



Newsletter August 2008

Dear Friends and Partners,

It seems that our newsletters are always “*overdue*”! Such is the busy-ness and pace of our lives as missionaries. These first months of 2008 have been full of challenges, transitions, progress and hopeful anticipation of things that are coming together for us.

I came back to the USA in April to attend the General Conference of the United Methodist Church as a facilitator for the African delegates, especially the French speaking ones. Many of you have known that Marty has been in the States for several months taking care of her parents during her father’s illness and trying to get them settled in a care facility. We scheduled our return to the Congo for June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Our supplies and equipment are slowly but surely arriving in Lodja and will enable us to move ahead on a variety of projects and programs in the months ahead. We seem to be building up a head of steam and are looking forward to a season of productivity and progress. Marty’s *Children’s Ministry* is ready to grow. She now has 4 sets of felt graphics all cut out for the stories of the Bible and 4 bicycles are on board a river boat loading for Kela, our river port. Please help us pray for the Congolese *co-workers* who will help expand this outreach into the villages near us under Marty’s direction.

Our sawmill is producing and will become more productive with the retro-fits of hydraulics and a diamond sharpener that are on the way. We loaded and shipped an *ocean container* the last of June that should arrive in Matadi August 23<sup>rd</sup> and be cleared and in Kinshasa by the middle of September. In it are wood-working equipment and a generator to operate them. There are medical supplies, our solar power system and many other much needed ministry items, including the “*Jesus Film*” *projection equipment*. It will enable us to reach the villages throughout our area with a very effective evangelistic tool that we helped put in their own language 14 years ago.

We are grateful for the establishment of the *DeRuiter Scholarship Fund* for the Lodja Pastor’s School. Rev. William and Mrs. Isabel DeRuiter were missionaries to the Congo from 1926 until 1961. I knew them when I was there with my parents. Initially a riverboat captain and later a builder, evangelist and teacher, they made a significant contribution to the life and growth of the Church in Central Congo. They built a number of the primary buildings at the Lodja and Wembo Nyama stations in the 1930’s, including the main churches. Their family has created a fund in memory of their parents/grandparents/great-grandparents and we encourage you to participate in helping meet this vital need. The fund will be administered by “Appointment Congo”. We have our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students funded for 2008-2009 from several sources, but still need funding for the new students who begin in August. Check out the information and photos on our website!

In the midst of this excitement there has been sadness for us as well. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, just after our return to the field, we received word that Marty’s father had passed away in Kentucky. We had to quickly make arrangements to fly back to take care of his funeral and legal matters. The funeral at Nicholasville UMC on Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup> was a wonderful time of celebrating his life and ministry with many friends and our family. We are saddened by his absence, but are relieved for him and know that he is in a better place. We have been able to move Mom into a care facility where her special needs can be better met. We are grateful for God’s comfort and provision throughout this difficult transition.

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You can see that the past few months have been challenging, but then again, they always are! We are returning to the Congo on August 4<sup>th</sup> and hope to go on up to Lodja on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Our plans are to go over to Katakombé in September to complete the tabernacle at the *Camp Meeting* site. In October we hope to re-build the *Esenge village church* and will, of course, continue to do repair work on the mission station and our home. It is our hope that the contents of this latest container will come on up to Lodja in a timely manner, possibly arriving by the end of the year.

We deeply appreciate all of your *prayers, love and support*. Without them we could never do what we are doing. If you are not receiving our *e-mail* updates, and would like to, please contact our home office and let Leon know your current e-mail address. Several friends had recently changed their e-mail addresses and failed to let us know. We do not want to lose contact with you! We are adding items from time to time to our web site, so please check it out when you have the chance.

Blessings to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul + Marty". The "P" and "M" are large and stylized, with a plus sign between them.

Paul and Marty

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