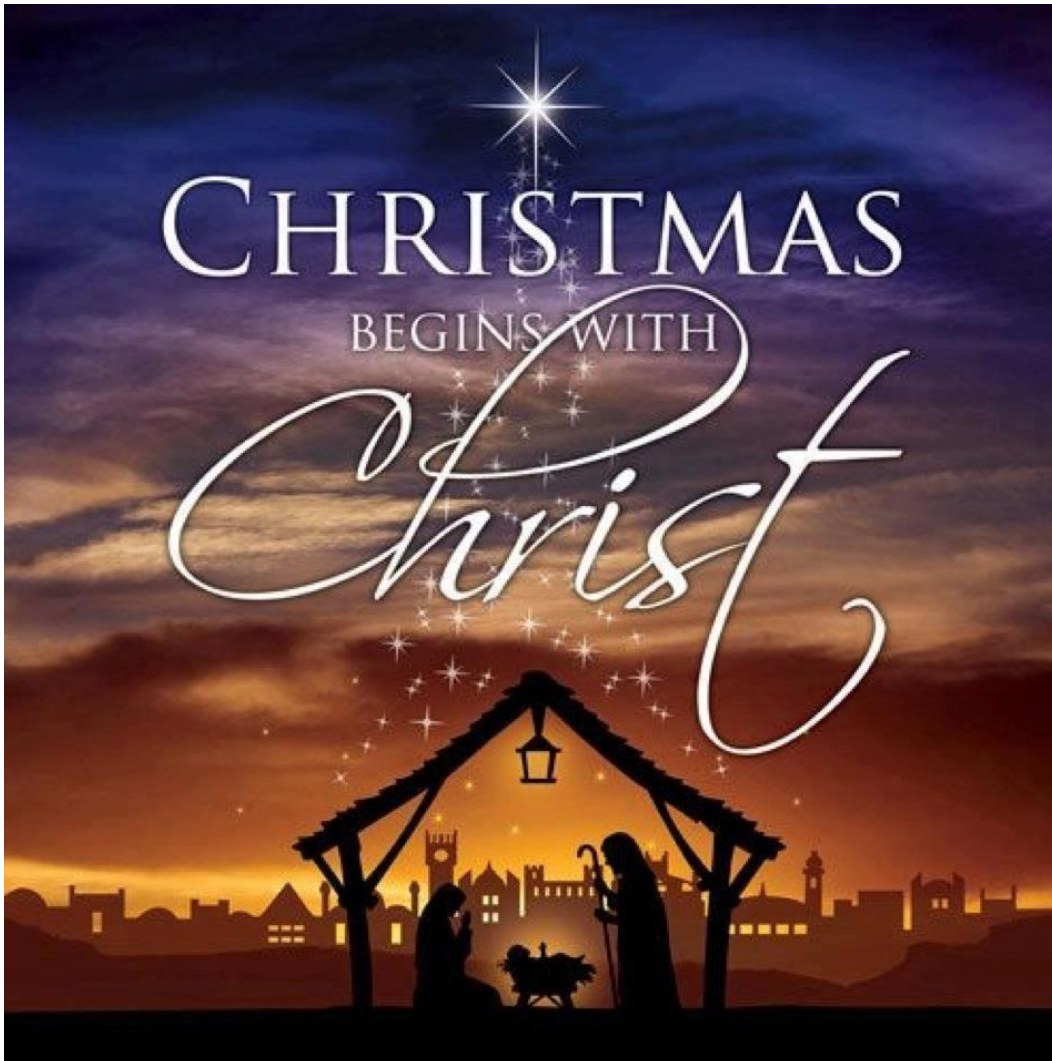


December  
2024



***For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9:6***

Greetings once again in the name of our Lord and Savior, our Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. We are currently just starting our favorite season here in Niamey. **First**, because the calendar has flipped, bringing us to the Christmas season. This letter was supposed to be out 2-3 weeks ago, but life just kept getting in the way. So sorry for the delay. Hopefully, I won't miss anything that has been going on around here. It seems like the days fly by and before we know it, another month has clicked off the calendar. I have no idea to where October and November disappeared. If any of you find them, please send them back to me. And **second**, because the nights are cool now. At least for us, in the 70s Fahrenheit!

