

Taking the Gospel to Remote Villages in Nigeria

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, well it's good to see everyone today. Definitely a joy to be here and a big, big, big privilege. But I'm just going to pray for us and we can start.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for this morning. Thank you first of all for waking us up this morning. Thank you even just for the gift of common grace to be able to see such a bright and beautiful day.

Most importantly, we thank you for your work on the cross, saving us from our sin. And that's why we gather every Sunday just to fellowship and enjoy and remind ourselves of what greater gifts you're giving us in Christ Jesus.

But as we're about to just jump right into the talk, we pray, Lord, that you speak to each and every one of us. That you challenge us. That you'd encourage us. That you spur us on towards love and good deeds.

Humble our hearts and speak to us this day. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. I just encourage you to do a sound check with the audience to see if everybody's hearing you.

[1 : 1 2] Okay, okay, sounds good. Okay, use the mic right. Alright. Can everyone hear me? Maybe. Okay, maybe I might have to use the mic. Sorry. Sorry. Who's the...

What's up with this? Huh? Let's see. You're right. It's a safe. Alright, it's time to get out of the way.

Alright, so I'm just going to get started. So I was, you know, called to come talk a little bit about taking the gospel to remote villages in Nigeria. So I'm just going to...

So this is my outline. I'm just going to explain a little bit about who I am. For those of you who don't really know me. And I'm going to talk about my home. I'm going to share a little bit of my testimony.

That basically grounds, you know, this work. Taking the gospel to villages in Nigeria. Because it started from coming to know the Lord. So I'm going to talk about my testimony. I'm going to talk about how I started thinking about living out this faith that I had come to have.

[2 : 1 1] And I'm going to talk about Jada. Jada is a village. Just on the outskirts of the town I grew up in. I'm going to talk about that village and the work I did there. As well as in Beo Village. Which is also, not around where I live, but more further up north.

And then I'm going to talk about the work I started more recently doing with refugees in Nigeria. And then I'm just going to give up the time for prayer. Okay?

So I think we can roll. Alright. No, no. Not quite that one. Alright. Sweet. So my name is Kelechi Omoga.

That's my name. And so Kelechi in my language means, literally means thank God. And there's a story behind that. Because I was, so when I was born, I was my mom's fourth child.

So she had two girls. First girl, second girl. The first guy. And then she had me. So I sort of completed the cycle for her. So she was like, you know what? Two boys, two girls. This is perfect.

[3 : 11] Thank God. I'm done. And so she literally named me Thank God. Which is Kelechi. So that's the main of my name. I was born and raised in Abuja, Nigeria. Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria.

So I'm going to talk about that a little bit. And I'm the third of five children. I'm talking about having, being the fourth, right? So my mom thought it was, you know, perfect. She's done having kids. But unfortunately, two years after I was born, the second girl passed away.

She died very suddenly. She was six. So my mom wanted to, you know, have more, try and see if she could balance it back and have more kids. So she tried. And she had a boy.

And then she tried again and she had another boy. So now it's four guys and one girl. Wow. So it's not as perfect as she thought it would be. But, you know, but God is good. So, yeah.

So that's me. I'm going to talk about my home. So I'm from Nigeria. And Nigeria is right here, the western part of the continent, right?

[4 : 12] So that's Nigeria right there. And in Nigeria, I'm from Abuja. And Abuja is right in the middle. You can see right there. So that's my city. That's where I was born. That's where I was raised.

But my parents are originally from the southern part of the country. They're from the southeastern part. They're from Abia State. But what happens is that, you know, once people, you know, are born and raised in a certain area, they go actually to go study and then, you know, get work.

So my parents got a job in the capital city. So that's where I grew up in. And just some quick facts about Nigeria. So Nigeria is a British colony. And we gained our independence in 1960.

The population of Nigeria is about 190 million. Some estimates say 200 million. So it's a very populous country. It's actually the most populous country in all of Africa and the seventh in the world.

The official language is English. A lot of people ask me, oh, you're from Nigeria. Why do you speak such good English? I'm like, yeah, I speak in English since I was three. So, yes, the official language is English.

[5 : 15] So if you go to any form of school in Nigeria, you would master English. But I speak other languages as well. And Nigeria is incredibly diverse. There are about 520 languages spoken in Nigeria alone.

I mean, 520 languages. So there are a lot of places in Nigeria. Actually, most places in Nigeria, I do not understand the languages they speak. If I'm not communicating in English or like a more colloquial way of speaking, which is like, we call it pidgin, which is more like abridged, jacked up English.

