we had prayed, ten years earlier, his friend fully recovered, and he wanted to thank us for coming to the farm that day. That prayer was 30 years ago and the man and his wife with the farm have supported us ever since. We look back with thanks for many different events like this.

An old lady from a village once visited us at our flat when we lived in the south of Nigeria. She said she prays for us every day, and the Lord told her to tell us he wants us to have patience, not to faint. How right she was. We never saw her before or after that time. This kind of interaction with the Lord's people has happened often over the years, and it's usually the simple brothers and sisters, and the ones who clearly have no motives. Some even donating large sums of support with simplicity and love. And we meet most of these people in simple churches, who just want to pour out the love God has given to them. Even in times of economic crisis, Christian supporters behind us have doubled up their efforts to help others, not putting themselves or their fears first. What a blessing these have been to encourage us. What a blessing all our supporters and encouragers have been, not just to us, but to all those who are lifted up to go and serve others. This is how regions are transformed from darkness to light: the light of self-giving. We do not represent one denomination but are supported by Christians from all backgrounds.

Ruth works tirelessly on filing reports and communicating with a few Christian agencies that support some of the projects within CFM. These agencies have been very kind and the believers who serve in them devote their lives to sharing the love of Christ. They have

helped so much, through the many Christians in simple churches who back these agencies with prayer and support.

Ruth also applies endlessly for other grants from charities and government bodies, but usually to avail at the present time. Providing the restorative services to those most in need, while building peaceful coexistence seems to be the remit of most government aid bodies. Ruth uses the lingo government employees like to hear, but for us it is genuine. CFM aims at providing the outcomes these bodies claim to be looking for. Possibly, the problem presently is our lack of connection. Britain recently took away the independence of its aid department (DFID.) Now British aid is linked to what the government determines to be their strategic aims in a region. Australia also made this change some years ago. This means aid is related to trade, given to areas that are strategically important to British and Australian interests. This largely diminishes the integrity and effectiveness of aid. It's more a bribe and subject to change, which makes it ineffective in long term development goals. But Ruth doesn't give up.

The last facility to be erected at Wurin Alheri is the bible college, enabling us to finally move from our rented premises at Bukuru. We have kept this story for the last chapter, to end where we began, with the central part of Christian Faith Ministries, the integral base of our training, theology: the place of studying, learning, and reflecting on the character and will of Christ. This constantly, year after year, does so much to build us into a family and to feed God's primary mission into every one of CFM's arms. It is the foundation, with the presence of God's Spirit, from which the biblical narrative emerges in its ever-increasing richness, informing us on the new creation God is building through his people. This is the building we desire to build with him, the renovation of hearts, relationships, communities, and the natural creation, as heaven fills our earthy place, just as Isaiah depicted. This is sacred place, wherever it is located. This is the temple. May the Lord be willing! Amen. As well as the prayer gifts of the Spirit, the mysteries expressed in doxology make way for God's creational blueprint in all our hearts, the garden he is building and filling.

## Building Local Community

The story so far outlines some of the initial steps CFM took in emergency conditions towards peace. After sponsoring 250 orphans for several years, in non-CFM, government, Christian and Muslim schools in regions recovering from violence, our attention began to shift to some of the longer-term issues. That is, building the economic conditions that would give us all the joy of being able to support our own families. I have already commented on the poverty in parts of Bukuru. CFM had been providing food relief in the hardest times. Because of the years of violence, farming opportunities had shut down for non-landowners. They weren't able to rent farming plots anymore due to the general fear and mistrust that had taken over in these years.

So at the beginning of 2020 we took a letter to the Gbong Gwon of Jos, the king of Plateau State. He graciously received us, and we spoke together about the economic conditions. We asked if traditional landowners of our regions could once again allow others to rent land, so they could farm. We talked about the rent income this would give landowners, the increased foodstuff that would be in the marketplace, the increased cashflow this would provide to everyone, flowing on to other businesses and jobs. In economics, we know there is a multiplier effect on any cash injections. Family income levels would rise, and we would be able to afford to pay our children's school fees. The outlook for our future would improve. We spoke about the need to integrate all sectors, people from all backgrounds, so the contribution of all would lift the whole economy. Any isolated sector becomes a drain, rather than a contribution, and their suffering points us to a future of violence. We spoke of improved relationships, and how we believed that this indicates the time was right for development. If we didn't take this step, and development didn't take place, we would remain in the cycle of poverty and violence.

We had to also speak to Christians about this, who sometimes believe we can prosper without this integration and healing of others. This is "personal prosperity," that is often taught, which discounts the lessons of creation that show we are intertwined. "The eye cannot say to the ear, I don't need you. If one part of the body is sick, the whole body is sick." Paul said this in relation to our Christian community and it is very true. That is why we share the principle with our whole neighbourhood, because God is teaching us true building principles. If one part of our city is sick, we are all in trouble. As we heal others, we are healed. It's moving from the business model of domination, or from the competitive empire building model, to sustainable economic prosperity that comes from inclusion. Only this prosperity succeeds, because the other models, where I prosper on my own, require higher and higher fences, more and more security, to keep me safe from those who are poor. The saying goes, "A rising tide lifts all boats." Let's not work for our own prosperity, but for the improving conditions that lifts us all.

For some time we had been considering the environmental conditions around us. These had become increasingly concerning. The region around Wurin Alheri was forest a couple of generations ago. Traditional landowners, the Berom people, sometimes wear leopard skins during traditional events. Their area was once rich with a whole array of animal life, which is

almost gone. As we look out from our Wurin Alheri site we see mainly cleared land. Most of the trees and shrubs have disappeared. These provide nutrients for the soil and encourage insect and bird life, essential for fertile ecosystems. Our hearts feel the way Paul described in Romans 8: "The creation groans." Not only is the environment groaning, but the people groan as they clash over reducing environmental and agricultural resources. It's a groan that comes from the breakdown of community and the violence and death that follows. This is really the topic of Paul in Romans as he deals with the breakdown in community between Jews and gentiles. The creation depends on our renewed relationships and our relationships in turn depend on a renewed environment.

In most modern nations we have lost site of the importance of the rural, of the condition of our soils, and of the need for family farming communities. In Western nations agriculture has shifted more to large corporations. In African nations, this has meant dependence on food imports. Western large-scale farmers were told they were feeding the starving masses, but really the West was dumping excess products on to world markets for its own profit, destroying local agricultural capacity. The damage this has done to local community in our regions cannot be overstated. If our nations are to survive, Western or African, farming communities must be rehabilitated. Farming must move away from industrial methods into the restoration of local ecosystem diversity and rich soil fertility. We must revisit Old Testament teachings of restorative sabbath principles, which restore our agricultural environments, and thus our lives. The Adamic commission relates to this: "Adam" means dirt, implying our connection to the creation, its soils, and its ecosystems. Our task is to ensure the flourishing of full natural diversity, flora, and fauna, through which the whole system is sustained. Our imbalanced "heaven-bound spirituality" has disconnected us from creation and from our commission.

This brings us to one very concerning aspect of public policy papers put out by the United Nations (UN) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) in recent years. The *Agenda 21* and the *Great Reset* programs place strong emphasis on further depopulating rural areas and cramming cities. Starting from the early 1600's, the British Enclosure Acts took over the commons land, driving masses of poor people into the industrial revolution and army. It increased profits in farming, but also capitalised land, and humans as labour, moving more towards Pharaoh than jubilee. British aristocracy advised the early Australian government to limit the sale of cheap land because of the labour needs of their corporations. (Ruth and I saw a report about this in a museum at Murray Bridge, SA.) Land ownership increases human choice and wage costs, which is why God gave each family in Israel land and kept the land in their family by jubilee. The WEF claims corralling people into high rise living will save the global environment. Recently we were in Australia where bushfires were out of control causing much damage and loss of plant and animal life. Depopulation of the regions was put forward as the needed response, but this depopulation is the problem. Aboriginals once managed these forests. Nature is supposed to have a human presence, not exploiting it but applying holistic management as we were created to do.

Though it was a politically hot issue, forestry staff said a main reason for extensive fires was they lacked manpower to maintain forests, to backburn and remove flammable understory,

to protect them from fire catastrophe. This shows depopulation of the human presence was the leading causative issue. “Austerity” in government budgets will continue to serve as a reason not to employ needed forestry management. Later in 2020, the NSW government rezoned land to “protect the koalas.” However, we know this won’t protect the koalas from fires. If the koalas were our concern, we would employ the forestry workers to collaborate with farmers to ensure habitats are flourishing and maintained for fauna protection. The NSW government also recently passed horrific abortion legislation allowing abortion on demand up until birth. The policies of the WEF are driving this and many parliaments today. This perceived injustice is breaking the cohesion of our societies. Media in Australia is divided, neither side with the solution of regenerative environmentalism.

Listening to the WEF, experts present their case. “Experts” are sponsored by chemical companies with strong vested interests. Other “experts” are leaders within agricultural companies. It is a corporate takeover of public bodies, which is about the worst thing you could imagine for the environment. The real purpose is to promote markets for their synthetic farming chemicals, their new digital technologies, and fake foods. This is moving us towards a biotech world, where digital products are merged with crops and animals, and even with humans, through manipulation of DNA or digital implants.

In promising technological breakthroughs in medicine, the dangers to humanity are also chilling. Biotech enhancements could seriously threaten the sustainable ecosystem on which we all depend, as has been shown by GMO (genetically modified organism) seed and its destruction of the environment. Elon Musk is the founder of “Neuralink” implants, to connect humans to artificial intelligence through the high powered 5G network. Some experts cast doubt on the work of people like Musk, but the industry has strong commercial drive. More common, are experiments in altering human DNA, as has been done in agriculture. These technologies are being held out as our hope in a world of agricultural and health challenges. However, the root cause of most of these challenges lie in our move away from our original holistic systems into a manipulated world of synthetics and over urbanisation. In agriculture, industrial animal farming is a major problem: separating animals into cruel conditions, filling them and our food chain with antibiotics, putting our societies at risk of disease outbreaks.

God made humans to enjoy rural community, where families, local economies, and health build in a properly managed environment. Crowding us into cities is inhumane, like animals in a factory. It raises levels of depression and food intolerances because we are cut off from nature, and our immune systems go haywire. We cannot live alone, in social distancing, on processed and fake foods, and expect ever new patented medical interventions to keep coming to our rescue. We need interactions with others, even sharing germs. That’s the way we are made. Over urbanisation is treating us like factory fed animals in cages who don’t have proper natural diets, surviving on a constant intake of synthetic pharmaceuticals: a system that has ever increasing side effects. Separating farm animals from their natural habitat denies both them and us the biodiversity that is essential to life. Further crowding us into cities will destroy our agriculture, destroy our health, and overburden our national budgets to breaking point, in health care and welfare costs. The only way to explain how

global public bodies could mandate such madness is the financial interests of those now at the helm: the “philanthropic” sponsors of these bodies, in search of new patents.

We have tried our hand at farming on the Wurin Alheri site and nearby plots. We used the methods that have in recent years become standard practice, which include chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Results have been very discouraging. In 2019 we planted corn on part of the site, and it was a total failure. We lost the money we used. One of CFM’s leaders planted corn on a plot beside Wurin Alheri and that was also a complete failure, and he lost his money. Earlier this year a graduate of CFM’s bible college went through violence in his region near Barkin Ladi. He was recovering with us at Wurin Alheri and we got talking about his farm. Farmers in his region experienced the same thing. Yields were dropping, chemical fertilizers were becoming too expensive. The farmers could not make enough to feed their families, let alone sell.

