

# Bene Koytara Goyterey

Those who work for God's Kingdom (translated from Zarma)



## Dear friends,

It's vacation time, time to slow down a bit. We don't have to get up early each morning for the kids to be at school by 7h25. That, for me, not naturally being an early riser, makes a big difference already. And we had been thinking what we could do to get away from Niamey for a bit. The security situation in the areas around us really have made that quite challenging. In the end we decided to spend some time in Maradi. The bonus with staying in Maradi would be that it could easily be arranged for Caleb to get his drivers licence. Over past few years he had had several occasions that helped him to already learn how to drive a car, which helped significantly to speed things up. For now he has his 'attestation', a kind of temporary permit till he gets his actual license. And of course, till he is 18 he can only drive while being accompanied by an adult. A good way of gaining more experience while there's an extra pair of eyes helping.

At Training Centre Caleb the present group finished their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of training. At this moment there are 50 participants who succeeded their exam and can continue into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year. There are however in total 43 participants who are in a, let's say, intermediary situation.

A number of them should in the end be able to continue into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, but for the moment we don't know how many. We hope that at least about 30 of the 43 will be able to continue and finish their studies. Besides these participants, there are also the 8 girls and women who follow both the training at Centre Caleb and the discipleship training. They all succeeded and we hope that all will decide and have the possibility to do their final year of training. In what follows in this newsletter we will share some other good news about Training Centre Caleb.

Even if administratively it was not an easy year at Academie Evangélique Cornerstone de Maradi, the teachers did good work and we were very glad that all the students of the final class of the elementary section succeeded their final tests and all of the first group of students in the final year of the 'collège' (first part of secondary training) succeeded their exams. That is a wonderful accomplishment! And as for the administrative matters at the school, you will be able to read below that we've found what we expect to be a good and durable solution.

We hope you will enjoy reading a bit of our news again. Please do contact us if there is anything in particular that you would enjoy reading more about.

## Transition at AECM



Monday morning June 19 at about a quarter to eight, I'm driving from the SIM compound in Maradi, to the Maza Tsaye compound. We're having a special meeting today with the school leadership and a delegation from Cornerstone Association. They arrived from Niamey yesterday.

Turning back the clock; it's October 2010 and in a newsletter we write: "Next school year (2011-2012) it is our intention to start a kindergarten on the outskirts of Maradi", and: "we will work under the umbrella of Cornerstone Association, which is an officially recognized association with the objective to start christian schools in Niger."

That was almost 13 years ago! Since then a lot of water passed through the Niger river, many things happened and many things changed. For one thing, we can no longer say that the school is on the outskirts of Maradi. But more importantly, since we actually started with that first kindergarten class in 2012-2013, we have had the possibility to add another class each year. As a result, this year the first group of 'collégiens' successfully finished their first 4 years of secondary education. The message I received in the WhatsApp group for the school leadership announcing the 100% pass rate of our candidates at the exams oozed relief and great joy! And rightfully so!

Administratively though, since the start of this past school year, the supervision and guidance of the school from a distance for both Judy Evans and myself turned out to be particularly challenging. It made it all the more clear that we really needed a sustainable solution toward the future.

As I wrote above, the school was started under the umbrella of Cornerstone Association. In subsequent years, however, and for various reasons, the people from Cornerstone Association were not actually involved with the school. The link existed nevertheless. And so now, in the search for stable supervision for the school, Cornerstone Association came to the forefront again. At a certain moment I sat down with its president to discuss the situation. In my mind we would try to brainstorm about possible options, but he actually told me that Cornerstone Association was ready to take on full responsibility for the school. That was great news as far as I was concerned! And so for this reason, after some further preparatory work, we now are having the meeting with the school leadership to fully inform them of Cornerstone Association taking on the supervision and guidance of the school (and of course all the teachers and the guard are going to be informed at the same time too). For the people from Cornerstone Association this the meeting is also to understand the organization of the school and discuss how to continue.

For me, as well as the other three people on the board: Ayouba Sabo, Judy Evans and pastor Mathieu Motem, this now means that we do no longer carry any responsibility regarding the school. I will however, continue to be involved in the background, receiving reports and providing any information necessary to work where possible on fundraising for the rest of the buildings still necessary.

## The roof that disappeared



Not a nice idea with the approaching rainy season....

I don't remember how many, but it has been several years since we discovered that the termites had eaten away significantly on the wooden structure underneath the sheet metal roofing at the main building at Training Centre Caleb. During housing the office and the sleeping rooms for the DTS students, and having the roof blown off during a rainstorm was not a particularly pleasant thought. It was obvious that we needed to think about replacing the roof. However, raising funds to be able to do the work, turned out to be a big challenge.

Earlier this year, when a first strong wind hit Maradi, Sunday (the manager) called Blaise to let him know that several sheets of the roofing came loose again. They arranged for someone to repair it, only to discover that there was basically no wood anymore to fix them to! The roof was as good as gone.

With the rainy season approaching and no funds to do anything about it, Blaise decided to do some minor repairs on the classroom building to fix a few holes in the roof, there and to secure the windows, so that all the office material could be safely stored there, awaiting a solution. The work was done and at the end of the school year everything from the main building was moved to that classroom building. We were thankful that no big storm came till that was done!

### End of story?

We thought the story would end there for now. But then, to our big surprise, we received a generous gift that was sufficient to pay for all the work! And, when we received it, there should also be just enough time to start the work and have the new roof in place before the arrival of the big rains, to avoid damage to the interior of the building.

### Renewal of the roof

The builder (someone we know from the church we were part of in Maradi) started working as soon as possible and together with his crew he worked hard to be able to put the new roofing on in due time. It rained just once, and not too much, before they could put the new metal roofing sheets in place. They continue to work to finalize everything, but the building is protected again now that the rainy season is in full swing.

We are so thankful and relieved that the building has a good, reliable and durable (the wooden structure has been replaced by a metal one) roof again for years to come!

## To thank for:

- The possibility to have some time away from Niamey and get some rest.
- Good rains thus far this year.
- The gift making it possible to replace the roof on the office building of Training Centre Caleb.
- The students finishing well at Academie Evangélique Cornerstone de Maradi and the group of girls and women continuing their training at Training Centre Caleb.

## To pray for:

- The present transition in the governmental situation in Niger; that in particular those in leadership will use wisdom and rule with justice and righteousness. Please also continue to pray for peace in general in Niger and the surrounding countries.
- The people part of Association Cornerstone as well as the staff and Académie Evangélique Cornerstone de Maradi, that they will work together well and have a good period of preparing for the new school year.
- Our various involvements; that we would be wise in our choices and investment of time and other resources.

With our love,

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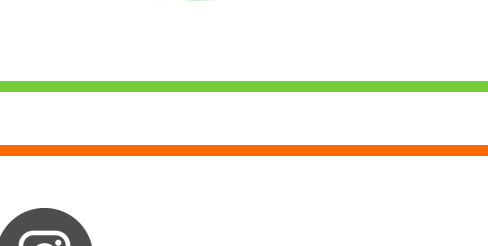
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