RCA Global Mission

Update from

TOM JOHNSON

June 2026

Dear Friends,

This is the season of transitions to our family. Marie graduated from the University of Northwestern-St. Paul and Ellie finished Pella Christian High School in May. Thekla, too, had her moment in the sun, serving as a Tulip Time flower girl for three days.

In just a few weeks (July 11), Laurey will marry Ian and they will move to Boone, IA, from which the two of them will commute for their senior years at Iowa State University. Ellie starts ISU in August and Marie will live in Apple Valley, MN, a 15-minute drive to her music and Bible teaching job at United Christian Academy in Bloomington, MN. Soon, our family of six will shrink to the three of us (mom, dad and Thekla) in Pella with Ellie only coming home on her breaks.

Above left to right: Ellie with mom and dad at the Pella Christian High School graduation. Marie and her roommate both graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education degrees.

Thekla was on Pella's 2026 Tulip Court as a flower girl

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.

Likewise, the francophone ministry is transitioning from "start-up" mode to humming along with a full slate of pastoral candidates and faith workers pursuing Christian theological and leadership training in French. Not only am I working with immigrant pastors in the U.S., but I've started weekly sessions with three Young Life (an international youth ministry) staffers in Mali, three church leaders in Niger, and a dozen pastors or pastoral candidates in eastern Congo. Two of these are done with the Zoom video-conferencing platform, but in Congo WhatsApp works better with their internet.

Congolese pastors receive laptops to study with Coram Deo.

The Young Life staffers are full-time faith workers, but they are not currently interested in becoming ordained pastors. Thus, we're treating their training more like continuing education, rather than having them pursue pastoral qualifications. The Nigerien church leaders are somewhat of a similar perspective, although at least one of them does intend to become a pastor after completing the Coram Deo program. For the Congolese candidates, most of them are now pastors in the Congo, but they are preparing for an alignment with certain Canadian RCA churches and want to be able to pass their commissioned pastor process in the future. Coram Deo was started to help RCA churches by providing the required commissioned pastor training, but this will be the first time that it is all done in French.

I still need to keep creating and adapting courses in French for these students. In a few cases, the courses already exist for free with another ministry, but I have to become more familiar with the content in order to lead discussions on the materials. In other cases, the course needs to be translated from English and into French. Finally, I have another three to four courses that must be created from scratch, having only a textbook to start. I recently finished a course on "The Supernatural Kingdom and Biblical Spiritual Beings" using The Bible Project's six videos on the topic, along with readings from the Book of Enoch and author Michael Heiser's "Supernatural" book for the content. The goal is for students to understand the Bible from a First Century perspective so that they can better explain the biblical texts when teaching and preaching.

PRAYERS AND PRAISES

1) We praise God for Marie and Ellie graduating in May! Pray for their next steps in the fall, but also for their summer ministry jobs: Marie is working with kindergartners at a Brooklyn Park, MN, Christian school summer program and Ellie is a team leader for Child Evangelism Fellowship's five-day clubs.

2) Pray for wedding preparations as we approach the July 11 marriage date for Laurey and Ian. Pray for those who are traveling for the event. Pray that God will bless their married lives together. Sadly, because of visa restrictions, no one from Niger can attend the wedding, but Aichatou's family from Ottawa and France will be present.

3) I'm very thankful for the new candidates we have in the French Christian leader equipping program and that we've begun to reap from the earlier seeds that were planted in developing this unique program for francophones.

4) I'm grateful for some of the new individual and church support that has come in during the past few months. I still need another four to five churches or individuals to pledge mission shares to be fully funded. I'd be glad to talk to anyone who might be willing to help.

In Christ,

Tom and family