One of missions leaders in Bauchi State had a sudden rise in violence in his area. Strife had risen between herders and crop farmers. He looked into the matter and found that the land of 1,500 farmers had become similarly useless. They needed virgin land, or their families would not be able to eat the next year. For a fee, the elders of the area gave the farmers the rights to clear forest and use new land. They planted their crops and later found cattle grazing there on their crops. Our missions leader found out the elders had also received a fee from the Fulani to graze on the same new land. So the strife wasn’t the fault of the crop farmers or the herders.

After fruitless appeals to the elders and state authorities, our missions leader took the matter to the press in Nigeria’s capital city. When it was aired there was motivation back in Bauchi state for the highest powers to help settle the dispute. The stakeholders were called to the Emir’s palace. They fined the Fulani for the loss in crops. When our missions leader spoke with the 1,500 farmers, gathered in a large field, the farmers decided not to compel the Fulani to pay the fine. It would have been too costly for the Fulani community. They would have had to sell their cattle. Then all these herder boys would still have guns, but no jobs: they would join the gangs of bandits kidnapping people and terrorising the region. This is often the problem we have in the north and the source of a lot of the instability. The farmers decided they would take the loss for the sake of relationships, to quell further violence between them. They made the Fulani only pay legal fees, just for the record.

This raises a lot of issues that are pressing today. One is our farming methods, and another is why there is deforestation. Is it because of overpopulation? This brings up some issues we hear most pressingly from public bodies like the UN and the WEF: the “urgency” about population growth, the climate change “urgency,” the call for wide scale abortion, either to turn around population growth, or to prevent children suffering in poorer conditions. We are even told humans are the main problem for the environment, just for being alive as consumers.

We have leaders, staff members and missions teams in many northern Nigerian regions. They have a lot of knowledge about their regions. They all tell us there are no population issues in these northern states. Ruth and I have travelled through most of these areas. The

issue is the loss of fertility in the soil. This is the reason why forests are being cleared. They all tell us farming methods have radically changed in recent decades. Yes, there is population growth, but there is also plenty of land everywhere. All studies show population growth levels out and then declines when education increases. However, the people previously farmed differently. Local landowners originally invited the Fulani to come into their region to benefit from coexistence. Farming and herding communities of different ethnicities integrated crop farms with cattle. The soil benefited from the manure and urine and the cattle benefited from sharing portioned land or eating crop residue. Farmers used crop rotation to put nutrients back into the soil, and local trees and shrubs provided diversity to the ecosystem, even “green manure.” This integration has largely disappeared. There is now a monoculture in farming. Everything is cleared, all plants, all animals, except for the crop that is being grown.

Our team leader who heads up CFM’s Egypt family says where he grew up in Nigeria no synthetic fertilizers were used. The integration between cattle and soil provided all they needed. They just put the seed into the ground and the harvest was bountiful. In Egypt cancer has recently become common in Alexandria. Our leader was speaking to some young people who were recovering from cancer and to elders in the community. They believe the prevalence of cancer is due to the way their food is now being farmed, using synthetic chemicals. In many places GMO seed allows large amounts of *Roundup* to be used as an insecticide. The Monsanto company, now owned by Bayer, one of the world’s largest pharmaceutical companies, has been forced to pay massive sums to settle cancer cases in America, but lobbies (bribes) government to prevent laws prohibiting the sale of *Roundup*. Ninety percent of America’s corn and cotton crops (their two biggest crops) are controlled by the Monsanto GMO monopoly. Monsanto owns all the seed under patent. The firm intimidates and takes legal action against farmers to maintain its control. The same company sells poison in agrochemicals and cancer treating pharmaceuticals, collecting massive profits at both ends.

Our leader in Egypt also suspects that the drop in nutrition in foods in the region of his birth in Nigeria, due to the lack of nutrients in the soil, has led to an increase in hypertension and diabetes, exacting a huge financial toll on communities. Food products don’t have the nutrients they once did, so people eat more to fill up, causing obesity. This problem exists today all over the world. Proper integrative farming techniques, ecosystems, and nutrition are required to turn this around. Professor Wannang (introduced more fully in the next chapter) said this move towards processed foods has resulted in a high incidence of cancer which was unknown in his youth. The distinctive of the Nigerian case is that these changes to modern farming happened more recently and the impact on health is more noticeable in this short period. The change has occurred within a generation.

Ruth and I began to research farming techniques. When we looked at our soil at Wurin Alheri it had no life. Before we bought the land, years of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides had taken their toll. The microbial and fungal life that breaks up the soil and makes it permeable to water was gone. The soil was compacted, “hard as stone.” Rainwater would run off, causing erosion, taking away the topsoil. The erosion spoils clean natural waters

ways. The soil wasn't drought resistant because it didn't retain water. Without microbial and fungal life, the soil was without nutrition, completely lacking in the ecosystem that provides its fertility. Unhealthy soil is unable to sequester and retain CO<sub>2</sub>, releasing CO<sub>2</sub> back into the atmosphere. Synthetic chemicals from farms around us were running off into the waterways and polluting them, eventually finding their way into oceans, polluting marine life. In many parts of the world this runoff into rivers and oceans has brought serious environmental problems. Synthetic chemicals kill the microbial and fungal life in the soil, eventually leaving farmers no choice but to move on, looking for new land.

Researching on this issue we found that there is wide concern that this is happening to farms and land globally. Each year life is extracted from the soil through farming techniques that do not in turn regenerate the soil. Soils are left bare for weed management and this leads to large-scale loss of topsoil in many nations. Some experts estimate that much of the farming land in the world's leading farm economies may only have 60 years left before it becomes unusable. Some historians have said that all major empires of the past fell because they similarly exploited their soils to unsustainability.

When synthetic fertilizer companies (whose products have been pushed by philanthropists, like the Gates Foundation to "help the poor") entered our regions their products were cheap, or subsidised. Harvests were at first good, because the soil was still supporting the growth. But when the microbial life in the soil died, and the cost of the fertilizers rose, these farmers were left impoverished. We have seen this with one community after another. The fertilizer is like a drug. The pusher sells it cheap at first, but when the farmer is hooked the drug takes all their money and leaves them with nothing.

One of the appeals of this "drug" is that it makes farming easy: no weeding. The farmer doesn't have to build the kind of farming methods that deal with weeds and insects, without poisons, and without killing good insects, including bees, butterflies, moths and dung beetles. These have almost disappeared in many regions. How can our ecosystem survive without such diversity? Rebuilding this diversity into farming is complex to learn at first and takes time and effort, but when it is done it keeps yielding increasing fertility and harvests with ever lowering costs. It becomes the golden goose that provides local wealth to the community, without shipping all that wealth out to chemical monopolies. This is what we are after: local wealth building, that gives the basis for shared peace. When this wealth is lost, and the resources have been destroyed (extracted by foreign corporations) then poverty and violence take over.

This hasn't only happened in Nigeria, but further north, depleting farming conditions in the Sahel and pushing Fulani herders south. The Fulani have also been pushed out of other regions by Boko Haram and by militants in Mali. If they can no longer herd cattle, and they have plenty of weapons from international illegal arms trade, and are joined by other militants pushing south after the fall of Ghaddafi, then we end up with militancy and criminal gangs proliferating in our regions, calling on local brothers to "make money the easy way."

When violence rises like this, theories of geopolitical religious agendas and conspiracies proliferate. No doubt some of these are real. Some people have a lot of knowledge of Fulani jihads in the past, and the ebb and flow of relationships between ethnic groups overtime. This knowledge can be a hinderance as it can cloud useful responses to heal the divisions at a local community level. Rehearsing similar issues was obviously a hindrance to Jewish/Samaritan relationships in Jesus' time. We vowed not to treat any neighbour according to these wider geopolitical divisions that exist in the world. We would treat a neighbour as a neighbour. Boko Haram initially grew because the Kanuri people of north east Nigeria were marginalised by corruption. We have found that when we build up relationships at the local level, wider nefarious power-seeking agendas don't infiltrate and take advantage of embittered peoples. We are fighting a war against division by building genuine relational cohesion.

Accounts that blame the violence in northern Nigeria on national corruption are true, but when these accounts come from Western commentators, then omissions to the narrative can be problematic. Nigeria's high level of corruption among Nigeria's elite was learned from occupying colonial powers. Since colonialism, much of the corruption has been directly tutored by Western corporate interests that have partnered with governments in developing countries to exploit industries, while teaching these government's how to corrupt the military for their own protection, needed in the environment of injustice they create. It is distressing to see this culture in government and military bodies, and to see how the people employed in these sectors struggle under it, knowing that my nation was involved in its creation. Western commentators would do better by starting with a critique of our own corrupt systems. This would do more to reform the corruption in other places.

This brings us to the biggest problem caused by industrial farming techniques: the temptation of synthetic fertilizers is that crop farmers can "go it alone." This is especially relevant in the global geopolitical tensions between Muslims and Christians, born out of the competition for resources in the Middle East. This new arrangement of relationships, simply pushing others away, seems very easy. Chemical fertilizers look like the answer. We can push the Fulani out, regain dominance and build a monoculture that is made after the image of a monopoly. It is disturbing how easily this happens. The culture of monopoly and exclusion passes through the whole system, from monopolies like Monsanto to our farming methods and to our broken relationships. The biggest problem with this is that when these chemicals have killed the life in our soils, we have nothing to fall back on. We have burnt our bridges with our ethnically diverse neighbours, and we are now on our own. The promises of dominion were false. The "eye does need the ear" after all. Now, on our own, we are left with the poverty of our soils, and of our souls. Our whole nation is now in trouble. We have ethnic strife and farming poverty. Even the cities can't survive this.

A lot of the farming disputes arise because of immaturity. Young boys leading cattle bring them on to an unfenced farm, failing to herd them carefully. An angry young farmer responds badly, or even violently. This escalates, sometimes with payback in many multiples. Building new relationships can be hard. It takes the kind of virtues Peter spoke of: adding patience to our knowledge, and brotherly kindness to our patience, and love to our

brotherly kindness. We have to work through issues that arise. Almost all of these can be solved by adopting the kind of teachings Jesus shared in the Sermon on the Mount. And when we have relationships with the elders, we can come together to carefully consider the more serious incidents, to talk and make resolutions and reparations as needed. This used to be common practice in our wider regions, but in recent decades this indispensable resolution of problems has been allowed to slip. Restoring this means both sides win. The new relationships are far more rewarding for the environment and for our personal lives and the wellbeing of our communities. But they take work. Synthetic fertilizers lead us to believe that we can avoid this work because the relationships aren't needed.

Further below we spell out the agricultural changes we have been able to make in 2020, which in just a short time have had multiple positive impacts. This year's crop farming season is the first season for many years, probably 2 decades, in which there has been no case of farming violence in the region around Wurin Alheri. There has not been one death caused by friction between cattle herders and crop farmers. They have all mixed and shared resources peacefully. This has great promise for the future of farming and our community development.

Speaking of modern industrial techniques in farming, one farmer said he woke up each morning deciding what he would kill that day: weeds, insects or other animal and plant pests, like birds and trees. We have adopted this easy "poison them" attitude towards all our "enemies," be they on the farm, in our societies or nations, or sicknesses in our body. As said above, this approach has significant side effects, in ecosystems, interethnic relationships and in health. We need an approach that encourages the diverse life systems that enable us to overcome the imbalances that brings plagues and violence. Even weeds have a positive purpose, and better farming techniques eventually overrun them with more nutritious grasses. Weeds show the soil is lacking and they are designed to provide a recovery service. Imagine that: such blessing in weeds, non-patented!

