

NEWSLETTER

from Margaret & Celestin

August 2026

Dear Friends & Family,

How are you? We're well, even under the immense pressure to make a decision about the future of La Bergerie school. When the secondary school classrooms were seriously damaged in a storm a few weeks ago, we were very discouraged and downhearted. Since then, we have been thinking and praying seriously about whether we can continue running the school or whether it would be better to close now. We haven't paid the primary school teachers yet for their last month of work, because not all parents have paid their children's school fees. The work on building the primary school toilets has stopped, and we have no primary school classrooms. So what hope do we have?

We know that this is God's work and he does things his way and in his time. He is Sovereign and Lord! He loves us dearly and shows mercy and grace. We have turned away from our sin and worldly ways, to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Life is not easy, but actually it wasn't easy for Jesus when he lived on earth. We are learning to trust him more, and see things his way.

Many local people naively believe that we have a lot of money, and that because the school is Christian it should be free. They don't see the need to pay school fees ... or they wait until the last minute to pay. Some parents are known to the local education authorities for sending their children to a different school each year to avoid paying fees, and so last year, 'change of school' was banned. We do try to help the most vulnerable, in particular orphans, who would otherwise not go to school.

We have encouraged local staff to take responsibility in the school, (and the church and health centre) and we have not always been present. Staff assured us that parents had money to pay school fees and that they would be able to chase them up to come and pay. This doesn't seem to have happened as well as it could, so we need to make changes to the way we work.

We feel that God would have us continue running La Bergerie school and to build classrooms. We don't have the funds to build a permanent structure yet, but have made a plan that will help us move from temporary to a permanent classroom building. We plan to build 6 classrooms on the primary school land, to accommodate 6 classes. They will be built with deep foundations and very strong pillars that could take the weight of another storey in the future. Four classrooms will be built in a block using the boundary wall at the back, and the other classrooms against the boundary wall at the side.

This year we will strictly limit the number of children in each class by only accepting those who will pay school fees. That means all those who haven't paid this year will not be accepted (unless they complete payment first). Margaret has already committed to take over managing the finances for the school for this year. This involves meeting the parents, receiving money, writing receipts, recording transactions, accounting for all expenses and writing reports. All supported in prayer!

We will probably just repair the secondary school classrooms – building up the wall and replacing the roof. As soon as we have money to build new secondary school classrooms, we will. We also still need to finish building the toilets for the primary school.

We have 2 months to do this work, including raising the finances to finish before the new school term starts. The position of the classroom building has been marked out on the land and some young men have been engaged to start digging holes for the pillar foundations. They need to be 3 metres deep. The iron rods are being attached and then they will be cemented into the holes. We will use the stock of sand and gravel, but need to pay the debt at the builder's merchants and buy cement. We also need to pay the workers each day and give them a daily ration of food and tea (which is very strong and sweet)!

This is a step of faith in obedience to what we hear God saying. We have a fraction of the finances needed and would greatly appreciate any help you are able to give. Thank you.



Digging foundation holes 3 metres deep

*“Enter through the narrow gate;
for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it.
For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

Matthew 7 v13-14 (NRSV)

Have you ever heard God calling you into missions? Ever wanted to come and help us in Chad? It isn't easy, but mission is an adventure of faith. Trust God, follow him and share the gospel - draw others into his Kingdom and disciple them. We live alongside local people to teach and preach and show how to live a Christian life. It's a cultural experience, including communicating in another language and respecting our differences. We want to show the way to the Father and to eternal life.

Would you come for a couple of weeks or so, or even longer? If you could help with building or construction in the next couple of months we would be delighted. Living conditions are basic, but this is real life on a real mission field! Whatever skills, knowledge and experiences you have can be used in service to God and will be of help here in Chad. If you would like to be involved with work in the school, such as helping with language learning, or assisting the teachers in class – or other activities, you are very welcome. It's hard work, but can be fun! Its certainly a time to draw near to God and grow in relationship with him!

Margaret has been growing in faith by 'Copying the scriptures'; a course with the University of the Nations. She has copied out the Gospel of Mark (by hand) and is now working through Matthew. Although it does take a long time, especially with many disruptions from the children (on school holidays); it's a way of slowing down to meditate on God's word.

We are in a spiritual battle with many dangers and challenges but God is with us! He gave us the power to overcome sin and death, and to have eternal life with him. Thank you for all for your prayer and support which carries us through.

PRAYER POINTS:

- Thank you for praying, and thank the Lord for helping us to decide on the future of La Bergerie school.
- Please pray for his provision to build the classrooms and finish building the toilets.
- Please pray for the preparation of the new school year as we start to plan, talk to parents and accept pupils for the next year. Pray for the engagement of good teachers.
- Pray for the new church growing in 'La Paix' quarter of Koundoul. There are about 12 to 13 people coming regularly and they would like to rent a shelter there for their Sunday services (especially in the rainy season).
- Pray for preparations to start a church in Moundou. The lady who has been pioneering there has now returned. She reports that much prayer is needed as even in the churches there are people possessed by demons. They are not really committed to Jesus, and visit the marabout (witch doctor). She found an area which would be suitable to work in, where the local thieves and bandits sleep. Celestin and team were unable to travel to Moundou, (or Sarh) due to lack of finances.
- Celestin is really tired and desperately needs time out. He would like to go to Cameroon for a few weeks to really rest. Please pray this would be possible once the building work on the school is underway.
- Please continue to pray for our safety and the security situation in Chad.
- Pray for the working of the health centre. Unfortunately the doctor has been arrested on evidence of being a con-man. The health centre is not involved in malpractice but this doesn't give a good impression. A couple of local government nurses have offered to work there on their days off, in addition to one of the nursery school teachers (who is a nurse) and is already working there as a volunteer. We need to buy some more medicines that they can use and sell to patients which provides a small income. Thank you

GOD BLESS!

Margaret & Celestin

To support us financially:

If you would like to gift aid in the UK, please sign up to www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20103447.
Stewardship claim back from the government the tax paid and add it to your gift (making it bigger).

Here are our UK bank details if you would like to give towards our personal support or mission work:

Bank name: Santander; Account name: Margaret M TANNER; Sort Code: 09-01-32; Account no.: 85726803.

If you would like to give towards building La Bergerie school, please give through our bank or GoFundMe:

<https://gofund.me/e439558cf>.

Thank you