



# GWEIMEN CENTRE NEWSLETTER

A Self-Sufficiency Centre for

Widows and Orphans of HIV/AIDS

Spring 2016



## DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR:

### A Matching Gift Opportunity

A generous group of supporters of the Gweimen Centre have put together \$5000 to be used to match dollar for dollar every gift that YOU give to the Gweimen Centre between now and July 1. It's simple really. A gift to support one child now supports two. A gift that might feed a child for a day will now feed that child for two. Any gift that would send a child to school for a day will now send that child for two days. A \$100 dollar gift will send a child to school, feed him, and provide medication if that child is HIV positive – for a MONTH. This is a better deal than any two for one coupon you have ever redeemed. Any gift amount will go directly to the children at the Gweimen Centre. There is some urgency to this appeal just as there is to this work.

## TO DONATE

give online at

[www.gweimencentre.org](http://www.gweimencentre.org)

or mail your check to

The Gweimen Centre

P.O. Box 1517

Wheaton, IL 60187



## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN NIGERIA?

Rachel Vanderhill, PhD

The political and economic challenges facing Nigeria today directly and indirectly affect the children, orphans, widows and employees of Gweimen. The most well-known and significant challenge are the activities of Boko Haram, a terrorist group primarily active in northern Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. An estimated 15,000 people have been killed as part of the conflict with Boko Haram. UNICEF reports that 1.3 million children have had to flee from their homes because of the fighting. In April Human Rights Watch reported on the devastating impact of Boko Haram on education in Nigeria, noting that attacks by the group have destroyed at least 900 schools. After the 2015 election of Muhammadu Buhari as president, the Nigerian military has made some progress in reclaiming territory originally seized by Boko Haram. Unfortunately, in response to the loss of territorial control, Boko Haram has shifted tactics to utilizing women and children to conduct suicide bombings. Thankfully, the majority of the fighting caused by Boko Haram is not near the Gweimen Centre. However, a less well-known conflict closer to Gweimen has escalated in intensity over the past two years. The general region where Gweimen is located, the “middle belt” part of Nigeria, has seen increased fighting between Fulani herdsmen and Berom farmers, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

Along with significant concerns about security, many Nigerians are also suffering because of the worsening economic situation in Nigeria. With government revenues largely dependent on the sale of oil, low global oil prices have led to reduced public services, pressure on the currency, and less ability to pay for essential imports.

The current economic and security problems are intensified by widespread corruption. When oil prices were high, members of the previous government used the money for personal gain instead of saving for the future. Although accurately measuring corruption is difficult, estimates are that \$20 billion in oil revenue went missing because of corruption. High level security officials have also been arrested by the government of President Buhari for corrupt arms deals, weakening the ability of the military to fight against Boko Haram. President Buhari's anti-corruption campaign has had some impact, but the size of the problem remains substantial.

Under these circumstances, Gweimen faces fewer available local resources and increased need, as the most vulnerable (the widows, orphans, and children) often suffer the greatest in times of political and economic turmoil. Your assistance to Gweimen has helped the Centre provide essential food, training, transportation, and school fees in these difficult times.



## BEING MINDFUL OF GWEIMEN

Mary Sytsma | US Board President

I recently heard an interview on the radio where a neuroscientist talked about the “dementia of the preoccupied.” She said she made up the term to describe the modern condition many people experience. There are so many things coming at us, in rapid and random order, that we never have an opportunity to concentrate on any one thing. We have no time to be mindful; we only have time to have our minds full, and sometimes our hands too.

That gave me a reason to think about Gweimen. The word means hospitality, peace, welcome, shalom. I get a lot of snail mail and email that ask me to think about a certain idea or cause, especially during this political season. I am bombarded by stuff that is causing me to think I have dementia of the preoccupied. I can't be mindful of important stuff, because I have my mind full of too much stuff.

This newsletter might be adding to that for you, but stay with me for a minute. True, this is one more thing that comes in the mail demanding your attention. It is one more reason to feel you should be doing more, being more, loving more, giving more.

Let me suggest another way. To know about Gweimen is to know about a place that offers widows and orphans a way to step away from terror, poverty, illness, and inequality into love, light, peace and plenty. It is a place of sharing burdens and blessings. It is a balm for the soul, for those who come and for those who support it. It allows us to do something full of meaning.

Here is one simple thing you can do. Be mindful of Gweimen. The Gweimen Centre exists as an oasis in Nigeria, a land full of conflict and inequality. If you could pray for the work of Gweimen and think of the widows and the orphans being loved and helped, think of the world changing for them, and give thanks for this work, it would mean a lot.

[www.gweimencentre.org](http://www.gweimencentre.org) | 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

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