As a global policy today, abortion (more killing, at genocidal levels) is considered the solution, rather than rebuilding the local conditions that bring wealth and nutrition to our communities. The solution to child suffering is justice, care, and love, not poisoning them in the womb. True philanthropy should build local capacity, resilience, and democracy, not import foreign ideologies, products, and control. Aid should be collaborative, not manipulated by external business interests. The knowledge of each group must be shared along with the processes and benefits of development. "Philanthropic-capitalism" (a term recently coined to justify the private takeover of public bodies) prohibits this sharing, but controls and suppresses the smaller parties through patents. God is a God of life and the Christian witness to the world's problems is to serve and encourage this life at a local level, decentralised, so communities and family can provide the nourishing base for health and the safety of our children and environment. Monopolies care neither for people nor the environment. Both are resources from which profits are extracted, to be then thrown away, as capital moves on to new markets. Chaos even promotes their cause, as it kills off weaker competitors.

Ruth and I read up on the work of Allan Savory, who lives in Zimbabwe. When Zimbabwe received independence Allan gave his large land area to the local community, and together they manage the land. It had suffered drought seasons and much of the land was barren. Allan learnt from the bison in the American plains, how they moved in large mobs, fertilizing the land, and softening the soils as they passed through. The key to the integration of bison and the fertile plains was that the grass was never overgrazed. I had a little experience in cattle farming in the Hunter Valley of Australia, over a period of several years. Cattle were kept in fenced paddocks and the grass was overgrazed, ground hardened, and synthetic fertilizers were needed to restore the pastures.

Allan and his countryfolk learned to mimic the bison. They moved large herds around, never overgrazing. In a few years, the land was restored and today flourishes with grasslands, forests and croplands that are permeable to water and drought resistant. The fresh waterways are restored, trees are sprouting that haven't been seen in Zimbabwe for years. Forrest and animal habitats have been restored and all the wild animals of Africa have returned to the region. This is the kind of human land management that CFM began to learn from. Today, people are replicating Allan's techniques, termed "holistic management," all over the world, and doing so at profit, producing large outputs of cattle and crops, full of nutrition from integrated natural resources, and building family communities as industrial farming practices are laid aside.

If such techniques aren't taken seriously our farming conditions globally will suffer even further. Sci-fi scenes predict a future where we rely on food grown on building rooftops and balconies in high rise densely populated cities, as a means of survival after the destruction of the land. This is being seriously advocated by some science commentators today. It's amazing the madness we will succumb to. For cities to survive we must know the value of true farming produce, not synthetic substitutes. We must disassemble the grocery monopolies (in Australia, enterprises like Coles and Woolworths) that use market leverage to underpay farmers and drive communities and families out of business and off the land. This is destroying us all.

One of the issues with economic, job and family instability that stems from fluctuations in resource prices, interest rates and currencies, is the lack of local resilience, through an overdependence on foreign markets. The flow of knowledge, goods, and services internationally is good for our development, but reliance on foreign markets for local resilience means a boom and bust economy. Like in Australia, farmers have built personal wealth on mass production for overseas market. Prices and market opportunities fluctuate massively. This chaos allows larger organisations to move in and take over Australian farming, depopulating the area of families who are able to sustain rural regions holistically. Suicide rates are high among farmers all over the world.

If farming communities focused instead on building local relationships, ecosystems, diversity and support systems, the communities would become much stronger, more resilient, and more stable. It is moving farming from wholly personal achievement to community achievement. Good, long term and stable prosperity is not in super-exports, but in the gradual improvement of a broad base output at home. When a large rural region builds a

monoculture on the current global cash crop, it destabilises the future of families and communities. When we rebuild resilient and shared wealth in local communities, we can then serve other communities globally to do the same. Sustained prosperity is intertwined with the welfare of all. We may call this a “local globalism:” global care, collaborating for each community’s local wholeness.

This would not be only true for rural regions, but for townships and larger centres. Building a community-based economy with local industrial capacities and local supply chains decentralises both political power and wealth while providing stability. This is a radical departure from the economic theory of recent decades that has advocated for an unregulated movement of speculative capital through global markets. But this has proved far too volatile for local communities, jobs, and community interests. The purpose of this policy was to enable corporate shareholders to maximize their profits by moving investments from one community to always follow their best personal advantage. In turning back to building local community, this does not mean an either/ or position on globalism or nationalism. Our national borders remain accessible because we serve the interests of local justice for all other communities, not just for ourselves. As local communities heal, the destabilising effect of economic or conflict migration minimizes.

Holistic management means not only managing the diversity of nature, but also the diversity of human relationships. All locals contribute to building the environment and all share from the benefits. Nothing necessary to holism is priced out of the region by unregulated competition. Life is more than economics but includes the indispensable rehabilitation of each part of human and natural existence. This management is the opposite of monopoly. There is diversity in agriculture and human diversity as industrial farming practices give way to holistic farming practices that revolve around the diverse contribution of all. We are learning that to win economically is to lose, because “winning” expels someone or something we need. Monopolies are kissed goodbye as we are weaned off synthetic chemicals. Natural farming systems provide for themselves. It just has to be managed properly and the whole system “builds itself up in love, by which every part supplies.” (Paul)

The restoration of the soils, grasslands and forests even sequesters carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Many areas around the world are today being restored this way, turning back desertification. As Allan Savory says, droughts don’t make the land arid, but arid land brings droughts. The recovery starts with the land. If we are concerned about climate change from carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, then more carbon dioxide is sequestered by restoring our soils than by any other intervention humanity can bring. By the process of photosynthesis plants take CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere and pass it into the soil. There carbon is stored and used to nurture the life support systems of healthy ecosystems. Unhealthy soils will not retain carbon but release it into the atmosphere. The number one agent that prohibits soil from sequestering carbon dioxide is synthetic chemicals used in industrial farming. This is an important matter when you consider how much of the world’s farming depends on these chemicals. Restoring the world’s arid land through regenerative processes gives us a balanced climate.

The oil industry has played a brutal part in our greed, as has mining, in both sheer inhumanity (driving geopolitical duplicity, sanctions, wars) and devastation of the environment. All around us in the Jos region land lies waste due to a past tin mining industry. This also contributes to local land tension and conflict. Corporations don't operate as responsible citizens, but as responsible only to their shareholders' interests: just like the munitions industry that is so profitable to its owners, yet with brutal consequences for humanity. War is a massive industry and its owners have lodged themselves in government to make war and arms build-up perpetual.

Corporate greed clearly needs to be regulated but governments have failed to do this. Industrial farming is in the same camp. It extracts from the earth just like mining does and leaves desolate land in its wake. It is families who care for land, leaving it to generations to come. This is why God kept Israel's land in families. The digital revolution is in the same camp, a vehicle only for its shareholders interests. As huge amounts of corporate capital flow into this sector, it too will have massive costs for the environment in resource exploitation. The exosphere will become a satellite junk yard, far beyond what we see now, as space becomes a new devastated "landscape." The digital industry's capacity to exploit human data and privacy globally and enslave humanity to its technology will be far beyond any corporate abuse in history. It's not so much the resource that is in question, but the unregulated corporate greed that exploits it. These corporate interests don't care, even though they pretend to.

This brings much of the modern debate on climate change into serious question. What is driving it? Global bodies, like the UN and the WEF at Davos have been taken over by the interests of the private sector, especially by many of the world's largest monopolies and their huge offshore cash reserves. The last Davos summit on the climate had government and the world's top business owners meet together. This collusion between business and government is very concerning. The conflict of interests is massive.

One thousand five hundred private jets polluting the atmosphere, emitting CO<sub>2</sub>, flew into Davos in 2019 for emergency discussions on climate change. None of these discussions dealt in any serious way with industrial farming, GMO's, or synthetic poisons that kill the life in the world's soils, freshwaters, and oceans, and prevent carbon dioxide sequestering. Though industrial animal farming is a leading cause of global disease outbreak, no serious action is taken to revert to holistic farming. The interests of this industry are too well represented at these summits. The only "solutions" they come up with are new patented technologies, which often have nothing to do the natural long-proven processes of regeneration.

Bill Gates speaks publicly of cattle as one of our main climate enemies. Many researchers connected to vested interests attempt to support this. Two solutions Gates has launched are "false meat" products for human food, and lab-cultured "breast-milk" for babies, to eradicate the need for cow milk used in formulae. He says this will reduce our "carbon footprint." These two patents are worth billions of dollars. Solutions of this kind do nothing to address our problems while they increase the wealth of the world's richest 1% massively. Removing cattle from the farming grid and relying even more on synthetic chemicals is a

recipe for global disaster. However, monopolies sponsor the non-objective scientific research that comes out in their favour, promoting their destructive farming methods. This is a private takeover of public bodies that are supposed to represent us all, justly, without monetary influence.

Environmental discussions held in forums like Davos are disingenuous and dangerous. The hope of better outcomes for family, life, health, and the environment lie in reconciliation with our neighbours and with our natural environment. Davos pays lip-service to this, while the aim is market control. The last time I listened to the WEF, CEO's spoke of struggling farmers needing digital connectivity for satellite weather apps. This serves the interests of Microsoft, not of poor families. Impoverishment in India due to GMO crops led to the suicide of thousands of farmers, while digital innovations were to set India up for its failed cash-cancelling experiment of 2016 that hit the poorest even harder. (See the activism of Doctor Vandana Shiva.) Meanwhile in Bangladesh, vaccinations have already been used to install a digital identity marker in each person, which will allow for a range of "personal data services." The goal here is the commercialisation of personal data and transactions globally: a massive industry. Apps and new technologies can help people, but they can't replace the fundamentals of nature, and they must not be controlled by monopolies or forced upon populations.

We invited a team from America to come and teach us and some of CFM's staff and missionaries on regenerative farming practices. This American mission team is linked to the well-known Ecuador missionary martyrs of the 1950's, where the murderers later came to faith and were restored to the families of the missionaries whom they killed. This American team have visited CFM frequently with teams of different technicians to pass on their skills to the missionaries of CFM. They came in early 2020 and gave us valuable lessons in creating and utilising natural fertilizers. This helps our farms in the initial stages of regeneration, until the soils are more fully repaired.

In 2018 we completed a massive earthen dam structure across a seasonal stream just below Wurin Alheri. Due to good wet season rainfalls, this water reservoir is large, extending back from the wall almost one kilometre. When we were planning this dam we thought about its location. I remember thinking to put it in a place where our "enemies" couldn't tamper with it. This kind of exclusion contributes to making violence a self-fulfilled prophecy. We must include all our neighbours. We visited all local ethnic groups and asked how this dam could best help them, and the dam was located after consulting with all, to supply irrigation for dry-season crop farmers, for small industries that need water, for Fulani cattle herds and for the Wurin Alheri site. In 2020 a diesel pump and waterline were installed to bring water from the dam one kilometre to the top of the Wurin Alheri site, where it is used to supply CFM's farms in the dry season: six months with no rain.

