



Baines Broadcast

December 2006

David and Evelyn Baines.
Serving with SIL.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you"

We knew this to be true when on April 13th, we and other residents of N'Djaména, Chad's capital city, awoke to the sound of gunfire and shelling. It wasn't a complete surprise since the steady movement of rebel forces towards the capital had been announced on the radio the previous day. There was heavy fighting on the outskirts of the city, some 3-4 kms from the SIL centre, causing many deaths and injuries among both soldiers and civilians. Fighter jets and helicopters flew over the city and we heard gunshots close by. We moved to the SIL centre, where we stayed two days before returning to our own compound. We were told that, during our absence, rebels had come to our gate asking our guards for directions to the President's palace.

Tensions had been growing in Chad since November 2005, when factions opposed to the President began gathering and attacking towns and villages in the east. We were therefore in a state of readiness for several months before this attack on N'Djaména. We had evacuation bags ready, had stored extra food and water, and tried to make "what if" plans while continuing to work and travel when it was deemed safe (i.e.: Christmas in Bitkine and visits to classes taught in the children's mother tongue near Kelo).

A week after 'the battle of N'Djaména', SIL Chad members in town met to debrief the events. The Africa Area staff, who oversee SIL's work in Africa, recommended we take a holiday or relocate temporarily to work in neighbouring Cameroon before the upcoming elections on May 3rd. Rebels had threatened to stop the elections from taking place. We decided to leave the country and go to Belgium for a few weeks until it was safe for us to return to Chad.

We had three days to pack and store all our belongings at the SIL center, let go of the house we were renting and provide for our guards and house help for the time we estimated we would be away. David had come down with malaria three days after the attack and he was quite ill for several days. He made a steady recovery over the next few weeks while we were in Belgium. We visited the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp to have medical check ups and David was given the all clear.

Many of our colleagues left the country for a few weeks and stayed either in their home country or in Cameroon. Some, who chose to remain in Chad, gathered in the two main cities where there are French military bases so they could find help should an evacuation be needed. Travel in the country was restricted. The election came and went without incident though the turnout was low. The president was re-elected for a third term.

The threat of renewed attack was suspended during the rainy season (mid-June to early October) since travel around the country then becomes very difficult, due to the marsh-like terrain. Since late September, there have been several attacks by rebel factions on towns in eastern Chad and more fighting between different ethnic groups, which has already cost hundreds of lives. Despite these challenges, vital work continues in Chad.

Highlights

April 13th, 2006: *We wake up to find N'Djaména under attack and move to the SIL centre. After 2 days there, we return home.*

April 18th: *David comes down with malaria. He makes a steady and full recovery.*

April 22nd: *Following the attack, SIL members gather to debrief. We decide to leave the country as recommended.*

April 25th: *We fly to Brussels after 3 days of packing our belongings and storing them at the SIL centre.*

May: *We have medical check-ups, visit churches in Brussels and Antwerp and tie up loose ends after our departure from Chad.*

June: *We visit David's family, meet friends in Scotland and attend a workshop. We debrief with Wycliffe Scottish Office personnel.*

July: *We set up meetings with churches, prepare materials and visit supporters in Brussels.*

August - September: *In the UK, we visit some 27 homes, 6 prayer groups and 5 churches. We attend and share at the Wycliffe Scottish Conference.*

October: *After staying in 13 different homes in 5 months, we move into a flat in Brussels. David attends a conference and workshops at JAARS, in the USA.*

November: *David accepts an invitation to work with SIL International, as a software tester based in Belgium beginning in January 2007.*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Home Assignment

After nearly two years serving with SIL in Africa, our time on Home Assignment was due to start in September. While in Belgium, we decided with SIL Chad and with Wycliffe that it was best we begin our Home Assignment early rather than return to Chad and face the possibility of an other evacuation. Home leave is a time which allows us to get back in touch with our families, friends, and churches in Belgium and in the UK, to share with them about our life and work in Chad and to promote the work of SIL. This gives us also the opportunity to study, learn new skills, and be refreshed in order to return to our ministry in Chad.

We have spent several months both in the UK and in Belgium, sharing in churches and prayer groups, and visiting many friends and supporters. It has been a busy but enjoyable time. We covered a lot of mileage, enjoyed the lush green countryside, and deepened our friendships with many. We've also cherished time with our families and we look forward to Christmas with them.

2007 in Brussels

As some of you know, we've been keen to start a family for some years. We've decided to stay in Belgium this coming year to benefit from the medical assistance we need to have a child. This is not available in Chad. We are grateful that Wycliffe and SIL Chad are supportive of our decision.

In October, David attended SIL's Computer Technical Conference followed by 2 weeks of workshops at JAARS, in North Carolina, USA. While there, he heard about the great need for software testers to assess SIL's software. After further enquiries, David received a formal invitation to join the team. This was exciting news as it is a full-time role within SIL that he can do while we are in Brussels! David will be testing a software package called Fieldworks, which will be a great help in translation work. <http://fieldworks.sil.org>

Living in Belgium is more expensive than living in Chad and so our support need has increased. Since Wycliffe requires that we have 100% of our financial support before the start of an assignment, we are looking for new financial partners to join us in this work. Would you prayerfully consider becoming one of them? We hope to start this new assignment in January.

We thank you for your prayers, support and encouragement. We are grateful for your partnership with us in this work! Merry Christmas! David & Evelyn

Praise the Lord with us.

- For God's protection while we were in Chad
- For His provision of a car for our visits in the UK and Belgium.
- For a home to settle in and a remote assignment with SIL International.

Pray with us.

- For peace in Chad; for the healing of this nation after all the unrest and trauma; for the task of Bible translation and literacy to continue in Chad.
- For David as he takes on his new role, while Evelyn studies Chadian Arabic.
- For this coming year to see our prayers for a baby answered.

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