As we begin our preparations for Christmas (as they say here), we are reminded just how blessed we are when we can say that our God provided such a perfect and easy (for us) way for redemption.

### ***Niger News***

I know last letter I reported that visas were starting to be granted to Americans again. Well, that is what they said. Saying things is a whole lot different than doing. People who were waiting for visas from last June are still waiting. Both our kids currently have their passports in the Niger embassy in Washington DC, but they sit. Both our kids are supposed to fly out to Niger in less than two weeks, so we can enjoy a family Christmas together, but at this point those visas still have not been issued. We do have a backup plan, if the government here will grant another way into the country. It is hard to know reality because one person might say it is totally possible, but when it comes time to make it happen, then it falls through the cracks. Please pray that the meeting I have with government officials Tuesday, December 3, will be profitable. My visa expires at the end of this month, and I have no idea when I will be able to renew it. Lord willing, very soon. Other than that, most things in Niger seem fairly normal. Prices of goods are still high, but seem to have hit a plateau. It is still difficult for people to find jobs because so many groups from foreign lands have left, creating a huge amount of people without jobs. It is amazing how many people have come to us asking us to teach them English and when I ask why they want to learn, the answer is usually along the lines that we need to leave here to get a job to provide for our families. Times are still tough. Please pray we will have wisdom to decide who and how to help, and pray that jobs will be found by those seeking them. I am asked almost every time I go into town if I have any jobs available. I try to be creative and can create a temporary job for some things to be done, but nothing permanent which is what they need.

### ***Villages***

David reports good news from the villages. I recently asked him if I could go to one of the villages to which I normally could go. Recently, the government has stated that all foreigners (including me) who visit a village, must be accompanied by a government official so he can hear everything we talk about with the chief of the people of that village. Because of that, David and I both thought it would be better if I stayed in town mainly for the reason that I do not want my presence to bring a target to those in the villages. So many have had to move to bigger villages because terrorists have taken over some smaller villages. Normally, there is no killing in these raids, but threats of it remain, and as I reported last letter, they were required to pay a huge amount of money to stay. Recently, I have been helping the Gourmanche church in one of our villages with rebuilding their church that was burned. Another retired missionary in the States has raised some money to help with this as well. I am currently building them some benches on which to sit for church instead of sitting on the ground. Even that has proven not only costly, but difficult. The wood we get here now is never straight, is expensive, and the fact that we must employ a taxi to get it out to this village could cause some to watch it more closely. We plug along, we pray for the people. But God is faithful; as you see in some photos, people are being baptized! They are coming to know Jesus and walk in obedience to Him. Praise the lord!

## **Opportunities**

As we come upon the end of another year, I am reminded so much of the need here in Niger. So many of you have often asked, "how can we help?" I was trying to think of some less costly projects that we try to fund or help to fund that may pique your interest. I will list them in no particular order.

1. **Benches.** I am doing my best to make about 60 to 100 benches for the churches in the villages. Right now, unless they already have a set of benches, they come in and sit on the cement pad or dirt floors. I buy all the screws, washers myself and only require help with wood. This last batch of wood which consisted of 14, 4 meter planks cost about 500.00 USD. Transport out to the village normally would cost around 50 USD depending on what mode of transportation we employ.

2. **Grain.** Villagers especially ask for grain, and when harvest is small or has been stolen by terrorists, the need is more acute. I have not done this recently, but normally it would cost around 2,000 USD per village. We have 4 villages to care for. I do not automatically do a grain distribution. I usually wait for the chief of the village to request help. They normally would not request help unless they were in dire straits.

3. **Farming Tools:** Along with grain, that is often needed to be replaced so they have the tools to prepare the soil and plant their grain to grow crops-- as in the case after the floods. This price varies depending on how much they need, if they need tools to go along with that, and what crops. Normally, it is lettuce, peppers, onions, etc.