In late January 2020, in dry season when fodder supply is low, we went into full scale "bridgebuilding" by inviting Fulani from Bisichi to bring their cattle to feed on our Wurin Alheri site. We have believed for a long time it is unneighbourly to let grass grow on portions of our land and not let cattle access it, but just let it waste. This kind of unneighbourly behaviour festers resentment, exploding into violence later. Even simple

things like greeting strangers on the road is the kind of “warfare” that we found so essential when conflict was at the darkest point. This is what we learned in earlier years from Jesus’ comment about people greeting their friends but not their enemies. He said even the pagans do this. But this isn’t yet the love of God. Jesus was teaching about the inclusiveness that is essential for climbing out of violence and sustaining peace. This “greeting” Jesus referred to is a parable for caring for strangers, for neighbourliness towards our enemies.

Other locals and some security personnel were not in favour of the step we were taking. They spoke of the danger involved. But our leaders decided to press on. It is more dangerous not to take the step of inclusion. In February and March cattle came on to our site every night to sleep. The Fulani chose the area right in the middle of the site to camp, surrounded by hundreds of Christians every night, because they felt that was the most secure for them. They trusted us. This built our relationship as we conversed over the next two months. By the time the cattle left, a large area had been saturated with urine and manure, mixed all through the top layer of soil, trampled in by cattle hooves. We gathered up many mounds of manure to use around the whole site during farming season. The value of this fertilizer was significant at market rates but was given to us completely free.

When the rains came, we began to plant. The land was not ploughed, because we had learned that ploughing breaks down the microbial subsoil life, even compacting the soil. Our farming leader (also a CFM pastor) and his team dug small holes, put in a mix of cow and chicken manure, lime and the seeds. Almost free. The crops there took off, with an abundant harvest of corn. Last year the soil of this main field was dead, the crop not worth harvesting. This year we reduced our chemical fertilizer to one quarter, and the harvest went up to the level top farms in northern Nigeria would experience. People noticed the amazing change and came around asking how this had happened. This was after only one intervention from the cattle. Mushrooms are coming up in large quantities all through the field, showing the soil improvement and the life returning. Even though we used manure in seed holes, the areas where the soil had been most improved by the cattle were the best. With more cattle on more of the site over the next dry season, manure in seed holes may not be even be needed and we will soon be weaned entirely off the chemicals.

It’s strange what we call “alternative.” We are embarking on “alternative farming methods,” they say. No, the synthetic chemicals are the alternative, sucking the life from the soil. Building life into the soil is the basic, correct way to farm.

Meanwhile we were also working on a pig farm. Ruth, with the help of ITEC USA (mentioned earlier) learned a little about deep bed pig farming. A concrete floor, needing cleaning every day with a lot of water and chemical cleaners, with regular antibiotic infusions for the animals, are done away with using this method. When using a concrete floor you get myriads of flies and the stench of the pigs is terrible, even from a distance. And the cleaning and disinfecting of the concrete every day is a lot of work. Septic pits for the wash-off from the pig pens require constant maintenance. Instead we have a composting pig pen floor.

About half a metre depth of soil is removed from the pens. Corn stalks form the base, next a layer of dried grass, with some lime and salt, followed by sawdust laid up to floor level.

Some pig droppings are removed, left to soak in water for a few weeks, then a little of this is sprayed over the pig pen deep litter beds initially to encourage composting to begin. The pigs love it. It's natural habitat for them, snorting and digging through the floor, mixing their urine and manure through by the digging. There is no smell, no flies and the pigs are happy and healthy, because the manure and urine are broken down in the compost. No antibiotics are needed and no chemical cleaning agents, which are polluting and costly. After one year, all this compost comes out and is spread on our farms, further enriching our soil, while new bedding is laid. Other pigs farmers are visiting to learn, amazed by the lack of smell, noise, and flies, and at the simplicity, seeing the advantages. It's a loss for the chemical industries and a big win for rebuilding local soil wealth, putting the money back into local pockets.

We dug a fishpond into the earth. Grass grows through the edges of the water keeping it fresh for longer. An earthen pond stays warmer at night. Thousands of fish are thriving. The water is emptied on to the farms, providing a very rich source of fertilizer, which we spread through our fruit orchards and vegetable farms. We use chicken fertilizer the same way, mixed with sawdust to make rich compost. The chickens provide eggs for our crisis-care children and for the market, and meat when they are finished (old layers are the favourite chicken meat here,) and enriching manure to our soils. The soils in turn grows feed for the pigs, fish, and chickens.

Both our fertilizer costs and our feed costs plummet. Our treatment costs for all our animals fall also. They are much healthier feeding on our local ecosystem. A blow for monopolies, a big gain for local community building. Weeds are disappearing from our grassed areas while useful insects and birdlife are returning. The presence of good insects helps to keep harmful insects in check. Crops are much better protected by this ecosystem. This is all happening in a very short time cycle so far. It starts working as soon as we get the animal/ soils, crop cycle working. This keeps building. Costs approach zero, and food supply goes beyond anything known in recent decades.

In 2020 we have also begun with goats, in partnership with Zoetis, an international vet pharmaceutical company based in Ireland. A veterinary friend in Australia contacted Zoetis, already running a philanthropy project, to ask if they could conduct a cattle veterinary clinic at Wurin Alheri, as a way of reaching out to our Fulani friends. Our Fulani neighbours have suffered loss among their cattle. Zoetis agreed to help and since then together we have conducted surveys to learn the main issues for cattle and sheep health among our Fulani neighbours. The Fulani are excited and fully cooperative. Professionals who helped said they have never met such trusting Fulani before. Their chief said it is because they know CFM will not exploit them with poor products. They learned this from our medical centre. Just to show how easy relationships are to heal. Zoetis and CFM set up a WebEx conference with experts from different universities in UK, Australia, and Nigeria, and with Fulani and crop farmers at Wurin Alheri, all involved together, with one of CFM's team translating.

At this WebEx conference we realised how knowledgeable the Fulani are about animal diseases. Working with an entomologist from Vom Veterinary Research Centre near Jos, CFM collected data from 100 herders mostly from Barkin Ladi. When asked of the leading problems the number one response was the chemicals used on the crop farms are poisoning

the cattle. The Zoetis experts agreed that the Fulani understand this well and are correct in their diagnoses of poisoning. Another issue CFM addressed among our crop farmer neighbours was the burning of their crop residue each year. This burning was done in the past only selectively, where cattle would not graze on crop residue. Fulani would come with their cows and help farmers harvest their crops before allowing the cows to eat what was left. In those days, crop farmers also had some cows and sheep and grazed together with Fulani. Now farmers burn after the harvest to stop Fulani from grazing on the residue. We are advocating for this practice of burning grass, weeds, and crop residue stop. Burning takes away the soil's cover, kills underground roots that benefit soil, and leaves soil open to erosion and loss of fertility. Soil needs to be covered with protective "clothing," or "skin," like any living organism does.

Zoetis also wanted us to raise goats for widows. One male and three female goats are given to local vulnerable families, and they give the first kid of each doe back to CFM, to raise more small herds for more vulnerable families. The giving keeps going all through our regional communities. All will benefit from this: wealth is building for our Fulani and crop farmer neighbours, for vulnerable families, even for CFM, and it brings us all together.

We share together also in the farming process. Hausa (Muslim) neighbours are good at cutting grass, because it is a tradition that goes back a long way with them. If we used machinery for this, we would miss the opportunity for neighbourliness. They come to our site and we pay them to cut grass which we store under our pig shed roof. The grass dries quickly and then is rolled into bales and stacked. More cut grass is put into the roof for drying. This gives us low costs feed for the dry season, a much cheaper way to feed the goats. The grass is nutritious because it comes from fields with improving soils. It builds our relationships between Wurin Alheri and our Muslim Hausa neighbours.

This is what we mean by all the community being involved in the agricultural process. If "children are for all of us" (our joint responsibility and joy, as mentioned above,) then so too is farming for all of us, to benefit together. Our different ethnic and faith groups need to find ways to share in the challenges and joys of farming as one community, watching out for the farming or herding needs of each other and helping. This alone can build the agricultural ecosystems that will benefit us all. This way farming builds community and cohesion, and everyone benefits from it. It is far better than our highly mechanised ways of farming, which separate us all, and even separate us from the soil. Farming must build community, not build individualism. And it must bring us back to the soil, which is the golden goose. Now we know the condition of the Fulani cattle and help solve their problems (like foot and mouth disease) because this also solves our farming problems. This is better than fighting. It's the best form of "reciprocation." This is how farming communities are meant to work.

Ruth has been working closely with our Zoetis friends in setting all this up. One part of their research includes sustainability studies. Ruth has been explaining how the whole system of sustainability works here, through building the relationships that build our ecosystems and build our local wealth and thus also peace. It enables us to grow financially and to each pay the school fees for our children. This is what normal aid programs don't do. Genuine aid must be something that brings about this grassroots democratic sharing and brings wealth

and resilience back to the local community. To achieve this, extractive business interests must be weaned out. Then aid and external businesses that have a genuine purpose to build local interests can help. There must be sincere care and respect for each other and for our diverse knowledge and contributions.

A Zoetis director wrote to Ruth about CFM's sustainably approach: "Thanks so much... this is exactly the sort of information we were hoping to generate in this exercise, and you understand sustainability better than most people at Zoetis! Looking forward to discussing further... I am proud to be involved and pitch in to this project and the work you do. When the rest of my Zoetis work is causing me frustration, this project and your work in the community puts it in to perspective for me."

As I said above, 2020 has been the first farming season, possibly for two decades, in which there has not been one case of killing locally due to conflict on the farms between herders and crop farmers. These are proven techniques for rebuilding soil fertility, output, local wealth, local relationships, and peace. It's simply turning from our selfish ways of individualism and separation (which reaches a pinnacle in monopolies) towards community with sincerity. This is sustainable spread-out wealth: wealth in the soil and wealth that won't be taken away by violence or by the market and price manipulation.

The director of CFM's farm knows first-hand what Barkin Ladi, which has been a hotbed of conflict in recent years, was once like. He grew up there before synthetic chemical use became widespread in the region. They had good relationships with the Fulani in those days. They used crop rotation and cattle to fertilise their farms. They also used inter-cropping, planting two crops together to provide different nutrients to the soil. This is not to be confused with Moses' prohibition of farming two kinds of crops together. That was about two species of one kind of grain (like wheat or barley,) resulting in sterile seed impoverishing their farms, like mating a donkey and a horse to get a sterile mule. The stipulation was to protect them against poor farming techniques that would bring poverty to their children, such as we have seen today. Barkin Ladi formerly had abundant harvests. Today, poverty in farming conditions and violence has taken over the region, with much killing and heartache. He is very happy to be directing CFM's farms, returning to what has been known by his people for centuries, rebuilding the environment. He has a lot of hope, not just for farming, but for the forests, wildlife, and barren lands.

In the 2020 lockdown, the children in our Jos crisis-care home farmed all available space. They were given our cow and chicken manure and raised up the best vegetables we have yet seen, all completely fertilizer and pesticide free. The older children taught the younger children how to do it. When you see this you know there is hope for our future. We even had excess cow manure for a second field of corn. All free. Soon our first new corn crops will be harvested. Then the cattle will come into our land for two weeks and eat the corn stalk residue, while urinating and spreading manure for our tomato farm which will follow them. Then at Christmas, after the tomato harvest, the cows will return to sleep at night for a couple of months. By God's grace, we will manage the soils as they keep getting richer each year.