If I'm not speaking that or they're not speaking that to me, I probably won't understand. So there are a lot of languages, 520 languages in total. But out of the 520, there are three major languages.

There's Igbo, there's Hausa, there's Yoruba. And I'm Igbo. The northern part is where you find most of the Hausa. The Igbos are in the southeastern part. And then the Yorubas are in the southwestern part.

And in 1999, May 29, which happened to be my fifth birthday, Nigeria became a, they adopted a democratic style of government. So just some quick facts just to orient you about the country.

[6 : 24] So religion in Nigeria. So Nigerians are a-religious people. People, they are very, very religious. And remember, I was reminded of when Paul was in Athens.

And he said, he gathered and told people like, you know, I've been walking around and I see that you guys are a religious people. And I feel like if Paul went to Nigeria today, he would say the same thing. Nigerians are very religious.

You hardly find Nigerians who would look you in the face and say, I don't believe in God or whatever. You know, they are either Christian or Muslim, at least theoretically, right? They tell you, oh, I'm Christian or I'm Muslim.

You hardly find someone who's like, oh, I don't believe in anything. So it's kind of like a 50-50% split. You have about 48.9% Muslims. And most of the Muslims are, again, in the northern part of the country.

And then 48.3% Christians. Now, you might find some Muslims in the southwestern part. You hardly find Muslims in the southeastern part, like my part of the country. But you might find them in the southwestern part.

[7 : 22] And 2.8% of Nigerians actually practice what we call traditional religion. So they're religious, but they're not either Christian or Muslim. They're just more traditional. And yeah, so unfortunately, religious conflict, because of this, again, 50-50% split, religious conflict has come to mark a significant part of our history.

As a country, I remember growing up in Nigeria. And, you know, it's like a Friday. It usually happens on Fridays because, again, the Muslims go to prayer on Fridays. And that's when things happen. And it's Friday and, like, my parents come to pick me up from school, like, super early.

And they're, like, you know, they're blowing up things. And, you know, so I grew up having that experience of just safety, just being very wary of where to go, where to be on a Friday, being worried about where my dad is going to come back, if he's going to come back.

I had friends whose parents went away and never came back because they were, you know, bombed or whatever. So that's a big part of one of the challenges we face in my city and in a lot of cities up north.

And there's been an increase in the number of evangelical or what we call Pentecostal Christians in Nigeria, people who identify as either Pentecostal or evangelical.

[8 : 41] Over the last two decades, you know, starting from the 90s, there's just been an exponential rise in the number of these people. And with that has come the growth of the prosperity gospel and the prosperity theology of, you know, health and wealth.

And, again, it's just taking advantage of the fact that there are a lot of people who are suffering and just proclaiming to them this message of, you know, put your faith in God and, you know, you get all these things from Him. And that has come to mark, it's just a big part of the narrative in Nigeria.

And if you come to Nigeria, you can see for yourself that spiritual darkness is still evident in the land, you know, and it's in a lot of other places. But, yeah, so, again, just talking about my hometown.

So, again, I'm from Abuja, and this is what Abuja looks like at night. Very beautiful. I love the city. Actually, my dad, in the early 80s, helped plan the city because it was a very rural settlement.

But in the 80s, he and a team of other people were employed by the government to help, like, plan. But that is an urban planner. So he did that. So there's Abuja at night. But the interesting thing is that this is what Abuja looks like as well.

[9 : 52] So we have these two conflicting images. Again, this is just 30 minutes away from the beautiful capital city, right? 30 minutes away, this is what you see.

And these are people in Jaira Village. Now, this water source is where they get their drinking water from, is where they do their laundry, and is where the animals also drink water from. Again, this is Abuja, just 30 minutes away.

Again, thinking about this and that. And I don't know what this reminds you of, but it personally reminds me of New Haven, right? You know, one minute you're in a certain location, and the next moment you're in a totally different location.

Literally just probably five minutes apart. You don't even have to travel 30 minutes. But that's, again, a disparity that's apparent, you know, where I'm from. I'm going to come back to that. So my testimony.

So I came to know the Lord during my sophomore year at Cornell. And again, I was born and raised in Nigeria, and I moved over here for college in 2011.

[10 : 53] And it was during my sophomore year, some young man reached out to me, and just through consistent, I guess, bugging. They were like, bugging me.

Because I was at a place where nothing really made sense, because a lot of the successful people I saw, my goal coming to America was just to get some sort of success.