4. **Radios.** Yes, people still want radios to be able to listen to the the gospel and to listen to Christian songs in their heart language. When I could go out to the village, often, I would hear the kids singing the songs that are on those radios. They have memorized them and the message of those songs are continually sung. I asked David if he put the kids up to singing just because I came, but he said he hears that almost every time he visits the villages! The cost of radios has gone up, as has everything. But, you can purchase a radio with an SD card for about 30 USD.

5. **Prison ministry.** You have heard me often ask for prayer for Pastor Ali and his dear wife. I wish you all could hear their testimony of how they came to Christ and then how God brought them together. They are a very precious couple and one that we call our dear friends. Pastor Ali heads up the prison ministries all around Niger. I think there are about 8 prisons scattered around the country. Some are big, some are small. He has pastors stationed in the area of each one so they can continue to bring the gospel message. But, once a year, he loves to provide a meal, a feast, if you will, of macaroni or rice, chicken, vegetables, etc. Janice and I usually try to go out to help with the preparing of this meal as well. But, as you might expect, it costs money to do this. I try my hardest to reserve about \$2,000 a year. between our mission, us, and maybe some other ministries who might give towards this. Some years get pretty lean around here. Pastor does not receive a regular salary, ever. He is a missionary in his own land and relies on those who will support this ministry. I often ask Pastor to help with our visas and he gladly does so, so I usually try to give him way more than he would expect, just to help him out with day to day expenses. But, if you would like to give to the prison ministry, he would be most appreciative.

6. **Motorcycle fund.** In the past, I have tried to keep up a small motorcycle fund to have on hand for when the guys, our workers, are desperate to get their motorcycles repaired. This is their only means of transport and when they live on the other side of town, and their motorcycle breaks down, they usually walk the 7 or 8 kilometers to get to work. This account stays open for anyone who would like to give.

These are just ideas. I often hear from a Sunday School class who would like to donate some funds to a ministry going on around us. The list above is not exhaustive of the needs here, but it is a start. If you would like to give to any of these, you can send your donation to the [Mission: 3dThreshold](#) in Canada or [FBM](#) in the States. You will find links at the bottom of this letter that will take you to the correct page or click on the blue links in the text. In Canada, you can also use [paypal](#) if you choose. Be sure it goes to us and mark it with whatever ministry you would like it to go to. For example, if you wish to donate to the prison ministry, simply state ***T & J Phillips, prison ministry, Niger***. When I see that on my statement, I know what to send out here in Niger to have that on hand. If it isn't marked with anything specific, it will go into our personal account and will help with our day to day expenses as well.

### ***Sahel Academy***

Things keep rolling along as school. I love teaching my history class, even though my love of history hasn't quite hit my students, yet. Janice continues to teach Bible and is having a great influence among all our kids, but especially those from a Muslim background. They are asking some good questions. Please keep praying that we not only teach our subjects, but show the truth of the gospel to our students.

### ***Family news***

When I say family news, I mean news of Mikaylah and Jayson. Over Thanksgiving, both our kids were able to fly down to Florida to spend a couple of days with my family who was having a grand celebration of my dad's 90th birthday! We tell our Nigerien friends that my dad is 90 and their jaws drop because that is so rare here. But, it was great for us to be able to use Whatsapp and see what was happening at this celebration. I am so thankful for the spiritual legacy that my dad has left us. I can remember so often when I was young that he would be in a chair in our living room with the Word opened on his lap. He has been and continues to be one of our biggest prayer warriors. Thank you, Dad!

Mikaylah and Jayson are both supposed to fly out here to spend Christmas with us.

However, the Niger government is still not granting visas to Americans. The kids sent their passports into the embassy in DC about 8 weeks ago and have heard nothing. I try to call them and all the numbers say that the number does not exist. I email them every week, but so far, have received no response. Tomorrow(Tuesday), I have an appointment to go talk to another official who says they will grant a different form of visa, but we need their passports. If we don't have visas soon, we will have to cancel this trip and nobody wants to do that. Please pray for this to happen. Pray that somehow, they will grant our kids these visas and they show up in the mail tomorrow! We don't know, they could be in the mail right now! We have a big God who can do this.