Even our aquifer is improving. As we plant more fruit trees (now over 1,000 fruit trees on site) their roots penetrate the ground, making it more permeable to water. After having cattle on our land at Wurin Alheri for only two months at night we also observed softer soil. The hoof action broke up the soil and mixed in the cover crop organic matter. We might think cattle would compact the soil, but their hoofs did the opposite. When land is left undisturbed by herds for long periods in our region, it becomes hardened and grass growth starts to diminish in quality. The improved microbial and fungal life in Wurin Alheri's soil has already made it more permeable. More of our seasonal annual rainfall now filters through to our underground natural storage rather than washing away our topsoil. We have already noticed the improvement in one of our boreholes during dry season, just from the fruit trees planted before, even with an increased population on our Wurin Alheri site. Population isn't our problem in the Sahel. Neither is fresh clean water our problem, but our wholesale adoption of "modern farming techniques" and our abandonment of traditional wise practices.

Some have said they want the Fulani sectioned off into ranches with their cattle, like in "modern nations." Please, no! We don't want that. "Modern" farms are failing. This mono-ethnic and mono-agricultural system is deadly for soils, for health, for climate, for global relationships and for local wealth. It is a disaster of massive proportions and touches every emergency issue the UN speaks of. We want to live with the Fulani. Without them our farms are doomed. We just have to learn to live with others, something we have always resisted, since I was a child, when I argued about my toys. This is life. We learn how to live together, or we die.

Now, for the first time, we have a comprehensive system that makes sense of economics, agriculture, environment, community, and peace all at once. This is how things are supposed to be, working together as a sustaining whole. Individualism or monopolisation of any part breaks down the whole creational intent. As I write, we are harvesting our first corn after reintroducing cattle on our land. Last year we received one bag of useless corn from one of our main fields. After rejuvenating the soil for two months, with cattle walking and sleeping on the field each night, this year we have harvested 100 bags of good quality corn off the same field. In addition, left over manure was transferred to a different field on Wurin Alheri, for a harvest of more corn, and also used on 40+ rich organic vegetable plots planted by our crisis-care children, without the need of chemical fertilizers, for free.

And not one death in farmer conflict in our region. And this is just the start. Allan Savory emailed Ruth and I, speaking of these regenerative farming techniques, "With all the conflict in the country (Nigeria) costing their economy, by their own estimate, unbelievable millions of dollars annually, it is time they did more as a country. It is such a beautiful country that could be playing a major role in Africa."

## Restoring Health & Development

When the Covid-19 crisis broke out and spread to Italy, Spain, and the UK we were perplexed as to what this “pandemic” would come to. Nigeria has experienced serious epidemics, like Ebola, and Lassa Fever, and knows how to handle such outbreaks. Both these diseases are much more deadly than Covid-19, both on Britain’s list of High Consequence Infectious Diseases, while Covid-19 was taken off this list in March 2020. We were shocked by the draconian lockdowns in country after country, following the style of totalitarian China. I lived through a worse flu outbreak in 1968 - 1969, which killed millions of people. I caught the flu in that outbreak, and it was very potent, but there was none of the alarmism associated with Covid-19 today. Our thought on Covid-19 at the start was that it would go through the population, and that the vulnerable should be protected. When they locked down the whole population, we knew the impact this would have on the poor everywhere. It was a measure to protect those who could live comfortably with lockdown.

And this is what happened in Nigeria. People totally dependent on wages or daily labour were locked up at home without any money for daily living. The fear generated by the global press caused hospitals to shut down so the virus wouldn’t spread in those facilities. Millions of people who needed medications and surgeries for other conditions much worse than Covid-19 were left with nothing and many died. The poverty level of the country rose significantly over the lockdown period. Though the virus killed very few people, schools were shut and are still closed as I write this at the end of September, though it has been clear for months that this virus is not a danger to the nation. Already over 10.5 million children in Nigeria have no chance to attend school. This lockdown means that most of the other children have missed a whole year of school and many of their teachers are without pay. They cannot learn online, receive government bailouts, or have Amazon deliver their favourite books to read. And yet the WHO ensures the nation follows these rigorous lockdown measures that are clearly doing far more harm than good. The dictatorial nature of the WHO has been the biggest shock, taking health completely out of the hands of the doctor/ patient relationship, something that hasn’t been done since Nazi Germany.

Early in the Nigerian Covid-19 experience we heard some people express their response to the crisis in biblical apocalyptic terms. 5G and Bill Gates were described as the beast and the coming vaccine as the mark of the beast. It wasn’t only Christians who saw it this way. This shocked us at first. It seemed incredible, especially to those of us who live in better conditions. This “pandemic” has exposed a marked distinction, in many ways, between the elite and others. One of those ways is that in elitism, those qualified to speak are carefully selected, and the others are discounted, even mocked. But we began to see that if those who are accustomed to the oppression of global corruption reach into the biblical apocalyptic narrative to express their pain, then this isn’t a voice to be discredited. This voice has more “data” behind it than “accredited mainline voices.” If people have had years of experience of monopolies ruining local businesses and of pharmaceutical companies using them as guinea pigs in testing new drugs and vaccines, profiting from them through exorbitant prices for patented drugs, pushing for the abortion of their children rather than

the repair of their communities, then it is no wonder they dip into the only language they have to express their sufferings: and biblical language was written to just this kind of people for this reason, to give them hope of God's justice, which is real, if not in this life, then certainly in the next. So, our response changed, from despising the poor, to judging ourselves. We still have no respect for "gospel ministers" who use apocalyptic themes to scare parishioners and manipulate them to their own advantage. That is another matter.

The next thing we heard was some hope that hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) may help those suffering from Covid-19 to recover. This was from Chinese hospital reports and from treatment carried out by the highly qualified and experienced Doctor Didier Raoult. We heard that HCQ was shown to be effective in animal tests for SARS1. This news came as people were dying in large numbers in the UK, and yet the authorities banned the use of HCQ on the basis that "it is a dangerous drug." This was a shock because we know through years of experience it is not dangerous. The drug has been used for over six decades, with billions of doses given out over the counter all over the world. But stories were put out, like people drinking disinfectant, to make any person taking non-approved drugs look a fool. A herbal cocktail made in Madagascar in genuine laboratory conditions, based on the plant *Artemisia annua*, was said to help towards Covid-19 sufferers. *Artemisia annua* had long been suppressed by the WHO because it is a cheap and highly effective treatment for malaria, better than approved pharmaceutical company drugs which are expensive. We couldn't understand why the WHO was bending over backwards to ban the use of proven drugs for Covid-19 sufferers who couldn't afford expensive treatments like ventilators, that have since proven to be dangerous. And why not give a very cheap, non-patented drug (like HCQ) to those dying when there is no other hope? The bans just didn't make any sense. There was a distinct demeaning of African and Asian knowledge and contribution. The suspension of doctors for healing their patients with HCQ, just like doctors have been suspended for refusing on conscience to abort babies, shows again that we resemble Nazism.

But as the crisis has continued the potency of HCQ in treating Covid-19 has been established as a scientific fact. Since the early days of this "pandemic" HCQ has been used by thousands of doctors. Highly qualified scientists and doctors in many nations have fully endorsed it. Scores of valid scientific tests have been carried out to show its efficacy. Thousands of the most vulnerable patients have been cured by its use. Study after study, doctor after doctor, specialist after specialist, bear this out, but to quote just one: Dr. Harvey Risch, Professor of Epidemiology at the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Yale School of Public Health and Yale School of Medicine, claims he has never seen more scientific evidence for a drug in his whole career than for HCQ in treating Covid-19. He said it would save tens of thousands of lives in America alone, if used. He said its rejection is entirely political and has nothing to do with science. "The evidence is overwhelming showing HCQ is effective for high risk patients. It is beyond question." Statements like this have extremely serious implications. Studies attempting to prove the case against HCQ, published in leading scientific journals, were later rescinded, found to be fake. One published by the Lancet was based on fraudulent data. Others used incorrect protocols. Leaders of journals, like the

Lancet and the New England Journal of Medicine, have been filmed in private meetings stating that their journals have been reduced to advertising outlets for pharmaceutical companies and the science is no longer for the public good. (France 24 News.) We wondered why this happened.

Then we learned of the vested interests in organisations like the WHO. Pharmaceutical companies have overwhelming influence in its health policies. In the Swine Flu outbreak in 2009, the WHO changed its definition of “pandemic” to force Western nations to invest fortunes in a Swine Flu vaccine largely not required or used, making massive profits for the pharmaceutical companies. When the first study came out in favour of HCQ in treating Covid-19, the value of Gilead (the company that produces the extremely expensive, WHO approved but far less effective drug remdesivir) fell by \$21 billion. Several officials in the American health service have financial connections to Gilead. Dr Anthony Fauci (Chief Pandemic Advisor in the US) has financial connections to the Wuhan (China) laboratory that was conducting “gain of function” research on patented coronaviruses at the time of the outbreak, which began in Wuhan. Studies done on large numbers of people show that recent flu vaccines increase the chances of being infected with a coronavirus, which according to experts like Immunologist Professor Dolores Cahill, could lead to cytokine storms in elderly people. Bill Gates has invested huge amounts of money in major media outlets, research institutes and regulatory advisory bodies, with heavy interests in the new technologies he is pushing. We saw that the vested interests in this “pandemic” are massive and that there is no regulation by the government to prevent this kind of investment or control. Why would such a thing happen? One reason is that the pharmaceutical industry is the number one lobbyist of government in the world. If these interests are causing thousands of people to die because HCQ and other effective protocols have been banned or silenced, then this would be criminal. Where is the independence in our public health bodies?

Then the obvious question that comes up is why governments would allow this to happen. Are our governments really pawns of these strong industries? We began to find out that yes, they are. The research of many leading economists shows this to be the case. Thomas Piketty, in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, shows that governments today form a global oligarchy. Prabhat Patnaik, Professor Emeritus at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, shows that if this capitalist oligarchy isn't restructured it will lead to fascism. We could quote many others. In 1992, Prime Minister John Major found the UK was powerless to defend its currency in the face of global traders. The international flow of finance is now so large its movements in and out of nations controls their economy. Nations have lost their sovereignty. This loss of sovereignty now extends to any matter in which global capital presses. This fact along with government corruption (large interchange of career opportunities between government and corporate positions) ensures that governments only serve the interests of their electorates to the extent that international private sector forces allow them. This is regardless of their campaign promises and regardless of whether the government is “left” or “right.” Here is just one example of the “musical chairs” between government and monopolies, reported in the Telegraph: the Chief Scientific

Adviser of the UK for its Covid-19 response, Sir Patrick Vallance, was formerly President of Glaxo-Smith Kline, the company now working on a coronavirus vaccine. He was given shares in the company valuing today at £6.1 million. If this is why lockdown is advised and HCQ is banned, then implications are very serious indeed. It used to be illegal for such a conflict of interests to exist. The fact that such is allowed shows something is very wrong.

The danger of monopolies is their ability to influence government through their control of global wealth. Stefania Vitali, James Glattfelder and Stefano Battiston in *The Network of Global Corporate Control*, show that corporate interrelationships significantly centralise control of global wealth. In 2011, Roger Altman, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury under President Clinton claimed that financial markets were “acting like a global supra-government... they have become the most powerful force on earth.” Today’s economic collapse in lockdown hasn’t affected the elite. Leading billionaires have increased their personal wealth by more than a trillion dollars in 2020. The New York stock market has hit record levels, while economies have gone into recession and millions into unemployment. Just as in the 2008 crash, the rich are corruptly handed massive bailouts while poverty increases for the working class and developing nations. We can now see two economies, one for the rich in speculative assets, while investment in the real economy declines. (See Ioannis Varoufakis.) This increased level of speculative funding drives up housing prices for the lower income earners and drives down the currencies, wages, and savings of millions of people in weaker nations. It’s a massive theft of wealth from the poor to the rich and has been justified by “trickledown economics,” the false claim that deregulating the economy allows it to naturally lift the poor. The Great Reset of the World Economic Forum is a planned economic restructuring that requires “crises” to accelerate. Nations signed on to this Great Reset again at the Davos Conference in 2019. The speaker of the British House of Commons, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, recently said that lockdown should be extended to turn around climate change, deliberately tanking the economy even further. The elite prosper in an economic collapse they claim is for the common good.