But I realized a lot of the successful people I found here were not as happy or as purposeful. And so I began to question a lot of things. I had a really big crisis my first semester.

And I'm just asking a lot of questions regarding the purpose and meaning of life. And through that, God basically brought me to himself. So again, my sophomore year, I came to know Jesus. And I started studying the scriptures more intently.

You know, these guys encouraged me to look into the scriptures. They would read the scriptures with me. And what I saw immediately, what stood out to me, was that I saw this person called Jesus. I saw him express such a deep interest in the plight of the downtrodden, like the people who were suffering.

[11 : 55] I saw him just very, very tangibly just show love to these people, right? That's what I noticed. And he also preached salvation. You know, but he preached salvation, but it was not like an empty, just words, right?

He preached it, and he did things, right? He fed a ton of people. He healed people. He raised people from the dead. So he was doing real, tangible things that could be measured, in addition to the salvation he was proclaiming.

So I saw that there was sort of like a marriage between that gospel and action. And I began to think, because I was just, for me, I was conflicted. Because I grew up, again, in a very religious country, with a lot of people professing this faith.

But this tangible action, I didn't really see it. Quite frankly, there was a lot of preaching. Nigerians loved to pray. And you could wake up at 2 a.m. in the night, and I'm sure you would hear someone yelling from the next building, praying to God.

Which is amazing, right? But oftentimes, I felt like the living out of this faith, like the next day at work, I didn't really see it, right? But again, I came to discover this Jesus who was preaching this salvation, but also doing a lot of tangible things.

[13 : 14] So for me, it was a challenge. And I saw that he didn't just do it. I saw that he said, if you're going to follow me, this faith that you profess has to be lived out.

And I'm kind of like a simple person. I like thinking in terms of black and white, and that's usually not very good for me. But I realized that I could not claim to profess this faith without living it out.

Because that's what I just saw. I just saw that he didn't give that option. So my sophomore year, I began to start critically thinking of what to do to live this out.

Just saying I was a Christian, just saying it, I looked at scripture. It just didn't quite fit. There was a dissonance. So I began to think, well, what can I do?

And what can I give? What do I have? And what can I provide? So I began to think again back to my country. Again, it's like my second year in America, and I've come to adopt this worldview of living.

[14 : 20] And so, well, the easiest thing for me to do was, I'm not really familiar with the terrain in America. Well, there's a lot I could do at home. So I thought back, I thought back to that, you know, again.

So there's two images of this and that. And I began to ask, well, again, what can I do to basically bridge this gap? So I reached out to my dad.

I said my dad is an architect. And what he does in his, but he works for the government. But what he does in his free time, he goes to villages on the outskirts of my city.

So he would go to different villages. He would identify needs in this village. And he would call the attention of my church. And they would meet those needs in this village. And in the process, plant a church.

So that's the model they had going on. This is what I, you know, grew up seeing my dad do. But for the longest time, I resented my dad. Because I felt like he could be using his time for better things, right?

[15 : 22] Because we didn't grow up with a lot of money. I was more lower middle income. And I went to a very rich high school with a lot of wealthy kids. And so you see my dad technically, like, wastes his time doing this.

For me, it was just painful to see. Because I felt like if he worked harder, if he got more jobs, he could provide better for the family. And so that's what my dad did, you know, just growing up, seeing him do it.

But then I come to know Jesus my sophomore year. And I began to see, wow, my dad is probably the coolest person I know. And so I reached out to him. You know, again, thinking back to what he does.

I reached out to him. I was like, you know, hey, like, I am, I'm just, I'm reading the Bible. And I'm coming to understand some truths about who Jesus is and what he requires and what he calls us to do. You know, what village are you working on right now?

And how can I jump in? Basically, that's what I said. Again, this is like my spring semester, sophomore year. And he's like, well, we're in this village. It's called Jada Village. It's outside Abuja. We just started a church there.

[16 : 24] And we're providing some water for them. So, well, at this point in time, I'm thinking I might go into medicine. I'm not sure yet. So I was like, okay, well, do they have a clinic? Again, this is me, sophomore year.

And he's like, oh, no, they definitely don't. I was like, whoa, can you design a clinic for me? Let's, can we set up a clinic there? Again, I had no idea. I've never been to this village. And he's like, yeah, I can, but like, who's going to pay for it?

Like, you know, just asking the real questions. And so I'm like, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's a good question. Just can you, okay, how about we do this? Can you talk to the village chief and see if he can even give us a land?

