



July 2023

Dear friends,

This letter is being written as we drive through the vast expanses of green corn and bean fields of Iowa! Fortunately, because of recent rains, the fields look to be in good health in general, with prospects for a good yield. I ask myself how different it would be if a few of these green fields could be transported to rural Niger?

Besides enjoying a different color palette and some unusually cool weather, we have loved being united as a family even if for a short time this summer. Lydia and Eliza are spending most of the summer on the road. They participated in a wedding in North Carolina, visited Jeremy's brother's family in Maryland, and are currently at a reentry seminar in California. Once they return to Iowa, we will have a few more weeks together. Then Lydia will return to UNI, Eliza will start at Iowa State University, and we will travel back to Niger with Abigail and Ben. In the meantime, we are enjoying the opportunity to visit family, friends, and a few of our churches in the Midwest, as well as one on the West and one on the East Coast. Here are pics from Snoqualmie Falls in Washington and Clear Lake in Iowa. Next week, we'll be in New Jersey!



Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at kgilmore@rca.org to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.

I would like to present a taste of what we share with churches as we travel, since our visits will not bring us to see many of you in our few short months home. (Apologies to those who have heard or will hear this!) The past few years in Niger have been filled with a significant number of trials and struggles, many of which are longstanding. Some of these challenges can also be traced to serving under a national church structure. This is the principal model of missions used by RCA Global Mission and is one of the main reasons that Susan and I choose to serve with RCA Global Mission. We feel strongly that the partnership model is appropriate and healthy. However, that doesn't mean the model is simple or without significant challenges.

Every partnership requires good communication, confidence, and collaboration. When cross-cultural and language barriers are crossed, those elements are some of the most difficult to cultivate. Although we have been in Niger for over 15 years, we realize that some cultural and language barriers will never fully be overcome. And this is just at the foundational level...

We find ourselves under leadership that is disorganized and sometimes self-serving. Like anyone who is facing significant challenges, we sometimes ask ourselves questions like, "What are we doing here?" We have found ourselves at this point many times, even feeling at or near the end of the rope. However, despite that, God, in His mercy, has been showing us some precious truths through several avenues, including a woman's Bible study for Susan, a prayer partner for Jeremy, and several books, to name a few.

One of these truths comes from the familiar passage at the beginning of Romans 5, which explains a divine formula by which suffering produces perseverance and then character and finally hope! Unfortunately, our tendency, even as believers familiar with this passage, is to wonder, when trials cross our paths, where God is or why He has allowed or even caused such trials to happen. It is difficult to embrace trials no matter what. But one thing that encourages me is knowing that, by going through these trials in faith, we are promised hope! It is also sometimes necessary for me to remind myself not to connect God's love for us with the presence or absence of trials and struggles. His love for us is not intended to make much of us, but to make much of Him. We, His creation, are to enjoy making much of Him and this requires getting the focus off of ourselves. I believe that trials and struggles can serve the purpose of reorienting our focus back to Him. Please pray for us as we continue to connect with friends and supporters and then return to a difficult situation!

The work at the clinics continues in Niger. The imaging block was approved by the government, and now we are waiting for the arrival of a leaded window and some other shielding equipment. The photo shows the agent testing the device and the room to make sure that radiation exposure will be minimal. We now have an agent going out once a week to do X-rays. Pray that these additional services will help improve care for our patients. One of the most common tests we do is chest X-rays to look for tuberculosis. Identifying this treatable disease is life-changing. The government provides free treatment but not good laboratory testing. Our university and the public university are on break for a few months and activities will resume in the fall.



Thank you for your prayers and support that allow this vital work to continue!

From the Beebouts in Niger