So, today, if these corporate powers wish to restructure our economies, to further control labour markets, to close or buy smaller corporations and assume market control, and if they wish to profit from future pharmaceutical plans and new digital technologies, health passports, cashless economy, then governments are largely powerless to stop them. The pharmaceutical industry is the most profitable industry in the world. Emerging digital technologies, such as ID2020 and data collection through 5G, if they go global and are enforced, will be even more profitable and at the same time more controlling of populations and of our life choices. And if, in the midst of this, the draconian measures of China are held up by the press as our only hope in our current health scare, then the system works according to their plan. When we “follow the money” (as the wisdom goes), this is where it leads. We are now used to being herded like sheep. When we are in debt and our jobs are threatened, we are very easy to corral.

However, in 2020 we heard many experts who didn’t support this “herd narrative.” Most of the Covid-19 deaths are elderly; not as many elderly died in 2019 as normal, meaning more

than usual numbers of elderly people were vulnerable in 2020; death figures “for Covid” have been manipulated; the death rate from Covid-19 for infected persons is possibly as low as 0.02%; the most dangerous places for the spread of the deadly infection was in poorly equipped infectious disease hospital wards and poorly protected nursing homes due to poor investment, a result of austerity enforced by neo-liberalist governments; herd immunity is a better strategy given other coronaviruses, T-cell and other forms of immunity already in our communities; questions about PCR testing and associated scare-mongering; the constant lie that we need social distancing because we have no cure. “We know it’s curable. It’s easier to treat than flu.” (Professor Thomas Borody, St. Vincent’s Hospital Sydney, Mayo Clinic New York.) HCQ protocols; Ivermectin, Doxycycline and Zinc; inhaled steroids; intravenous Vitamin C (used successfully in China, which we saw from a review of their hospital testament records) just to name a few. Early treatment is key.

See Professor Sunetra Gupta, Professor of Theoretical Epidemiology, the University of Oxford; Professor Carl Heneghan, Director, Centre for Evidence Based Medicine, and his colleague Doctor Tom Jefferson; Professor Karol Sikora Consultant Oncologist and Professor of Medicine, University of Buckingham. They wrote an open letter to the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, urging him that lockdown is not required and is harmful. In this letter they estimated that 60,000 people will die in the UK from cancer, because they weren’t able to receive treatment during the lockdown. This is just one health condition. Also see data presented by Ivor Cummins, Biochemical Engineer. We learnt that Professor Michael Levitt, a biophysicist, and Nobel Prize winner, of Stanford University, demonstrated prior to UK’s lockdown in March 2020 that Imperial College’s prediction of 500,000 Covid-19 deaths in the UK was wrong by a multiple of ten, but was ignored. The same staff at Imperial had been drastically wrong in previous “pandemic” predictions. Levitt was proved correct. However, Imperial’s model is still guiding government strategies.

Something is wrong when these issues are silenced, when governments invest more in surveillance and personal protective equipment (PPE) for police to enforce draconian measures than they do in PPE for nurses who care for the sick. Government should soften its hand, take up a more caring strategy. Current government policies look like draconian neo-liberalism enforcing its economic will while destroying the businesses of many people. Governments have been lying, suppressing the full truth about Covid-19 to introduce curfews, separate children from their friends, arrest and detain people indefinitely, place masses of people under virtual house arrest, arrest and mischaracterise peaceful protesters, authorise “brownshirts” in communities with police powers to arrest the public just on suspicion to hold without charge, separate people from dying family members, make it unlawful to leave Australia, torture people in a kind of solitary confinement and cut them off from social touch with other humans. Governments with no genuine transparency or public accountability, introducing forms of Nazism we would never have previously thought possible. Constitutional rights have been suspended in many nations. This is far too risky to tolerate from this oligarchy, no matter the reason. People should be treated instead like adults. Former Premier of Victoria in Australia, Jeff Kennett, said never before in Australia, during war or peace, has the Westminster form of government been so threatened.

So, what can we do about this? There are three suggestions here, similar to those we covered in the previous chapter. First, our eyes need to be open about the world we live in. It is corrupt and its narrative favours the rich. It's the same story we see in the Revelation, the apocalyptic text about the oppression of the poor by the elite of Rome and Jerusalem in the first century. The people were advised by Christ to take medicine for their eyes, rather than, first of all for our bodies, that they might see. "You say you are rich but are poor (blind.)" (Rev 3:18) They were called to identify with the rejected, as Christ did. We live in similar apocalyptic times. While we fascinate ourselves with the latest gizmos of our "progressive technologies," we are increasingly enslaved in an impersonal society in which we aren't allowed to think freely. We need to wake up and value the kingdom of God instead. In past times when power and wealth dominated a corrupt landscape, monks took to their prayer rooms to rediscover the truth and shared it in renewing communities. We may not be literal monks today, but we must follow their path back home.

Second, our hope lies in redeveloping genuine healthy conditions, in building ecosystems and food systems that nourish our bodies and immune systems instead of turning our selves more and more into nations of people with "co-morbidities." If we rely of the coronavirus vaccine, "voluntarily" accepted through social and professional coercion, we put ourselves at ever increasing risk. They will do to us what GMO's and pesticides have done to our environment. The new mRNA technology employed in the coming coronavirus vaccine is untested. It manipulates our DNA the same way GMO's do in plants. This puts us on the wrong path, where we look for biotechnology to solve our problems, leading us more and more away from our humanness into artificial intelligence as our hope. All the interventions of the WHO against Covid-19, locking us inside, separating us from other people, the wearing of masks, and the reliance on yearly flu and coronavirus vaccines, when applied to the population as a whole, lead to further breakdown of our immune systems and vulnerability to outbreaks in the future. We can't say the science supports these measures, because many scientists, ignored by government and media, say otherwise. Experts such as Professor Sunetra Gupta and Swedish experts, are ignored and misrepresented, and many leading world experts are censored by falsely so-called "independent fact-checkers." Rebuilding natural ecosystems, returning to healthier levels of deurbanization, establishing natural farming, producing healthy food, will fortify us against future outbreaks of infectious diseases. Medical interventions are necessary, but they cannot replace our natural systems of health. These natural systems must be rebuilt as our priority.

As mentioned in the previous chapter there are many factors in farming ecosystems that benefit, until the ecosystem gets out of balance and a monoculture sets in. A diversity of plants builds diversity in insect life, meaning one insect is unlikely to dominate and cause a plague. Diseases also can become more prevent in animals when biodiversity is lacking, and one virus becomes dominant. Then we become more reliant on vaccines. The human body contains multiple bacteria and viruses that form positive roles, but a problem may occur when their normal relationships break down. The RNA of SARS2 is similar to human RNA and one mystery is why SARS2 is harmful to some people and harmless to most. Crops, animals,

and humans are related in how we seek to build healthier conditions for viruses and bacteria to work for our good. If we just default to the “kill syndrome,” we may not be rebuilding the health foundations we need. It’s hitting the balance between Louis Pasteur and Antoine Bechamp.

Third, and this follows more closely with the previous chapter, the important solution is the development of local economies of health, rather than allowing monopolies to exploit our local economies and leave us impoverished. Ideally, we need collaboration between international and local scientists and laboratories in the discovery and use of effective medicines, especially from local plant life. About 70% of modern pharmaceutical products come from natural plants. This knowledge needs to be further developed in a way that profits local communities and not global monopolies. Governments need to intervene for this to happen, to reverse monopolistic power.

But we don’t wait for governments to do this. It won’t be easy in our current global economic climate. Governments certainly need everything we can do to encourage them in this direction. But meanwhile there are other things we can do. If we are medical practitioners, we can look for treatments, wherever possible, that steer patients towards drugs developed and sold more justly. We can support those industries that are local, where possible, or those industries that are trying to break through the monopoly stranglehold. Support the David, not the Goliath.

This year CFM contacted Professor Noel Wannang, of the department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Science, University of Jos, Nigeria. He is the Lead Researcher, Plateau State Research Team on COVID-19 & Other Infectious Diseases. He is also the Director of General Studies University of Jos & Secretary General of West African Post Graduate College of Pharmacists. In developing a prophylactic and therapeutic remedy for Covid-19, Professor Wannang and his team “went into a herbal search, conducted in silico studies (a study performed on computer or via computer simulation) and obtained an array of about a 100 different plant materials taking into consideration the phytochemical properties of these plants. Eventually, 13 plants with excellent antiviral properties were selected. These 13 plants were further subjected to other analysis and it was discovered that 10 of them could be used in the treatment of microbes including viruses such as COVID. Combinatorial analyses were carried out for the 10 plants, and the team came out with 3 combinations of agents that could be used for the treatment. Another formulation called Netizen, which can be used as herbal tea was also discovered.” (From an interview conducted with CFM.) This treatment is in stage four of clinical trials.

Professor Wannang spoke of ways in which research bodies can collaborate to further this science. This is his earnest desire, and he and many others are well-qualified to enter into this collaboration. Presently, economic structures work to suppress local research that doesn’t directly profit the major corporations that syphon off wealth from African and other nations.

Last year CFM started a nursery that raises up trees from seedlings to plant around Wurin Alheri and nearby locations. It's part of our desire to see the local environment and ecosystems restored. This year we have also started a herbery, to raise up local herbs that are commonly authorized for medical treatments. This enables local people to have treatments they can afford, that are also tested and approved for the correct doses, reducing mishaps from self-medication. As monopolistic systems push these local treatments out of our hospitals it means millions of people take these treatments in self-medication. By including these in the approved system of health in our nations we have the following advantages:

- Appropriate dosage at safe levels are provided with good educational backing for patients.
- It allows patients to be treated at prices they can afford, rather than being priced out by unaffordable patented products.
- It develops local knowledge of plants that otherwise wouldn't be available to the international community. Vitaly important discoveries for health breakthroughs could be made here, that monopolies currently restrict.
- It enables the local economy to grow because local resources are being accessed and turned into local wealth on the global markets.

Africa doesn't need philanthropy as much as it needs this kind of market justice and genuine collaboration. Global forces must be made to stop treading local regions under their feet and instead to work for the good of us all. We will all profit from this, locally and internationally. As each region prospers it contributes to the economy and contributes to our overall health services. Stifling local regions while supporting them only in part in philanthropy is a crime against us all, but especially against the weakest.

In Nigeria, as in most of the world, hospitals operate under the strong influence of pharmaceutical companies majorly owned by the global monopolies. The training the doctors receive within this system and the treatments they offer to patients are those approved by the monopolies. Only drugs offered within this system have the approved testing to be allowed in this profession. It is said to be in the patient's interest, but it is also definitely to protect the interests of the pharmaceutical companies. This is where government regulatory independence is needed, without the lobbying from the industry, to ensure that all products that are good can go through the rigours of the testing processes and be accessed by patients at affordable prices.