And I'm going to see what I can do on my end in America to maybe get some money. And he's like, okay, sure. I'm going to do that. So my dad designs this clinic. And now I'm freaking out.

I'm like, I just told my father to, like, get on this project, to, like, design this clinic. And he gets a land. Thankfully, the chief provides a land. And so I started frantically applying for grants all over the U.S. And thankfully, I was able to get about \$10,000 from this organization.

[17 : 34] I didn't, I just, I applied. I remember applying the day of the deadline. It was, like, midnight. And I applied, like, 11 p.m. And God was faithful. And I got that money. And I was able to raise extra money.

And the summer of 2013, basically, we started building this clinic. Again, this is sophomore year, summer. I mean, the summer after sophomore year. I was 19 years old.

And I show up to this village. And we start building, right? And my job this summer was just to, like, supervise. Again, I'm 19. And the people on this site were, like, in their 40s and their 30s.

And I didn't know what I was doing. I'm not even going to lie to you and say I have this plan. I was just, like, okay, the goal was just to set up a structure, some sort of structure and use this money. So, that summer, we started building.

And we built. And we kept building. Sorry, it's not that bright. I don't know why it's not bright. Maybe. The lights. Oh, yeah. You've got to turn the lights off. Oh, really? The lights.

[18 : 27] But I don't know how to do that. Okay. I've always got it. Okay. Let me see if I could increase the brightness in my, no, it's not working. I'm sorry.

I thought it would be brighter. I don't get that. It'll work. Okay. Anyway. But, yeah. So, this is. So, we kept building. And this is kind of, like, the phase we got to, again, the end of the summer. And we ran out of money.

Right? Okay. Better. Yeah. Yeah. So, that's kind of, like, the progression. Right? So, we, again, we go from here to here to here. And, again, this is the end of the summer. And we have this.

Right? And we run out of money. And I'm like, well, I'm going to have to go back to school. Again, this was the end of the summer. Right? So, I went back to school junior year. And what would happen was, basically, my time in college was spent between trying to pass my exams and, like, raising money for this.

Because I didn't imagine just, like, moving on with my life and, like, just living my life. So, I'd study and apply for grants. Study and apply for grants. And I'll get grants and I'll just send back home.

[19 : 30] Basically. I'll send back home because I couldn't come as frequently. It was really expensive to come back home. And, thankfully, my dad really devoted his time and his heart towards this. And we kept building. And this is what we achieved by 2014.

And this is the clinic completed by 2015 November. Right? The clinic was completed by 2015 November. I graduated college 2015 May. And when I stuck around for another year in the U.S., I worked with crew.

I worked as a campus intern, you know, just hanging out with students and engaging them. So, I did that for a year. And after that, I actually moved back to Nigeria. Basically to run this clinic.

So, this is what a clinic looks like. And we officially opened 2016, September 1st. And this is, like, the consulting room. This is where the doctor sees the patient.

And, again, this is, like, the male. We call it the male ward. Female ward. This is a delivery room. So, we, one of the biggest needs in this village is that a lot of the women were, they'll go to the bushes, basically, to deliver their babies.

[20 : 37] So, we set this up. And this was our first baby. She was born, so it was the end of September, I remember. This is the first baby we had in the facility.

And this is our mini pharmacy. And this is some of our doctors actually seeing patients. Now, so, I designed this model where, instead of waiting for the villagers to come, you know, to the clinic.

Because a lot of them didn't trust the system. They weren't sure. This is not, they were not used to this. They didn't, they weren't sure they could afford it. So, they would just not show up. And that was a problem we had. So, for some months, people were not showing up. So, we designed a model.

Instead of waiting for them to come, we'll take it to them. Right? So, we recruited people from the village. And we trained them as what we call community health workers. And these people would go, knocking from door to door, checking in to see, is anyone sick?

How's everyone doing? And these are, again, these are not, these are people from the village who speak the language. Now, just context, I don't speak the language of this village. Now, this village is actually a very interesting village. Because within the village, there are like six different languages.

[21 : 40] And this is not a big village. This is like a thousand. But like six different languages. So, they don't even understand each other. So, they speak pidgin to each other. But I speak pidgin, which is really good.

Which is like the, again, more informal English. But this, again, these people who are from the community will go from door to door. Basically check in and see if anyone is ill. And they will bring them, accompany them to the facility.

So, again, let's bring in the clinic to them. And so, we had that going on. And this is our staff. The first, I mean, things have changed over the years. But this is like the first group of staff we had.

