RCA Global Mission

Update from

TOM JOHNSON

October 2026

Dear Friends,

This update begins with our biggest event this summer: Laurey and Ian's July 11 wedding! It was a wonderful day—not too hot, and not any serious glitches took place. We had most of my family as well as many of Aichatou's family in the U.S. and Canada. Sadly though, U.S. visa restrictions kept our Nigerien relatives from coming. Yet, we were able to live-stream the ceremony for them (and others) and you can still watch it at https://youtu.be/GMpReTQj4-M or search for the "Thompson Wedding" on our pastor's YouTube channel (Todd Rempe).

Family photo from Laurey and Ian's wedding.

Elias and Marie are engaged.

At the reception, we finished with a surprise! Rather than the bride throwing out her bouquet, she handed it off to her older sister, Marie. Marie had become engaged to Elias LaChonce earlier that week and they closed the event with their own announcement. These two met at the RCA Global Mission conference in January 2025, where both had student participation scholarships. They dated long-distance, as Elias was finishing Hope College before going to the Netherlands to pursue a Masters in Water and Sanitation Systems engineering. Elias grew up in Jordan, where his parents serve as missionaries, so it was that commonality that drew Marie and him together.

Ellie is now a freshman (technically a sophomore because of credits earned in H.S.) at Iowa State University. She is staying in the same dorm (Barton Hall) that her grandmother stayed in 60 years ago. She will double major in Hospitality Management and Event Management and already has a work-study job at ISU's Memorial Union (which handles up to 5,000 events/year). Thekla is now in 4th grade at Pella Christian Grade School. Laurey and Ian are finishing their senior years at Iowa State. Marie is beginning her professional career as a middle and high school music and 6th grade Bible teacher at United Christian Academy in Bloomington, MN.

We have close to 30 candidates now in the Coram Deo pastoral study program, with two weekly classes and another bi-weekly class that involves a dozen students in total. The rest are self-paced

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and take classes when it suits their schedule. August is always a challenge to schedule online class meetings because, in French culture, that is the month for vacations, but most have made good progress this summer. We have had some challenges with robust internet sessions in Congo, despite their use of a Starlink system, as the video calls were so full of drops and delays, that we couldn't really have class discussion. This week, we started the video call with a prayer for good internet and we had no problems!

I recently was informed that my ability to be a full-time RCA missionary is at risk because of declining funds—despite the fact that I did get two new church supporters in 2026. I'm scheduled to move to ¾ time in January and ½ time in October 2027 if nothing changes. Being stateside with an online ministry is a tough sell for support, despite the fact my age, experience, biblical knowledge, and French language skills make me an ideal mission worker to equip French-speaking African church leaders in a growing program.

In general, church giving has dropped off and even many long-term church supporters have kept their gifts at a constant level, despite rising benefits costs and overall inflation. While I am very grateful for all of my long-term church partners, it looks like I will need to find more individual donors or I must look for additional part-time income for our household. I'm certainly not the first missionary at this stage in his/her career to be in this situation. As you can see, this is a matter of discernment for me, as I prayerfully consider my options and I would appreciate any advice you might have.

PRAYERS AND PRAISES

1. Pray for the new married life of Laurey and Ian. Pray also for Marie and Elias, as they plan for their 2027 wedding.
2. Pray for our students and for Marie's launch into her first year of teaching.
3. I'm thankful for the steady growth of the French pastoral equipping program. Those candidates that fully engage in the activities and courses develop a confidence to better explain God's Word and his plan to others.
4. Pray for God's guidance as I consider my financial and career options for 2027. I believe I have at least eight more years of ministry left in my missionary call.

In Christ,

Tom and family