Nigeria also allows "traditional" medicines to be legally sold to patients in other commercial outlets. But these are routinely demeaned. The pharmaceutical industry demeans them through its educational processes and advertising. It has tried to outlaw them, and has succeeded in some nations, but not in all. The culture also often imbibes the idea that only processed foods and medicines, from expensive companies, are sophisticated enough to be worthy of our use. There is a personal status in these expensive products that demeans local products that would lift their home economy. It's the same in dress fashion. It is media

driven exploitation. The local economy and its development always suffer as a result. Even pastors demean that which is local as “shamanism,” as backward, not knowing they are playing into the hands of those who would keep their nations down. These pastors fail to distinguish between shamanism and genuine herbal knowledge, demeaning both, all for prestige, to be honoured by those internationally who demean what they don’t know, often for the sake of economic dominance.

Just as we found in our previous chapter, a return to the simple things is what the kingdom of God is about. That is why it starts with a child. It is a return to the village, to the rural, to the soil, to that which is local and not of international repute. This is where our revival is. Chasing the esteemed will lead us further into exploitation and the destruction of our local environments. Our central values must change. We must put off the programming of our commercial world which benefits only the elites’ own pockets. Without doing this we cannot have peace. Peace can only come from justice, and justice must start from our hearts, from what we value.

CFM has the desire to combine both traditional medicines and those of our hospital pharmaceuticals, in a licensed and approved system of health that benefits from the best that we all have to offer. CFM desires to help prevent a monopolistic system from dominating our health services, so we can esteem each one, and have genuine fellowship in promoting the contribution that is good from all our nations and regions. We desire to bring down the prices for our patients. In doing this, we wish to promote the good that the local community has to offer, to promote the local economy, to promote affordable health, to promote the culture where patents don’t dominate human need, and where local medicines can be properly tested and approved scientifically so all people can benefit from them. We are praying that our relationship with Professor Wannang and many others we shall meet will lead us into a holistic health system, that is also economically holistic, that contributes towards local recovery and peace. We cannot have peace where monopolies exist. We can only have peace through mutual love, respect, contribution, and profit sharing in justice.

Holism is the way of the Torah. God gave “the leaves of the trees for the healing of the nations.” As we build our permanent hospital at Wurin Alheri, this is the future we wish to explore, and God willing, see unfold. This holism is one reason why scripture says God’s word is the source of health. God’s word (Christ himself) leads us to the relationships and environmental conditions that promote wellbeing. A materialistic philosophy has become a monopoly of thought in science today, causing us to reject the ethics that promote holism and peace. This system can’t end in health.

Remember, CFM’s aim all along is to understand underlying strategies that build peace. Isaiah’s message was that while the governments of his day thought draconian measures were the way to quell the public in a climate of injustice, rather, God advised the opposite: a softening of force and an increase in care to restore communities and family life. The kings then and governments in recent times claim that centralising power and wealth is the solution to global challenges. But the scriptures teach the opposite: as power and wealth

are decentralised then local communities and families have the resilience to meet crises and overcome them democratically. President Roosevelt broke up monopolies after the Great Depression, warning that concentrated wealth led to fascism. President Eisenhower also warned of an elitist technocracy that would take over government. Founding fathers of America warned that patents would build monopolies that would take away freedom as much as the East India Company of the UK had done to many.

The motivation driving CFM here is to look for ways that return ability to our remote regions. We are one people, so we cannot prosper in sustainability while these communities do not. We can see the flow of resources out of local communities to the Western nations, including a brain-drain of the best people. This is what Babylon did to its satellite regions, which was why Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon. Even the kings of Israel did this. The villages were stripped bare. The West is still a colonial empire that God wants to free the people from. Isaiah called this a “return from exile,” to rebuild local family in security. The West sucks out all the best doctors, while millions from their home nations have zero doctors. This cannot lead to peace. We must turn things around, so power and wealth flow back in the other direction, back into local regions. There must be a decentralisation. For medical crises like Covid-19 it means local communities having the infrastructure and freedom to handle the crisis in the best way for all concerned. Neo-liberalism will never allow this.

This is the form of government and economics the bible speaks of. God delivered Israel from the centralisation of power and wealth under Pharaoh’s rule. They came into the Wilderness, where they encamped around the tabernacle, in secure village scenes, replicating the image of God at their centre: a God who restores the slave from Egypt and calls his people to do the same for others. He decentralised power and wealth back to the poor, the refugee, the people at the margins. This was his witness to new creation. Ezekiel shows this new creation in apocalyptic, symbolic terms. Gog and Magog are the powers of injustice, the elite of Jerusalem and Rome in the first century. The twelve tribes camped around the temple are the new Israel, people who share peace and security in decentralisation: no big man, corporation, or nation at the top: no stealing by a central economic or political power, but people working out their lives in fellowship. The early church was a living witness to this. Their table of care, in which there was no Jew nor Greek, no slave nor free, no rich nor poor, no male nor female, shows this new economic vision of sharing. They sold their houses and cared for those in need. These values completely overcome the values we often hold today. This is the people of Ezekiel’s vision, and we see them again in the new heavens and new earth in Revelation 21 – 22. This is what CFM desires to live out, in practical ways, restoring these values to raped and destroyed regions.

## The Bible College 2020

The biggest shift for CFM during the years of crisis and our response was theological. The Lordship of Christ, God's incarnation in Christ and atoning work, the centrality of scripture remains solid, but the way we viewed these things took on much richer meaning. The cross of Christ became even more central to our lives. The transformation of focus in our theology was a move from individualism to community; and a move away from "escaping to heaven" to living as God's family of new creation on earth. Therefore, CFI (CFM's bible college,) became essential to training our leaders. All arms of CFM reflect these two theological foci, because without them we don't have a gospel of peace. Peace means we move from self to community and it means we embrace what Jesus taught about the rule of God on earth.

The book of Romans was one place where our shift began. We used to see it about our personal faith. Our theology really began with Paul and from there we reinterpreted what Jesus taught in the Gospels. This was why Jesus and Paul seemed to be different in their emphasis. But we had it wrong. Living through the same kind of turmoil that threatened communities of the first century, we began to understand that Paul was writing about new community, and our personal faith as the steppingstone into new family. Paul's objective was to show that in the church Jew and gentile became one, and this new relationship is the basis of forming new creation. As one, the barriers of rich/ poor, slave/ free, female/ male and our nationalism all break down. In serving each other, we move from exploitation to renewal and recovery. We who once destroyed our relationships and environment in greed now begin to fulfil our true Adamic commission in nurturing a God filled creation. Unlike Cain, we ARE our brother's keeper. If Christ showed us God's free acceptance in his cross, then we also can accept one another, even our enemies, for whom Christ died. In rejecting our neighbour, in spurning our enemies, we are rejecting God's acceptance of ourselves.

Our second lesson was in our view of atonement. We thought Jesus didn't teach a clear theology of atonement but left this to Paul. This is a strange position to hold, since Jesus is head of the church and atonement is central. But we slowly realised that the Sermon on the Mount shows how atonement was central to all Jesus taught. In this sermon he reoriented our understanding of what atonement meant. He shifted it from the traditional religious view that "God demands punishment or blood for contravening his law," to an offering of ourselves as a new act of peace to defeat the darkness that fills human hearts and communities. In the Old Covenant the priest offered animals or other humans. In the New Covenant the priest offers him or herself. This Jesus did and taught it for us to follow as the basis of new creation. The children of God (the peacemakers) share self-giving light to form community, just as God through his light formed the world. This self-giving light, as opposed to the darkness of pagan greed, is the true light of Christ. This was Paul's gospel, as in Romans 8 where the children of God restore creation, and in 2 Corinthians 3-5 where God shines light upon creation through our new community. This was Isaiah's vision of earth filled with God's new rule. We began to understand Paul's atonement theology better when we started with Christ's teaching.

Peace is of prime importance globally today, and peace efforts must have a strong biblical basis to succeed. The creation shows humans made in God's image, from which comes human rights, or the dignity of every individual. Humans were also made for community, which negates the individualism of identity politics. Paul put it like this: Christ has freed us to serve. In the Torah property is privately owned but not for selfish purposes, rather used to lift the poor and heal the community. Spirituality means social care. There is a balance between "left" and "right," a monetary morality that shares wealth and a sexual morality that protects family and community. God deals with our self-centredness, the "pharaoh" inside us, so we live for each other. This is how the individual battle for dignity is won. This is how we are freed. It's a theology that bases around creation and not self, a theology of life, all our lives and not just my own, and the life of the environment.

The teachings of Jesus about forgiveness, reconciliatory and redemptive acts that atone for injustice in our neighbourhoods and renew communities from our hostile past are crucial to a new creation of peace. The vertical and horizontal parts of the cross show not only that God holds nothing against us, but that we should treat each other the same way. Restorative justice rather than punitive justice come from a right understanding of the cross. The way God punished sin was to put himself in the middle of it, to take the evil we did to him, and then forgive it, freeing our hearts from its guilt. He allowed us to punish sin in him. He put an end to sin by exposing it by his cross, redeeming our conscience by his death, which revealed his forgiving love. That the divine should do this is the greatest guide in the universe towards peace. This shows us the principles of rebuilding ravaged communities. The only way we can reconcile earth, is to know earth is reconciled to a loving God and follow what he did. Our self-giving towards each other exposes our collective sin and reveals God's love for a renewed world.

The resurrection of Christ is the vindication of self-giving. Resurrection is the hope of justice when we don't take justice into our own hands, but trust in the one who made all things. The new values of the new kingdom shine immediately, when women, even a former prostitute, were the first to herald the new heavens and new earth by declaring, "He is risen." This herald came from no one important, but from "the least" of society. This is God's way. This way will make our relationships new. The resurrection shows the result to our communities when we take up our cross: our communities bloom with love and heal when we die to ourselves and live to one another. The hope of eternal life by the resurrection of our own bodies from the dead is the final victory of righteousness and justice. This display of God's character to his creation through Christ is the true peace and only on this ground can the church follow the ways that bring peace. It's essential that CFM has a forum in which this truth of Christ can be taught. This is the only sure building.

When we were building Wurin Alheri the bible college was the last department of CFM we focused on. With all the classrooms, offices, boarding hostels, dining area and library space it needed the cost would be too high. In addition, charities don't give grants to build a bible college. They usually don't see a bible college as vital, or the grants come from secular sources. The concept of transforming our nations by a secular approach is doomed to failure. Secular materialism is a non-holistic approach to life. To CFM the bible college is

vital. As stated above, it is central to all we do, to the transforming work in all our staff and leaders. Without this central arm of CFM there would be no “central nervous system to the body.” It would be a temple without life. Life doesn’t come from science; science comes from life. So even without grant support, the bible college must be held at the centre. The bible college isn’t an arm of imperial “Christendom,” but a river of inclusive new creation. As Ezekiel saw (Ch 40-48), if we want new creation, the temple of Christ is the source.

But something happened in early March 2020. In recent years it had become more difficult for us to work with our landlord at Bukuru, who made increasingly unreasonable demands to double the rent paid for substandard buildings that he refused to maintain. In 2020 the situation came to a point where we had to act, forcing us to trust the Lord. Our two CFM leaders, Paul Shettima and Gabriel Aiso came up with an almost feasible plan to move the bible college to Wurin Alheri. We had one month to achieve it, before we would have to pay another six months of rent. It meant erecting three buildings at Wurin Alheri, as a minimum requirement to move the staff and students. We had a record 539 students in the bible college, so moving would be an enormous step.