And the guy to the left, the extreme left, is our doctor. And we had a janitor. We had a receptionist. It wasn't a big. And that was our nurse. And this, actually, the lady to the right is actually a traditional birth attendant.

So, she's the people helping the woman give birth in the bushes. So, this is the woman they trust. So, we employed her to also gain the trust, again, of the people in the community.

[22 : 38] So, that picked up. And, again, during my time in Nigeria, my church had begun setting up the school in the community.

But they couldn't continue because they couldn't fund it. They ran out of funds. Nigeria went into a recession, an economic recession, in 2016. So, it was basically abandoned. And me, you know, I decided to take this up.

Again, I had no idea how I was going to take that up. I was like, you know, yeah, we could look for a way to make this happen. And so, they handed it over to me to, again, like resurrect it.

Again, frantically, thankfully, I came back to the U.S. during that time for like a month and a half to apply to interview with medical schools. And so, during that one month to two month space I had in the U.S., I started applying to grants just to keep this going.

And God was gracious. And he supplied a lot. And we're able to like finish this up. And this is the primary school in that village. Again, so, they have the clinic.

[23 : 44] And next door, literally, this building is just next door to the clinic. So, the clinic is that way. And this is the school. And we set up the school. And these are our kids. And beside the school.

So, again, it's the clinic. It's the clinic, the school, and the church. So, again, remember my church planted a small church. So, again, in this piece of land is a clinic, a school, and a church.

And the idea was not just, oh, let's bring health care to this community. That was part of it. But a big reason I decided to pursue this was I was just, again, thinking about Jesus, right?

What did he do? He preached, and he also met physical needs. And, for me, it was just the, well, if we can bring health care and bring education in some shape or form, we can attract, you know, we can gain their trust.

And over time, after establishing this relationship, we can begin to share this gospel with them. So, in our clinic, they come, and we, the pastor of this church, she would pray for people who show up, who, you know, who are open to prayer.

[24 : 59] And through the clinic, we have even the parents of the kids in the school, they'll come to school to pick up their kids and would engage them and have these conversations with them. And we've seen a lot of people come to know Jesus and give your lives to Christ in this building right here.

So, that's the church, and there's a lot going on there on Sundays. Right now, it's probably after church now because it's six hours away, six hours ahead. But, like, this church was packed today. And that is the fruit we're seeing in this community.

Again, God has been so faithful, like, I would never, like, attempt to take any credit for any of this because, again, the provision was just unreal. Anyway, so, I started medical school in 2017.

I began to think about sustainability because the demands of school and writing grants, it was a lot to deal with. So, I thought about setting up a business basically to generate revenue.

So, 100% of the revenue just goes into, like, paying my staff and doing other things. So, I came up with this idea to set up a poultry farm because the person managing the clinic and the school, for me, she actually runs a poultry farm of her own.

[26 : 07] So, since it was a business she was familiar with, I decided to, you know, how about we just key into that business. So, we got a grant towards the end of 2017 and we set up this poultry farm starting in April.

And in June, when I went to Nigeria for the summer, we realized a potential for a fish farm. And so, that was what we embarked on. So, that's the poultry farm after completion in May.

And some of the chickens and that's some of the fish. I don't know how well you can see it. But we got a lot of fish, we got a lot of chicken. And then, again, the challenge was, well, we got this, how do we feed them?

But, again, God has been so faithful just seeing us through since July. I'm supplying the feed for these animals. And the hope is that by December, January, we'll start to sell the fish and the eggs.

And the money will just be plunged right back in to the work we're doing in that village. Now, sometime in, so while I was in Nigeria in 2016, you know, a friend of mine reached out to me.

[27 : 09] He was like, Kilich, I had this dream about just going to this village. Like, I felt like, I saw this, I've never been to this village in my life. I've never heard about it. But I felt like God impressed upon me the desire to go to this village in Boronu State.

Now, whenever you hear someone say Boronu State in Nigeria, most people cringe. Because that's the headquarters of Boko Haram. So a lot of their atrocities are in Boronu.

So no one goes there. When you say Boronu, people run away. People don't even want to hear it. My friend, again, told me about this dream he had of going to this village. Now, this is December. I just come back to America because I spent two months interviewing.

I come back. And the next day, he, like, called me. And he's like, yeah, man, I just feel like I'm losing sleep over this. I really, I feel like we should go to this village. Again, this is this village.

