

Letter from Nikodemus
27 July, 1976

Introduction

This document is a *fremdkorper* in that it is not written by or about me so much as *to* me. It is a letter from Nikodemus, a young Christian man I write about in our memoirs.¹ It belongs in the memoir rather than here. However, that did not happen and thus I share it with you here. I urge you to read the story, for it is a great example of the kind of very personal struggles in which we would sometimes be involved during our Nigeria ministry.

Nikodemus' letter is in the Hausa language. Good Hausa readers will immediately recognize the semi-literate level of the writer. He could not even spell his own name correctly in Hausa. That is no surprise, for Nikodemus was only semi-literate, having only finished a couple of years in a local leadership centre. In addition, Hausa was only one of several languages for Nikodemus that he used to communicate with people from other tribes, including us. It was not his mother tongue, Ngoro. Nevertheless, his written Hausa, halting as it was, was infinitely better than his written Ngoro, for that had not even been reduced to writing, it being a minor tribal language among Nigeria's four hundred.

Here then Nikodemus' letter, followed by my translation:

Jobombua
Maigidanmu
A Gidan Mission

27/7/1976

Nikodimu
Hezekiah
Bakin Kogi

Bayan gaisuwa mai yawa, da so, da yarda, da aminci, cikin sunan Ubangijinmu Yesu Kristi, ina tambayar lafiyarka da uwargida da iyali duka; idan kun kasance lafiya, wannan godiya ne ga Ubangiji.

Dalilin wasika ta ke nan domin mutane sun hana ni zuwa Gidan Mission; kada in tafi. Na biyu, ka kama ni korto sau biyu cewa ina neman matanku! Ga shi, shekara da shekaru ina neman matanku; ba ku taba nuna mini wata wadda ta dace da ni in nema ba; kun ce wai ina hauka ne.

¹For the story behind this letter, go to *Every Square Inch*, vol. 2, pp. 131, 242-243. See this 4-volume memoir at the top of this Boeriana page.

Shi ne ina shaida maka cewa yanzu na yi hankuri, kada ka ce, na yi fushi da kai, domin ba ka yi mini laifi ba, shi ke nan.

Wassalam; ka huta gajiya. Sai da alheri.

=====

Nikodemus Hezekiah

Riverside

27 July, 1976

John Boer, i/c
Mission House

After many greetings along with affection, agreement, and trust, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am asking of your health and that of your wife and all members of your household. If you are all well, then we have reason to thank God.²

The reason for this letter is that people are preventing me from coming to the Mission House, saying I should not go there. Secondly, twice you have taken me to court, accusing me of going after your women/wives. Year after year I allegedly am chasing your women. (But) you have never pointed me to one that would be fitting for me to pursue. You are calling me crazy.

So, I am telling you now that I have been very patient. Don't say I am angry with you, for you have done me nothing wrong. That's the point of this letter.

That's the end of the matter. Take it easy.

With grace.

² This is a traditional opening paragraph of a letter. I have written many letters opening with similar salutation.