Thank you once again for all of you who give sacrificially to our work here in Niamey. Thank you. But even more people told us that they would commit Niger to prayer, which is the best way to support us! Thank you. God is working in Niger and neighboring Muslim countries. Please continue to pray that the Lord will use our ministry to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus that will in turn make an eternal impact here in this country with these wonderful people.

In His Grip,

Tim and Janice

**"... Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with *thanksgiving*. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may *open* to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison--that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak..." Colossians 4:2-4.**



A photo of 4 of my siblings with my dad celebrating 90 years!



Some pictures sent in from the villages to show that crops are growing again after all that rain and flooding we had this past August. Praise God that people have come along side to help them get crops back into the ground so they can have food and an income.



I did not mention this in the main body of text above, but I had to snap a few pics a couple of weeks ago during church because Pastor took a day off from preaching to allow his son to preach. Jacob did a wonderful job bringing the Word. His brother is next to him translating from French to Zharma. This is a result of these boys going through Bible classes here at the mission over several years. A ministry that started years ago and continued until the coup that has made it hard for the teachers to travel back. But, knowing the work they put into these classes and then being able to use those skills is fantastic to see!



Most recent baptisms in the village a bit far from here. Praise God people are coming to know Christ! And following in Believer's baptism. God's work will continue!



### **Thanksgiving and Prayer Requests for December 2024:**

- 1. Thank God for working in unexpected ways, reminding us that His ways are higher than our ways and that He is faithful and worthy of our trust! Lately we have enjoyed electricity nearly 95% of the time! Praise God that our internet connections and ability to find cash have been more consistent. We just recently changed internet providers, and are so pleased with the better service.**
- 2. Thank God for the graduates of Sahel Academy, Pray for Caleb as he has traveled to the Netherlands to be near family as he figures out this next phase of life, Joel has traveled to Canada to attend Prairie Bible college for a year, pray for David as he plans to study at the American University of Paris, France. He wasn't able to secure a visa for the first semester, but is hoping for January. Pray for him as he is living with non Christian relatives in Benin as he waits to go to France.**
- 3. Thank God for the new converts in Niger this year. Pray they will be strong and courageous in uncertainty, and as they face persecution, they will remain secure in their eternal destiny and grow in their faith. One of our good friends just became engaged to his Christian girl friend and we are rejoicing at the fact that the church is growing!**
- 4. Thank God for the ways our daughter Mikaylah is growing in her faith and in her relationship with the Lord Jesus and with her fellow students. She is mentoring a large group of freshmen that have been a challenge.**
- 5. Thank God for our son Jayson's transition to life in the United States. Thank God that Jayson is walking in the Truth. Pray that he will be motivated to keep on persevering and not give up. Pray he will continue to hunger and thirst for the Lord. Pray for many details that we are discovering now that require lots of creativity. Praise God he was able to get his Georgia driver's license and is now driving again! Continue to pray for direction and ambition for the future, he has recently talked about taking some general education courses in January. Thank God for Paradise Mountain Ministries, and their specialized ministry to MKs in transition.**
- 6. Thank God for the opportunity to teach at Sahel Academy. We are grateful for the opportunities God has provided for us to speak into the lives of students, some of whom are not yet trusting in the Lord Jesus. Pray we will be a consistent witness of the Lord Jesus to students and staff alike and that those who have not yet trusted in him will be drawn to the Lord Jesus. Praise God for "T" who has recently put his trust in Christ!**
- 7. Thank God for caring for His Church in Niger. Pray we will find creative ways to meet the new needs brought on by the sanctions and terrorist activity. Pray He will bring more people into right relationship with Him as they hear the good news of the gospel and respond. Pray that God will raise up someone to pastor this new fledgling church in the village.**
- 8. Praise God that we are still able to serve in Niger in spite of the change of government. Pray that the infrastructure will survive this bumpy time and that God's will will be accomplished in this country. He is building His church in Niger!**
- 9. Thank God for his faithfulness. His mercies are new every morning. He is worthy of our trust. Pray we will be faithful to Him, to seek His face daily and depend on Him, remembering that though we don't know the future, we serve the One who does!**

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