

Happy February to my Friends and Family!

I can't believe how fast the months are flying by! Chad and its people have captured my heart in ways I could not have imagined when I first came! I will be sad to leave when that time comes. This month has brought its own joys, challenges, and growth. I have been able to branch out in my Sabbath activities, and that has been really rewarding. For church, I have



Telling Children's Story at  
Bush Church

been visiting the "Bush church" with some of the other missionaries here (we have had to take a bit of a pause on that while the truck is being repaired, but are hoping to start back up again soon). Bush church is a small company of believers who meet on some mats spread out under a mango tree in the village of Guissa. There are about 10 adults and a horde of children that attend each week. They are in the process of building a church for the group, but until then, the open air method works well. I went to share the children's story with the kids, which I did with the help of the pictures in the "My Bible Friend" books. However, I was not expecting to be asked to share the sermon with the congregation —in French! The first week that happened I am sure I looked like a deer in headlights (or maybe a more accurate description with the animals around here: I looked like a chicken caught in the middle of the road with a motorbike bearing down on it in a cloud of dust)! I have plenty of things to say in English, but I didn't think I had anything to share in French! But the Lord is present in every emergency and He moved on my heart to share about the story of Joseph and how Joseph was faithful in every task, however

menial, and how that faithfulness was rewarded. There were times I had no clue what I was saying in French and even less of an idea about what was being translated into the local dialect, but God's spirit moves on hearts regardless of our own proficiency or lack thereof. It was a poignant reminder that all God needs is for us to be willing, and He will do the rest!

In addition to visiting area churches, I have also been attending youth group meetings, called Pathfinders, in the little church of Nergue about three miles away from where I live. The Pathfinder club there has its share of challenges, but the kids are so joyful! This past Sabbath we had an activity about the days of creation, where the kids were sent out to find something that reminded them of what God made on a specific day. I was curious to see what the kids would find, but I was definitely not expecting the flaming palm frond that was marched triumphantly down the center aisle of the church to represent the light God created on the first day! Needless to say, we took the activity outside after that! (In my head, I could hear the admonition of my own Pathfinder leaders about how the fire needs to stay *in* the fire pit, and I just laughed at how different things are in different cultures and contexts!) But I really enjoyed seeing how creative the kids were with what little they have! I definitely will never forget the light God created on the first day after that demonstration, and I hope that they don't either!



Pathfinders Working on  
Learning Knots

In other snapshots of news, the older kids in our after school program are learning the French version of "In Christ Alone," "En Jesus Suel," to sing for the end of the year celebration. (If you are interested in hearing what it sounds like in French, you can find the song on YouTube!) The kids are loving it! Most of the kids stay an extra 15 minutes

after class ends to practice, and Victor (you will remember him from my last newsletter) will ask us to play the recording for him so he can practice whenever he gets a chance. Speaking of Victor, some of you were worried about his family having enough food. I am touched by your concern! I am happy to report to you that another volunteer here is really working with his family and sending gifts of food home and giving his mom some extra work so she can get a little more money. While this is a bit of a hungry season for the family, they are not going to starve! Victor also responded to an appeal for baptism, and those of us who have been investing in his spiritual growth could not be happier! Please continue to keep him in your prayers as he is doing Bible study in preparation for baptism, that the Holy Spirit would seal this decision in his heart and keep him faithful!



Martin and His New Bike

As I learn better French, I am gradually getting to know the kids in the program better, and am able to talk and laugh and joke and build relationships with them. One kid, Martin, has been working on our compound for about a year, saving up money to buy a bicycle. I pass him as he sweeps up mango leaves in the afternoons. I pause to say “Bon travail” or “Good work,” and Martin responds by teaching me phrases in the local dialect, Najerae. This past month he finally saved up enough money (30,000 cfa or about \$46.00) to buy the bicycle and he is just so proud! He tracked me down to take a special photograph of him with his bicycle. He finally got to see the realization of all that he has been working for, every weekday, for so long! How much more proud will we be when we get to see the realization of all the we are working for, here in Chad and back home, with souls saved to Christ! And we are getting to see some of the results of that work already.

But with the joys of fruit won to Christ also comes heartache. Last week, one of the midwives here was taking care of a tiny premature baby who was born at about 31 weeks. He was just on the verge of survival, with respiratory distress and other complications that are difficult to address with our limited resources, but the midwife really wanted to try to work with him and help him pull through. You see, he was the only surviving child of his mother. She had multiple previous pregnancies but all of her children had died. The last one died at the age of 13, breaking the mother’s heart. The midwife was giving round the clock care to this little guy, and she told me I could come over and help give some “kangaroo care” to the baby. For premature infants, “kangaroo care,” or skin to skin contact with a caregiver, is incredibly important. I had some free time one afternoon, and so I went over and held the little guy for over an hour. His body felt so tiny against my stomach and his little fists tickled as they bunched up against my skin. He would open his eyes and try to look around and he had the most adorable wrinkles on his forehead. I had great hopes for his survival! Sadly, the next morning he passed away. I cried. Maybe he would have lived in the states with the greater resources for medical care, maybe not. But the reality of the fragility of life is so real and so heartbreaking here. I was glad that I took the time to spend with him that afternoon and that I didn’t wait for the next day, since for him, that day didn’t come. I am forcefully reminded of the importance of taking the time to invest in relationships, to share Jesus, and to be present for people when we can, because tomorrow is not assured. But even in the



Me giving kangaroo care to the baby (He really is in all those blankets!)

midst of the sorrow here, I am comforted by the promise in Isaiah 65:20 and 22, “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days...For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” That is the day we live and work and wait for; that day is our earnest expectation and our hope. So my friends, in the midst of the laughter and the tears that are our life here on Earth, take hope! We have a promise of a better land, a heavenly Canaan.

Please keep us in your prayers now more than ever before! Pray that God will open doors for His work and that those trying to hinder His cause will be removed and that we will have safety to minister to the people around us! Pray for extra vanguards of angels and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we may work in all boldness without fear!

Courage and Maranatha,  
Lilly