



Matt & Becki Dillingham
in Chad

Spreading the Gospel Around Chad

One of the standout flights that we did in the last quarter of 2022 was for an organisation that has built up a network of over 400 churches across Chad. In 2021, they setup 20 churches and they are hoping to exceed that number for 2022. The New Apostolic Church Canada is making a huge impact here by planting these churches and spreading the Word but they are also benefiting the communities in the villages in practical ways. When they build a church, they also build bathroom facilities and a well so that it's not just providing a building for worship, it's also providing amenities for the community.

Becki flew a team of 6 people to Ba-illi in Southern Chad to begin a tour of some of the churches that their denomination had set up. There was a large turnout at the airstrip to greet the visitors and welcome them back. The church had organised a divine service and Becki was invited to attend as well, as she had nothing to do during the two hours that the passengers had requested to be on the ground. After a 20 minute car journey, they arrived at the church premises, greeted by a group of children singing a song. Three of the visitors each gave a sermon and two choirs sang and at the end of the service each choir was requested to do an encore by the impressed visitors. Three hours after it began, the service was finished and it was looking doubtful that Becki would make it back home that day! She was thankful, however, for the opportunity to see for herself how much of an impact they have had on the community in Ba-illi. "The service I attended was quite special," she said "it's clear that they are loved by the community that they have come to serve."

Becki and the apostles departed for Sarh where, again, they were given a warm reception consisting of music and celebration. From here they continued their trip by road, preaching at a different church every day, sometimes visiting two or three churches. Becki was reminded of how the apostle Paul visited churches, the team from the New Apostolic Church don't just set up a church, they come back and see how their church is doing and encourage their church, passing on greetings from the other churches and share stories of fellow apostles.

A week later, Becki flew to Pala to collect them and bring them back to the city and after the successful trip, Arnaud Martig from the church sent her a message. "I'd like to thank you again for the great experience and your kind support flying me and my team of God's servants the other day," he said. The time saved by starting and ending their trip with a MAF flight compared to doing it by road, enabled them to visit far more churches during their time in Chad and to be well rested before their tour. Working with the New Apostolic Church Canada was rewarding and an example of how MAF plays its part in efforts to spread the Gospel successfully.



(left) The passengers being welcomed by a group of children in Ba-illi. (Right) Amongst the congregation for the 'Divine service'

MAF Christmas party

One of the best days of the year is the MAF Chad Christmas party. All our Chadian colleagues, together with their families come to our compound for a celebration. This year there were around 90 people here, over half of which were children and included Houlda and Togba, who left MAF in 2022. It was the ideal opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to them and to Leon, who had just finished his stint as program manager. There was lots of laughter as we split into teams and played games such as musical chairs and a dressing up relay race, both of which became very competitive! We then enjoyed a Chadian meal, which was cooked on gas bottle stoves in an empty car port by a Chadian lady and her team who spent the morning getting it ready. After lunch we heard speeches from those who had left and listened to stories told about them by their colleagues. Some staff were given certificates to recognise their efforts over the last year and Christmas presents were handed out to all the children. A lot of time and effort goes into organising and running the day but it is worth it to see the joy at the end of Tug o' war or the excitement of a child receiving a new football. We are thankful for this team of people who are responsible for making the flights happen and also our supporters who make it all possible.



(top) Playing Tug o' War and (bottom) Listening to a song sung in French before the start of the awards ceremony and speeches

Christmas 2022



(left) Feeling cold after a fun morning playing in the snow. (right) Testing the acoustics in the Great Theatre in Ephesus

MAF encourage us to take a break from Chad each year and so last month we took a holiday to Turkey. The kids had never seen snow before so we visited Kayseri (Cappadocia) and drove up Mount Ericyes. We were all excited to find that a recent snowfall had produced at least a foot of snow and with hardly anyone around, we had a wonderful morning throwing snowballs, making a snowman and sledging at the bottom of a ski slope. We stayed in a cave in Cappadocia, had some amazing walks through the unique landscape and watched hundreds of hot air balloons take to the sky at sunrise on a crisp winter morning. We spent two days in Ephesus, which was fascinating and spent a fun week in Istanbul. We found an English-speaking church

service on Christmas day and enjoyed seeing the sights and sampling Turkish delight at the local markets. When we got back to Chad, we had a 'second Christmas' at home with friends, then spent a night camping out with around 60 people from the Mission community at the horse farm in N'Djamena. Then the following night we stayed with friends, although we were all too tired to see in the new year! So it was a busy period but great fun. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy 2023.