Very precarious. Very dangerous in Boronu. So I decided to pray about it. And I prayed. And, you know, quite frankly, sometimes you pray and you don't hear things. And I didn't hear anything.

[28 : 13] But I decided to go. Because I felt, you know, I mean, everyone needs the gospel. I don't need to hear a voice. And I went. You know, it was a very crazy idea. My parents were terrified.

And they would not talk to me. And four days after that, I went after my friend brought this idea. And we went. And, again, this was like the 20th of December. And we went.

We did a Christmas visit. So this is three of us in that village. So we traveled. An eight-hour trip. We had never been to that state before. Never been to that village before. Very dangerous zone.

We just showed up. We printed T-shirts. And T-shirts said, you know, in their language, you know, Borno, home of peace. And we talked about, you know, and we just said about Jesus is the prince of peace.

Stuff like that. And we took these shirts in our backpacks, about 50 of them, and went to this village. Three of us, we went there. And this is not very bright.

[29 : 09] But we went to the chief of the village. Again, this guy is a Muslim, radical Muslim. There was a decent chance we could have gotten killed. But at this point, I didn't even know what I was thinking.

I'm not even going to lie to you. I just, we're just like, let's do it. That's all. Let's do it. And we went in. And we talked to the village chief. You know, like, hey, we're not from here.

We're just visiting. And we thought we'll just come and just, we didn't know if people knew about what Christmas meant. If we could just share with you about why Christians celebrate Christmas.

That was what we told this chief. Again, he had no idea how he would respond. And he was like, yeah, sure. I could send my boys to call everyone to my palace. So, it was pretty wild.

It was like wild. Again, we showed up to this village at night. Again, we traveled all day. And we showed up to this village. It was like 9 p.m. We had no place to sleep. I'd never been there again.

[30 : 07] We had, there were no hotels. Again, it's a village. So, we had no plan as to where am I going to, where are we going to sleep? Where are we going to eat? So, we're just walking about. Again, three of us.

I'm going to put that picture again so you just see us. So, three of us, again, at night with our backpacks. With the shirts in our backpacks. And we just keep looking around. And then we see a sign of Ekwa Church.

So, E-C-W-A. There's a church. There's a church in Nigeria called Ekwa. It used to be Evangelical Church of West Africa. And it was planted many, many years ago. Pre, you know, by, I forgot the missionary group.

But they would go and plant Ekwa Church. And now, but they switched their names too. Because they decided that they're just not focused on West Africa. So, they changed it to like Evangelical Church. Winning all.

And so, these are, if you go to the deeper parts of the northern part of the country. If you don't see any churches there. If you see a church.

- [31 : 05] It's going to be an Ekwa Church. Because these people are just, a lot of them are northern. And they focus very much on reaching these really remote parts of the country.
- Could you, could you say that a little louder? Sorry. Okay. So, it's Ekwa Church. And a lot of their work, they do a lot of work in the northern part of the country.
- Ekwa Church. So, if you go to a remote village in northern Nigeria. If at all you see a church. Now, there's a decent chance you won't see a church. Because, again, it's predominantly Muslim. But if you see a church, it's probably going to be an Ekwa Church.
- And, so, again, we're in this village at night. It's 9 p.m. Freaking out. Again, we're like, these people don't know us. They don't, I mean, we're just freaking out. And then we see a sign. Ekwa Church.
- So, we go, you know, to that place. And there's a little hut. And we knock on the door. And we keep knocking. But we hear voices.
- [32 : 05] But no one responds. We keep knocking. And after, like, almost 30 minutes, someone comes in. A lady comes in and opens. And, again, she's visibly afraid.
- And she asks us, like, who are you? And we're like, yeah, we're Christians from Abuja in the south, you know. We're here to just talk to people about Christmas.
- And we could just see this relief in her face. Now, she was terrified, obviously, because these are people who are constantly persecuted. And these are people who are basically living their lives knowing that any moment from now, they would come and they'll be killed.
- And usually the Christmas, the festive seasons, Christmas, Easter, are usually when Boko Haram strikes. Because they know a lot of Christians are, you know, celebrating.
- So, they bomb churches and they do all sorts of things. So, this woman was afraid because she thought it was just that kind of visit. And so, she welcomed us in. And her husband was there, who was a pastor of that local church.
- [33 : 10] And they gave us food and, like, gave us a room. And we told them about our plan. And, again, we didn't speak the language in this place, right? So, we didn't even know how we were going to, like, share this Christmas message to people.
- But this pastor was like, yeah, I could translate for you. I'm like, great. So, the next day, the pastor walks with us to this, again, to this palace. And we hang out with this chief.
- And this chief summons a lot of people to his palace. And we just sit and just talk about Christmas and why we celebrate Christmas. And what Jesus did on the cross.
- And it wasn't real. It was just, it was ridiculous. Now, my parents are blowing up my phone. Like, they were not sure if I was still alive. And I couldn't pick. But, you know, after a couple of days, we went back home.
- We shared the shirts. Again, the shirts had some Bible passages in their language, which is really cool. And a lot of these people just took the shirts. And that's what we did. And the idea was, hopefully, I talked to the village chief about the possibility of setting up a clinic in that village.
- [34 : 21] So, the idea was, we'll set up a clinic, a school, and in the process, plant a church. And we're trying to develop a different model. What we had in Jaida, we had a physical structure.
- But we're trying to move away from that because once a lot of the villages just hear church and they see a building, they avoid it totally.
- So, we're trying to move away from the physical building model to a more home-based model where we have people with disciples and they just disciple people in their homes. So, that's the plan for this village.

