



JUNE 2023

A Journey with the Anabaptist Peace Center of Nigeria

Nigeria crackles and pops with energy and untapped potential. Only the fourteenth largest country in Africa by land area, it is the most populous with close to 220 million people and will continue to grow as the majority are also under 30 years old. Full of natural resources as well as beautiful and welcoming people, Nigeria should be a rich and thriving nation.

Unfortunately, Nigeria’s path to prosperity has been complicated by political corruption, religious conflict between Christians and Muslims, regional rivalries, and the challenge of uniting well over 200 different ethnic or tribal groups under a single national identity.

This situation provides a tremendous opportunity for Christian witness to the Gospel and a need for Anabaptist Christians to teach and model Jesus’ way

of peace. One place where both are happening is the Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center, one of Evana Network’s strategic partners in Jos, Nigeria.

Hoping to get a better understanding of the opportunities for ministry and challenges facing the Peace Center, I traveled to Nigeria this past April with Pastor Nehemiah (Nemi) Chigoji and Bob Johnson, a retired business owner and active supporter of the center from southern California. Together, we were privileged to visit the home in Jos where Pastor Nemi grew up in humble circumstances. We gained a greater appreciation for the struggle for many to survive when the unemployment rate can be 33% or even higher.



It is not uncommon for many in Nigeria to find employment and career opportunities outside of the *(continued other other side)*

Meet Evana Network’s Summer Intern

Hello! My name is Madi Keim, and I am interning with Evana Network this summer! I help Evana’s team write portions of the Pulse Newsletter, create study materials for the ReGen conference, and will be an extra set of hands at ReGen. My job is also to take care of some of the odds and ends that need to be done so that the whole team is more free to do their jobs.

In May, I finished my first year at Wheaton College, where I am studying a myriad of things—including Theology, Ministry, English Writing, Mathematics, Studio Art, and Classical Languages. I work with Discipleship Ministries on campus to lead small groups of students in Bible studies on a weekly basis and regularly volunteer at a local elementary school tutoring second graders in math.

In my free time, you might find me reading a good novel, plucking out chords on the piano, lounging around with my cat, or translating the book of Jonah from Hebrew into English (because why not?). I have been told I should have been born in a



different generation because I also love writing letters, embroidering, and a proper tea party.

After reigniting my love for Him during the COVID-19 pandemic, God has given me a specific love for His Word. I spend increasingly more time studying the Old Testament in its original language, making connections between Jesus Christ and those who came before Him. I am constantly prompted by the Holy Spirit to remember that my transformation does not stop at my conversion, but that it is an ongoing process of learning, growth, and renewal.

I will leave you with Psalm 68:4-5: “Sing to God, sing in praise of His Name, extol Him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before Him—His Name is the Lord. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling.” Our God is holy, loving, and glorious. How extraordinary that He chooses to make His dwelling among us! May we worship Him in spirit and in truth!

- Madi Keim

(cont. from front page)

country, but Pastor Nemi has never forgotten where he came from, starting the Anabaptist Peace Center to serve and encourage those in his home country. The mission of the Peace Center is "to promote healing and reconciliation, and to bring encouragement and guidance to those affected by violence and persecution by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ."

The Peace Center fulfills its mission by offering several programs: sports and discipleship ministries for youth and young adults, care for widows of pastors, support for retired pastors, theological support and training for peacemaking practices, and planting Anabaptist churches in major cities in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

While visiting the Peace Center, we participated in a day-long program for widows and a similar program the following day for retired pastors. What struck me most was the holistic nature of the Peace Center's ministry to both groups. At the center of the programs was a vibrant worship service and biblical teaching to nourish the soul. A Christian social worker spoke to both groups about the need for having good social and relational support networks. Fellowship and mutual support were encouraged through sharing testimonies and sharing a meal together. Material resources were shared with those who attended through small stipends and providing the widows with rice, cornmeal, and cooking oil to take home with them. Nurses and a medical doctor provided health screening and prescriptions when necessary.

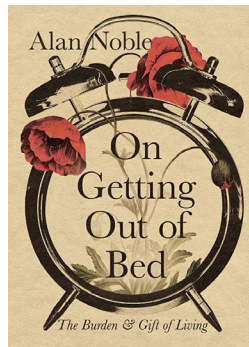
In doing so, I believe the Peace Center is following the example of Jesus who "went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction" (Matthew 9:35). Yet there is so much more that they could do to expand their ministry and their witness. Pastor Nemi has a vision for a permanent home for the Peace Center that would house not just a worship center, but offices, short-term lodging, a clinic, sports fields, and a bakery that could provide job training, additional income for widows, and produce bread that could be distributed to Muslim households in the city as a peacemaking effort.

Just as Jesus went on to encourage his disciples to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers because the "harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37-38), let us join together to pray for the Lord to provide a plentiful harvest for the Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center and the witness of the church in Nigeria.

Matt is available to share more about his trip in your church, email him at matt@evananetwork.org to schedule a time for him to share. If you are interested in financially supporting the ministry of the Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center, checks can be made out to the Evana Network, PO Box 33, Millersburg, IN 46543 with Nigerian Anabaptist Peace Center on the memo line.

On Getting Out of Bed

A recent addition to my book stack came from a conversation with an IntersVarsity Press editor about his current favorite book. Once I picked up Alan Noble's *On Getting Out of Bed*, I couldn't put it down.



Alan wrote this book based on an earlier article he wrote about living with mental illness, which received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback.

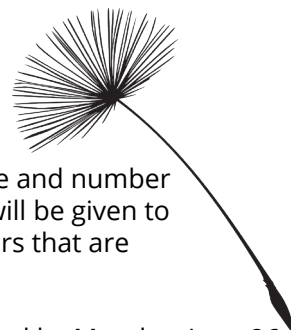
Throughout the book, he returns to the witness that we display when we simply swing ourselves over the side of the bed, and get up. Waking up and taking one step at a time is an act of worship towards God and a testimony to our neighbors of perseverance when life is hard. And when we can't even make that move, we lean into the community that lifts us up and walks with us.

Purchase book at your favorite bookseller, or read more at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/> and search "on getting out of bed."

- Tyler Hartford

Church Plant Grants Available!

The Evana Network has over \$16,000 available to be awarded to church plants seeking additional funding. The exact amount of each awarded grant will depend upon funds available and number of qualified applicants. Priority will be given to church plants and church planters that are members of the Evana Network.



All applications must be submitted by Monday, June 26.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3MZnuCT> to apply.

ReGen Day Passes Available

Day passes for ReGen 2023 are available at www.evananetwork.org. These passes are perfect for those not needing overnight lodging and desire to dip into the excitement of ReGen!

A one day pass includes one day of all activities and meals. Two and three day passes are available as well, which include all activities and meals.