Ruth and I took this as the purpose of God. All the staff could see the Lord’s hand in the matter. So, we bit the bullet and announced we would move the bible college from Bukuru at the end of March. Everyone got to work with enthusiasm. The students were excited, and all threw hands and hearts into helping. Work parties were set up and everyone worked at the building site. The little money we had was all thrown into this cause. The three buildings we thought were required were an absolute minimum. It would be a squeeze. Much more would be needed in the future. In the meantime, flexibility would be required: a lot of moving furniture each day between the bible college programs and the other arms of CFM at Wurin Alheri would be needed as we shared other space.

Then the coronavirus hit the Western nations and they locked down. The WHO forced the same policies on Nigeria. At that time, we didn’t understand anything about the virus and didn’t know what was coming. Our belief was that it would calm down soon, lose its severe potency and herd immunity would build. We didn’t believe it would hit Nigeria hard and we also thought the economy should remain open to support the millions of vulnerable people impacted by conflict and terrorism, already living far below the poverty line.

Then there was the question of our support base. We had just committed to a major move. The economies in which our supporting friends live had shut down. We had no option but to keep going. We had passed through many challenges before in which God showed us his independence from the things that restrain us. He is able to keep us. We said to everyone with us, “The Lord makes all things work together for the good of his people.” We saw how Jesus fed many thousands with only a few loaves and fish, twice. And once 12 baskets were left over, and the other time seven baskets left over: a new Israel (12) bringing new creation (7) through the presence and cross of Christ. He creates “out of nothing.” There was no doubt that he had every matter in hand and would see us through. This situation would come out for our good, so we should just keep going.

In just over a month the three buildings were completed and the move from the rented premises in Bukuru was done. The bible college students shifted all our furniture across to Wurin Alheri. Then many of them, most of the bible college students and some of the disciples, left to return to their home regions. About 300 stayed: 150 crisis-care children, 50 bible college students, 38 disciples and staff all remained at Wurin Alheri throughout lockdown. 98 more CFM crisis-care children and their care givers were also locked down on our other site near Abuja, Nigeria's capital. The team kept farming and kept building and within another month a fourth building was done: the new kitchen that can cater for thousands of meals each day. A cafeteria and provisions store were completed, enabling hospital patients, vocational students, and workers on site to buy food and small supplies, to eat and share together on the Wurin Alheri site. Toilet blocks and septic pits were built.

A large building, providing a male hostel, classroom space and a chapel/ dining area for the bible college had intimidated us for years. One wing was built, used for our safe house disciples. The foundation for the whole building had been laid some years before. We bit the bullet again and restarted work from the existing foundation. This building is now almost complete, a major benefit to the bible college. It gives extra hostel space, a chapel hall, classrooms, and a dining area, meaning our crisis-care children won't be disturbed in their facility. We built new tables and chairs for all our bible college classrooms. Then a building was erected for breeding 100 goats, to help lift vulnerable families. Then we returned to the permanent hospital building. We haven't stopped building on Wurin Alheri since we began in March. By October we will be nearing roofing level on the second floor of the hospital. Our support during lockdown has doubled. Only God could do this.

None of this building has come at the cost of caring for our crisis-care children, now 300, our disciples in our safe house, our bible college students from remote persecuted regions still in our care on the site. All the wages have been paid through this lockdown, for almost 300 staff, plus assistance for staff personal emergency needs. Not only that, we have also been able to build a house (nearing completion), for each of our two main leaders and their families. As well, we have opened a "long-service" account for our staff and started saving an additional 10% of our gross monthly wages bill for land investments for our staff. So, our monthly wages bill went up 10% during the lockdown. This is during a period where millions have been laid off work around the world, and in Nigeria almost no one in private institutions like ours retained staff or their pay. There has been great suffering caused by lockdown. Yet the Lord has kept us through the whole period. People from the communities around Wurin Alheri have been employed throughout the lockdown on our buildings, giving them wages when everything else was closed. It has provided essential help for many. Our staff have been busy throughout. The teachers responsible for 1,300 children have taught them every day by sending and receiving text messages to their parents in their homes, or their care givers in the crisis-care homes, keeping their education up to date. It has been a year of many miracles, possibly our greatest since CFM began. Thousands have been supported by the grace of God through the lockdown period. And they those on our sites have worked hard, building CFM to reach the African Sahel and millions of people in the years ahead.

The greatest resource CFM has is the mentoring that restores and trains her leaders. This comes down from the two main CFM leaders, Paul Shettima and Gabriel Aiso, who were part of the founding team of CFM in 2006. The love, hospitality, correction, and nurture that these two leaders and their families give daily to so many others, shapes the whole CFM staff body and flows on to all those whom CFM serves. From buying the materials for our first tables and chairs in 2006 to the current level CFM has reached and all its administration systems, these two have led the way in their own personal daily work and leadership, through terrorism, conflict, personal loss, and the most difficult crises and circumstances. They have never tired but always lived out the unity and mutual submission around which the whole ministry is based.

They have shared Christ in our churches, mission stations, and bible colleges (in Jos and branches in other regions) and raised up a team of church pastors who give us an endless richness in ministry and stability. These two leaders live out miracles quietly every day, never drawing attention to themselves, but caring for the needs for every person in CFM and every stranger they meet. People like these, and the whole staff team of CFM, are the greatest gifts God can give. I could write at length about each one of our staff members and the depth of true wealth they are bringing to those they serve, and this is because of the mentoring they all give to each other daily. A mentoring of care and love in truth is the basis of joy filled life that passes God's blessings on to others. As one of our leaders shared, Jesus said "My joy and my peace I give to you." How did Jesus give this to us? "Love one another, as I have loved you."

In 2016 our son John and his wife Michaela (Kay) joined the CFM team in Jos and have lived and worked here since. Kay worked with the Guardian UK and with Compassion (Australia) before coming here, and John co-owned a social business and did a pastoral internship in a church in Australia. Now, Kay helps by overseeing CFM's crisis-care homes and John oversees our mission teams, CFM's social businesses and business training/ micro financing for widows. They both help to structure evolving accounts and administration in CFM's arms. They also serve CFM's computer centres, and CFM's Vanguard for Peace outreach in communities and schools, to further build these as peace-making instruments to more regions. Their areas of interests are particularly towards restoring communities with locally inspired and controlled development. They both teach in the bible college. It's a busy time for them, also with their two small children.

Our two oldest children Esther, and Tim, are married with families, and live in England. Both are doctors, both general practitioners and partners in different medical practices. Our middle son, Ben, lives in Sydney and has been an English instructor before the lockdown. As stated earlier, our youngest son, Daniel, lives with us in Jos, working with dogs we breed at Wurin Alheri, selling puppies to the more affluent, for pets.

We are shocked and humbled by the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord. God does not make a show of himself as some "gospel ministers" do. There are many who use the gospel as an opportunity to enrich themselves, or make themselves into stars, so different to Jesus and his mission. Christ was maligned. God doesn't "showboat". He has nothing to prove, no reputation to build, no argument to win, no need to impress, no office to run for. He is

faithful and kind. He is gentle, not demanding. He is present every day, keeping his promises. He has never failed us. The Hebrew word that describes his relationship with the church is *chesed*: loving kindness, covenant faithfulness, steadfast love. This includes correction and discipline, so that his love may increase more. He is true and there is no other promise in this world that is true. We can't do anything ourselves. It is he who does all. When we make mistakes, he will always forgive us and will always pick us up.

Romans 8 is a brilliant in artistry, describing the church's interaction with the world powers as she brings renewal to our communities. There is a suffering that is involved, which is also part of the church taking on the image of Christ, who suffered for us. In this suffering, the love of God is revealed, the justice of God in serving, in which the powers of selfishness and coercion are laid bare. Suffering has been denied in recent theology, which means that we become embedded with the comfort of the powers and their injustice against the poor. In doing this the church denies her renewing identity. In the Roman world of Paul's day, renewing life meant denying the affirmation of corruption, "counting it as dung," so we can identify with the God of compassion towards the weak. Paul showed this is what Christ did in his sufferings, and Paul determined he would follow this example. He believed in the kingdom of God and not in the affluence and comfort of Jerusalem or Rome.

Hitler's regime exposes the consequences of seeking the world's version of "peace and safety" today. Those who succumbed to the regime's intimidation, to secure the interests of their profession or family, wept bitterly in the end. It's a trap. It has no future. It might not be something so apparent as a corrupt regime, but merely the allure of self-indulgence while the world around us cries for justice. The gospel teaches us to say no to unrighteousness and yes to a better future which comes from com-*passion* (suffering with) siding with renewal and hope. This is the choice of the gospel: to deny the future God has for us and become logjammed in our personal security, or to believe in the justice and love of God, to believe in tomorrow, and lay aside our personal interests as temporary. This is the basis of community renewal, whether in Africa where Ruth and I and our team serve, or in any nation. There are challenges of conformity to this current world, and if we succumb to them the world sinks into greater corruption, but if we reject this conformity and risk suffering the consequences, our hope grows. This hope is the most precious gift, the true vision of the future. This is why suffering is so essential to renewal, transformation, resurrection, hope and tomorrow. Those who believe suffer and receive the reward of sharing in tomorrow. There is nothing surer. The promises of self-security are false.

God has a history of overthrowing monopolies against impossible odds, like at the Red Sea. It entails trusting in him and following him through the journey. Throughout the Old Testament the powers of greed put the people of God under siege, whether by war, oppression, plague, or famine, often caused by their mismanagement of the land over time. Throughout the ministries of Elijah and Elisha God gave witness to his ongoing government of the world, including multiplying food for the widow, raising her son from the dead, and overcoming the army of the Syrians, Israel's enemies, bringing temporary blindness to the soldiers, saving their lives and giving them food. The four lepers overcame the army of the Syrians, on another occasion, taking all their spoil in the camp and breaking the terrible

famine in Samaria. Later when Assyria brought a huge army against Hezekiah, the whole army died overnight outside the city wall.

Jesus also brought God's government to save the world. He harmed none of his enemies, but his life was a demonstration that the earth is the Lord's and all the earth contains belongs to him. He governs the world, not the greedy powers who claim to own it. Jesus walked through the crowds of aggressors, walked on the water, stilled the storm, overcame lack and constantly met the needs of himself and all those with him, healing diseases and casting out demons with ease and even broke the power of death. All of these miracles are a demonstration of his power, love, and faithfulness, showing us that we are not to fear anything or any power but him. God still governs the world, no matter what other powers may think or plan. "Why do the godless imagine a vain thing? The Lord will have them in derision," meaning his kingdom will come and his purpose will be done on earth. All these miracles show us that God keeps his church and carries forward his plan to fill his creation with his glory.

In the days of slavery John Newton said the one thing that comforts him is that Christ is Lord, he reigns. Someone asked us once whether we have heard about the conspiracy of one world government. "Yes," we replied, "Christ shall rule from the river to the sea and to the ends of the earth." Isaiah is filled with God's plan to make Christ Lord of all things, and he is Lord of all things already today. His government shall fill our lives upon this earth. He shall raise our bodies to reign with him forever. If he can defeat the powers of greed that made slaves of mankind in John Newton's day, he can break their power today, as they enslave humanity in their web of commercial exploitation. Their power shall be broken. The monopolies that plot to enslave humanity and make the world their own shall be surprised that the Lord has a better plan. The whole scripture and history of God's revelation is a testimony that he governs the world. Greed comes to an end. The oppressor fails. Nature and human relationships shall be regenerated, and work as intended in the beginning.