But hopefully, that will pick up in the next year or two. I'm still trusting God to provide both the funds and the people. I'm going to be rounding up shortly.

But, again, during my time, again, so this one year in Nigeria, post-college was very pivotal for me because, again, I lived there. Now, as a Christian, as a 22-year-old Christian, right?

[35 : 21] I left Nigeria at 17 to come here for college. And now I come to know Jesus. I was more mature. I could now see just the needs. And one of the needs I identified was this issue of internally displaced persons.

So, these are, like, internal refugees within Nigeria. So, these are people displaced from the northern part of the country. Again, where, like, Boko Haram is pretty much decimating villages, right? In 2015 alone, we had over 3,000 people or 4,000 people killed by Boko Haram.

So, what the government does is that it takes these people, a lot of these people who are children and, you know, people, and they're orphaned, obviously, and displaces them and brings them, you know, relocates them, quote, unquote, to safer sites.

And by relocation, I don't mean, like, rehabilitation. I mean literally just dumping them on a piece of land. So, you can go to these IDP camps.

They're called IDP camps, internally displaced person camps. And you just see hundreds of people, a lot of whom are children, children running around naked, you know, starving.

[36 : 28] And there's just a lot of suffering. And the funny thing is that these camps are not, like, on the outskirts. These camps are in the heart of the city. Like, beside these camps, you can just see massive structures, like buildings, offices.

But next door are these camps. It's actually kind of funny. So, what I was doing when I had some time, when I wasn't in the clinic or helping out at the school in the village, I would come volunteer at these camps, teach the kids how to write and read and stuff like that.

And so, the time came for me to go back to start medical school. And so, it was three of us who were doing this. And the other guy was going to England for his master's. So, we were thinking about, well, how can we sustain this?

So, what we did, we raised some money and we sent 16 of these kids to schools in the area. And while I was in med school, we started getting reports from this school that these kids were doing so well.

So, we decided, well, let's make this official. How about we just register an organization that exists to just raise money to send kids from this camp to local schools in the area.

[37 : 37] So, that's what we did. So, we registered, we called it Young Shippers Club. And it was basically like formed to raise money to send these kids from this camp to school. So, we sent 16 in the fall of 2017.

And in the fall of 2018, we sent 120, which is amazing, right? Because it basically cost like \$30 to send these kids to school for the entire year. Again, including uniforms and books, tuition, everything.

So, I just reached out to my rich American friends. I said, hey, I know you eat dinner for \$30. You know, you spent \$30 on dinner. You know, you want to use that to send the kids to school.

And that has been, you know, sort of our model. Now, the challenge is, well, we want to send these kids to school, but we don't want to end there, right? Anyone can do that. We want these kids to come to know Jesus.

Again, these are kids from the northeastern part of the country. 99.9% Muslim. But they're going to school and they can now read. And so, we're thinking of, well, how can we incorporate?

[38 : 38] How can we get these kids to know Jesus in a way that is not manipulative? In a way that is not viewed as, you know, we're forcing things on them. And we don't know yet. We're still thinking through that.

We're not sure, but we see a great potential. Because by sending them to school, we have these relationships. They trust us. They call me sometimes, you know. They get phones and they call me and they send messages to me.

So, there's this relationship that exists. And I'm still praying for just, I guess, creative ways to engage them. Again, they're still little. They're like, some of them are eight, some nine, some seven. So, I'm still praying about how we could do this.

