

SHARING *the* MISSION

STM Newsletter - June 2024

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*Pure & faultless
worship before our
God and Father is
to care for the
fatherless & widows
in their
time of trouble . . .*

James 1:27

In this issue of the STM Newsletter we will be highlighting one of our partner organizations - **Bege for Gobe** - and their work with widows and orphans in Central Nigeria. Bege for Gobe (**B4G**) means “Hope for Tomorrow” in the Hausa language of north and central Nigeria. It is the mission of B4G to bring both spiritual and physical hope to these often desperate people.

Widow’s Conference

July/August 2024

Bege for Gobe (B4G) is one of our partner organizations in Nigeria. Each year during the lean month of August, when food and income is hard to come by, B4G gathers hundreds of widows for several days of encouragement and aid. During their time together, they are

well fed, they sing and dance, they are encouraged in their faith, they are given medical care and then sent home with provisions to help them make it through the difficult weeks ahead.

The link below will take you to videos from the 2023 Widow's Conference as well as more photos and information about the upcoming conference this summer - July/August 2024.

But how did these women become widows, and how did their children become fatherless?

Sadly, in central Nigeria, there are tens of thousands of widows and fatherless children who struggle to survive

Videos from 2023 Conference

the persistent violent attacks on their predominantly Christian villages. These attacks are most often carried out by Islamic militants from the Fulani tribe.

In a recent series of attacks beginning last Christmas Eve, over 1000 villagers were killed and nearly 30,000 were forced out of their homes in to camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP camps). [Learn more](#). Unfortunately these attacks have gone on for years and are still continuing on a daily basis throughout central Nigeria.

One of the videos at the 2023 Conference link allows you to hear the stories of several widows as they describe how their husbands were killed, sometimes before their eyes.

*Defend the poor and the fatherless.
Uphold the rights of the oppressed
and destitute.*

Psalm 82:3



Kauna Home

Ongoing Project

Another ministry of **B4G** is to fatherless children. Children may be found in IDP camps who have lost one or both parents and are facing life on the streets, hunger and abuse. In this violent and unstable region, there may be no relatives who are able to take them in. When facilities and funding allow, these children can be brought to Kauna Home where they are fed, clothed and given a Christian school education, while living in a stable group home with a Christian house parent.

Currently there are over 40 children at Kauna Home, most come from Plateau, Kaduna and Benue States in central Nigeria. These states have been particularly hard hit by Fulani attacks.

B4G has been caring for orphans in Kauna Home for years, but as the violence and numbers of orphans increase, too many of these children are ending up on the streets, with no relatives to take them or villages to return to.

B4G would very much like to help more of these children, they only lack funds. The economic crisis in Nigeria has made local funds difficult to find (see article below on Nigerian economy).

Kauna Home



The Sahel is experiencing one of the world's most severe humanitarian and protection crises.

UN Refugee Agency

Situation Report & Resources

Regional information and resources for Nigeria and West Africa

Some places in the world present more challenges to human flourishing than others. The region highlighted in red shows up on nearly every list of human suffering currently available (1). This area encompasses what is known as the Sahel, but also includes the Central African interior. Challenges in this region include:



< poorest global region

< highest rate of military coups and government instability

< lowest maternal survival and highest mortality of children under 5 years old

< high numbers of displaced people due to violence and climate

< low access to education, health care & clean water

< high rates of persecution of Christians

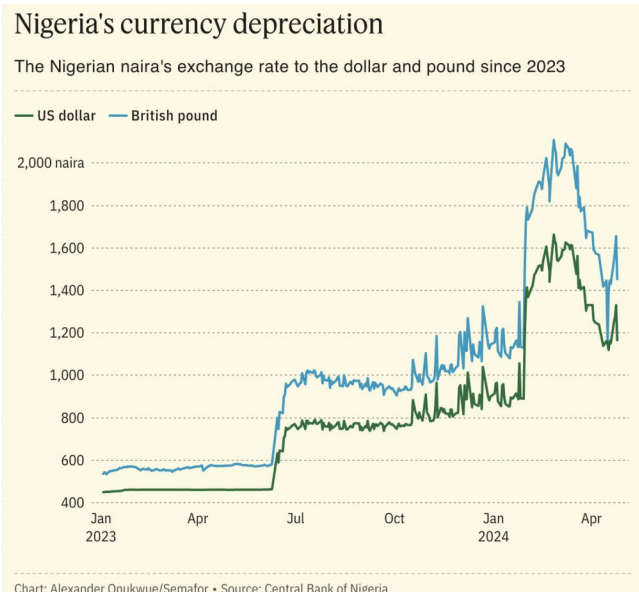
At this time, Sharing the Mission is focusing on West Africa and Nigeria in particular. Our partner organizations - Agape Missions and Evangelistic Network (AMEN) and Bege for Gobe (B4G) are based in central Nigeria, but AMEN also sends missionaries to other countries in West Africa. In future issues of this **STM Newsletter**, we will address the situation in West Africa more broadly, but in this issue we will focus on Nigeria specifically.

Nigeria Confronts its Worst Economic Crisis in a Generation

New York Times - June 11, 2024

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country - the 6th most populous country in the world - with an estimated 230 million people. Although it has valuable natural and cultural resources, its complex social and political history has never produced a functional middle class or tax base with which to fund effective national development. Nigeria does not currently produce enough food to feed its rapidly expanding population (3). Nigeria is currently in a state of economic crisis with its currency (Naira) having lost 2/3 of its value against the US dollar in a single year and inflation at around 25%. Fuel and staple food prices have doubled in Nigeria during the same period (4), but wages have changed little.

A typical starting wage for government employees is equivalent to \$1-2 dollars/day. A recent national strike shut off Nigeria's power grid in an unsuccessful bid to increase that base wage. Nigeria's national standard of living is below India and roughly equivalent to Ethiopia (5).





Along with its economic struggles, Nigeria is a nation divided - with the northern half of the country mostly Muslim and the southern half mostly Christian. Violent clashes are very common in the middle and north, giving Nigeria the distinction of having the highest number of Christian martyrs and kidnappings of any country in the world for several years running (6). There are an estimated 3 million people living in IDP camps, the majority of which are Christians displaced due to the continued violence against their villages, and the rest are displaced due to climate related problems like massive floods and droughts.

While the reason for the sharp economic downturn relates to some well-intentioned government “corrections” (7), there is no expectation for the economic situation to improve significantly in the short term. The violence in central Nigeria seems to be increasingly funded and inspired by forces outside of Nigeria, and it seems unlikely that Nigerian security forces will have either the will or the means to effectively control the violent attacks going forward. The outlook remains bleak.

In these difficult circumstances there are many good things for B4G and AMEN to do, but few resources with which to do them. Sharing the Mission is looking for partners to assist in this urgent work. For more information on how you can participate, please visit our website at sharingthemission.org.

REFERENCES

- (1) See for example [World's Most Neglected Displacement Crises](#) - Norwegian Refugee Council, [Populations at Risk of Atrocities](#) - RP2 Monitor, [The World by Income and Region](#) - World Bank, [Global Health Security Index](#) - GHS Index, [Fragile States Index Heat Map](#) - The Fund for Peace, [UN Human Development Index](#) - UNDP
- (2) See also [What's the root cause of Nigeria's economic crisis?](#) - Al Jazeera 6/24, [Nigeria's Hardship Economy in Four Charts](#) - Semafor 2/24, [Nigeria's currency has fallen to a record low as inflation surges](#) - AfricaNews 2/24
- (3) [25 million Nigerians at high risk of food insecurity in 2023](#) - UNICEF
- (4) [Nigeria Food Security Outlook, February - September 2024](#) - ReliefWeb
- (5) [Countries by Human Development Index](#) - Wikipedia/UN Human Development Index
- (6) [World Watch List 2024](#) - OpenDoors, [Christians, Others Increasingly Targeted in Plateau State, Nigeria](#) - MorningStar News 5/24
- (7) [Nigeria devalues the naira in bid to attract foreign investors](#) - Financial Times 1/24, [Tinubu marks one year in office as Nigerians continue to bear brunt of the economy](#) - AfricaNews 5/24



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