



**March 2023**

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you during this period of Lent! My wife and I are currently reading a devotional called “40 Days of Decrease” by Alicia Britt Chole. It has provided some interesting insights about Lent and particularly fasting, which is a subject most of us find reasons to fast from. The author begins with the proposition that Lent is less about well-mannered denial and more about thinning our lives (decrease) to “thicken” our communion with God. She describes how Jesus himself is a living demonstration of decrease, calling His ultimate decreases “the Grand Reduction,” as Jesus left Heaven to come to earth and, then, finally left earth to go to the cross before returning to Heaven. The author states, “God sometimes drafts us into (moments or seasons of) decrease and into the desert.” All of us have experienced this at one point or another. What do we do with these moments of decrease when we experience them? The challenge is arriving at a place of accepting whatever God brings our way—whether it is dessert!! or desert?? In the moments when He drafts us into the desert, may God enable us to accept these decreases so our lives may be thinned and our communion with Him may be thickened.

Coincidentally, this year the Christian season of Lent overlaps with the Muslim season of Ramadan and the two also overlap in their common themes of fasting, prayer, and piety. This year during Lent, consider praying for a Muslim friend if you have one or perhaps Muslims in Niger. Pray that they might experience the revelation of Jesus Christ. Some friends here in Niger have created a prayer guide for Ramadan that may be helpful. It can be found at: [https://www.axis-ministries.com/files/ugd/fb2ce1\\_669a5a773dd74247ac9e26346eeb4d22.pdf](https://www.axis-ministries.com/files/ugd/fb2ce1_669a5a773dd74247ac9e26346eeb4d22.pdf)

We are preparing to experience another sort of decrease in our house as our second daughter, Eliza, is preparing to graduate from Sahel Academy and is in the final stages of university selection. Please pray for direction, discernment, and courage for her in this season of decisions and transition. We will be returning home as a family this summer to facilitate her entry into university and to visit family, friends, and a few churches.

Our supervisor, Derrick, will be returning to Niger for a week at the end of March to do evaluations and continue a process of seeking resolution for some structural challenges that are (and have been) present within CADR and that threaten sustainability. Please be in prayer for the leaders of CADR and the EERN church—pray that we would desire to follow Christ in all things and to see His kingdom advance above all.

**And now a word from Susan:**

I spent last week consulting at our new clinic in Dogon Doutchi. Even after 15 years in Niger, I was shocked by how difficult life is in rural areas here. One afternoon, a woman entered my consultation room in a panic. With my limited Hausa, I had trouble understanding what was happening. She had a lab order asking for an

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ultrasound to make sure the baby she was carrying was still alive. My ultrasound skills are limited but I was able to do that. Then I found a translator to figure out what was going on. The patient, we'll call her Aicha, was being



*Consulting during our outreach visit to Matankari. The Prefect from Dogondoutchi looks on as we check one of our military guard's blood pressure.*

starved by her husband. He provided food for his second wife but when Aicha's food supply ran out, he left nothing for her, and she was wasting away. One day, she saw that the food cabinet was unlocked and she helped herself. Her husband found out and whipped her with a cord. She tried to hide behind her mother-in-law, but her mother-in-law held her so that the whipping could continue. She cried out that she was pregnant and her husband finally stopped. But she lost her last pregnancy the same way. This time she was able to get the police involved and her husband was in custody when I saw her. Pray that the baby would survive and that Aicha would get the help she needs.

Another day, I saw a boy who urgently needed abdominal surgery to survive. I tried to refer him

elsewhere, but the family simply didn't have any more money to spend on his care. I could literally see his father and uncle calculating how many people would go hungry if they tried to save the boy. We see extreme poverty all around us in Niamey but somehow the desperation is more palpable in rural areas. We are in the hungry time of year when the harvest has been eaten and it isn't even yet time to plant the next crop. When people are hungry, they will only seek health care when they absolutely have to, and certainly not for their chronic diseases like high blood pressure or diabetes.

How can we help? Providing free healthcare will only make the cycle of dependency worse. We continue to look for ways to provide more services at both clinics to encourage those who have some capacity to pay to seek care with us. That will give us enough income to allow us to provide free or lower-cost care when needed. In February, we received the donation of a sophisticated mobile x-ray unit that will allow us to add x-ray to our services in Douthi and to make a small profit as well. Pray for us as we seek the right technician who is willing to travel the 300 miles round trip to spend part of every week out there.

In addition to consulting at the new clinic, I was able to participate in one of the biweekly evangelism outreach visits. We went to a town 10 miles from the new clinic and saw 30 patients. An EERN evangelist was with us and was able to meet with several patients to quietly talk with them about the good news of new life in Christ. This program will be postponed now until the end of Ramadan. People are seeking Allah and open evangelism by Christians can seem caustic or hostile. Pray for this project as it draws to a close and we consider the next steps.

We thank you for your prayers and pray also for you that, during this season of Lent, you will experience His grace and, if you are drafted into decrease, that you will allow Him to do what He is seeking to do for your good and His glory.

Blessings from the Beebouts

*RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.*



*A technician from the company that donated the x-ray unit doing training with our Douthi team.*