So, that's basically it. But, I'm going to leave just a couple minutes for questions before we pray. Does anyone have any questions for me?

Thank you. So, I would guess from what you said that your dad was a committed Christian. Yes, he was. He was. But, though you were in the church, you know, the gospel didn't ring home for you.

[39 : 39] Not at all. There at Cornell. Yes. Which is so weird. So weird. Yeah. Yeah. Really, really thankful. It was just God's grace. It was not going to happen. And, like, he just showed up.

Yeah. Any other questions? Do you have any financial support from specific churches in the United States? No.

Except Trinity. This Trinity. Yes, this church. Recently. Which I'm very, very, very, very grateful for. But, as far as churches, not really. Some of my supporters are not believers at all.

There are some family foundations that I reach out to. Some Christian family foundations. But, for the most part, just individuals and, yeah, people.

Because, you know, I like to, you know, I want to be clear about the mission aspect of this. This is not just humanitarian, right? Anyone can go and set up schools and clinics.

[40 : 40] But I want to be very intentional about the purpose, right? Again, thinking about Jesus and his model of, like, healing the sick so that they will come to know him, right?

So that they will come to have this relationship with him. And I don't believe in just stopping there. So because of that, there are a lot of barriers, right? There are some funds I can't access because we're Christian. And that's just who we are.

And some people are like, yeah, we're not going to fund that. So that's a challenge. Yeah. Who were the directors of the crew at Cornell when you were there? Directors of what, sorry?

Who were the directors? At crew? Yeah, at Cornell when you were there. Oh, the campus staff? Yeah. Oh. Do you remember who they were? Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't even know them. JW Betts? I don't know if that sounds familiar.

But that was the only family there. But now, like, a lot of staff have joined. But it was just them and us. Yeah. Any other questions?

[41 : 34] Yeah. Would you say that reaching a point of enlightenment through your education helped to further your relationship with God in which kind of, not kind of it, it pushed you to pursue such a noble cause?

Right. I mean, the pursuit of education, you mean? Just reaching a point where you became more educated, knowledgeable about the world around you, just enabled you to be more at one with Jesus Christ in which that is what caused you to be so passionate about you pursuing.

Right, yeah. I mean, yes. Definitely my education did really challenge me to question things, right? Because, I mean, I grew up, I mean, they told me a lot, I heard a lot of things.

But now, being at an institution where it's okay to question why we did what, I was free, in a sense, to just really challenge, like, wait, why?

What is Christianity about, right? Because when I came to know God, I didn't want to, I didn't want to, you know, the idea of just going to church and, like, meeting people and hanging out was just not enough, right?

[42 : 45] Because I began to, again, read the scriptures and I saw very clear instructions as to what the Christian life ought to look like. And, again, the intellectual in me couldn't bear with just doing things just because.

Because, I mean, I didn't have a lot of time. So I just didn't want to do things. You know, I'd rather just not do it at all. It had no meaning. So, yes, that really did help solidify a lot of things.

Any other questions before we pray? Okay. Okay. So let's just pray for, like, a minute or two. Because I know we have to, like, I'm sorry.

But just some things to pray about. We're just going to, you can just bow your heads. And I'm just going to call out a request and we'll just spend a couple of seconds praying. So we just, can we just pray for continued open doors in just the more difficult areas in northern Nigeria?

Lord, we praise you for opening up that village in the north. And just doing an amazing work at the beginning and now. Oh, continue that opening of doors that we may praise you together.

[44 : 02] We just pray that the Lord will raise more laborers for this work. That more Christians will be willing to go to these hard places. Yes. Lord, thank you for putting that dream in Colachia's friend's mind, Lord.

And thank you for giving those three courage to embark on that journey. And we pray that you would raise up more people.

We pray that you would strengthen the churches that are already there, the EQUA churches that have been faithful in difficult places for a long time. And we pray that you would bring more Christians from the south of Nigeria and from even other countries that would participate in different ways.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Dear God, we just thank you that we could just talk about the ways in which you're moving in Nigeria. Thank you for the privilege, the privilege of me just being a part of this work.

Thank you, Lord, that it's just such an incredible thing that you call weak and broken people to partner with you in such majestic work. We pray, Lord, that you continue to work in the hearts of these people, breaking down the walls and the barriers, that the truth of the gospel will just shine through and they will be changed and transformed by it.

[45 : 29] We thank you once again for this time. We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.