Photography by our colleague Phil who gave the children glowsticks at the camp out and a photo challenge.

Pray for Sarah

Sarah has been our house-help since we moved to Chad and has worked for different MAF families for over 20 years. She is a very hard worker, a committed Christian who is heavily involved in her church and a single mother to her own five children (now aged 13-24). A couple of years ago, she took in another five children (then aged between 2 and 10) when their mum (who went to Sarah's church) was murdered outside her house shortly after their father died in military service. Last year, she took in a baby whose parents died and whose only relatives were too old to look after her. In Chadian culture, it is expected that you help your neighbour if you are able to and as she has a job with a nsara (foreigner), she is frequently expected to help people in her community who need money for whatever reason. It is therefore impossible for her to save money and any money that she earns goes on food, clothes and school fees for her children. Previous families that she has worked for helped her (financially) to build a house and over the last few years we have helped her to improve her standard of living further.

In October, N'Djamena saw the worst flooding for many years and as her house is situated on a floodplain between two rivers, she had to move her family to temporary accommodation. This also happened two years

ago, but this time the water was much higher. One day in November she broke down in tears in our house and told me that her house had been completely destroyed. She was devastated and couldn't see any hope in her situation. We have promised to help her build a new house but have insisted that she look for new land, away from the river, so that the same thing doesn't happen when the river next floods. At the moment, she is renting two houses for her and her children to live in, but as this is expensive, we hope to get her moved into a permanent house as soon as possible. If you pray for us, please pray for Sarah to find some suitable, affordable land in a safe neighbourhood and that we will be able to find someone skilled and trustworthy who can do the building work.



(Left) Photo of her house before the flooding (Right) The current state of her house Sarah with the children she adopted in 2019



Prayer

* We will be able to find suitable, affordable land and good builders that can build a new house for Sarah so that she can move out of temporary accommodation as soon as possible.

* Our new Program Manager family, Sundar and Pushpa, have been in the program for 3 months now but their intentions to learn French in that time have not gone well due to a lack of effective French teaching here. Sundar needs a good standard of French to do his job so they are looking into the possibility of going to another country to enrol in full-time language learning and return to Chad later in the year. Thankfully, we have an experienced MAF family coming for 5 months to help the program in his absence.

* The amount of flying that we can do is still limited by the availability of engineers to come to Chad to do the regular maintenance needed on the aircraft. In the short term we pray that engineers in other MAF programs will come when needed so that we do not have to "ground" the aircraft. For the long-term we continue to pray for a permanent Chief Engineer to join our team.

Praise

* We took an out-of-country break to Turkey over Christmas and enjoyed the opportunity to visit some amazing places and fulfil the children's desire to see snow!

* We had productive talks with MAF's Africa regional manager about our future and after considering our options over the summer, we decided that we would remain in Chad for at least another 18 months.

* The electricity supply to our neighbourhood has improved dramatically, with barely any power cuts in the last few months. We have now replaced our main generator after two catastrophic engine failures in a short period of time so the future looks bright on our compound!

Bethan's Blog

I had wanted to go flying in the Caravan with Mummy for ages but every time I thought I would be able to go, there was some reason that I couldn't. Finally, on a Saturday in November, I got the chance to do it! We flew for 7 hours and picked up a family (including my friend Sophia) who needed to come back to N'Djamena after visiting the village that they used to live. We spent a lot of time practicing for the school play in December, which combined the story of Jesus' birth with how it has impacted people since. We have children from Germany, Ethiopia and Argentina in our school so we sang Christmas carols in each of those languages. I had a great time in Turkey, especially seeing all the cats that live there and going ice skating.



A Letter from Luke

For Christmas I got a toy boat that has a motor that actually works. I like playing with it in the bath and in the swimming pool, although it is too cold to actually go swimming at the moment. I also got some tools like a hammer and a saw because my old tool set is too young for me and doesn't actually work. Now I can do woodworking with Daddy. In Turkey I spent my pocket money on a hot-air balloon light for my bedroom. We saw lots of hot-air-balloons in Capodocia and I had fun taking photos of them.