

July 16, 2006 newsletter

Subject: Newsletter

Dear Praying Friends,

I arose at 5:45 this A.M. for reflection and prayer.

Our team is staying at what used to be the house for the single women at the very end of the mission station. This UMC station is called Diengenga and is located about 12 kilometers from downtown Lodja in the heart of Congo. No missionaries have lived here for over 10 years now.

As dawn has arisen, I have had the incredible view of the magnificent palm trees in the fog of a dry season morning. The palm trees have their branches and leaves spread wide as if to say: 'Welcome to my beautiful country!'

I have seen a lone Congolese woman or two appear out of the fog walking their way to a very distant garden which they have planted by hand several acres of rice one grain at a time.

This trip has been one challenge after another even from day one when we sat in our plane on the tarmac for four hours in Lexington causing us to miss our international flight to Belgium where we were to have met up with our other team members.

Even in Brussels we left 2 hours late. We took off and the flaps on the plane would not retract so we had to return to Brussels flying in a holding pattern for 1 1/2 hours at 45* until enough fuel could be burned off in order for us to land.

Finally, we did arrive in Kinshasa five hours late. Never in all of our years of flight travel have we had so much difficulty arriving in Congo.

We hit the road running physically with one of our team having his left shoulder severely dislocated. We spent 10 hours of his first day in the hospital. He is fine now. Others have had numerous bouts of Montazuma's revenge, vomiting, severe chest and head colds, and malaria. Never in all of our years in Congo with visitors have we had so much sickness.

Doug Lindle of our team from Wilmore learned on July 5 that that his 23 years old son, Ben, was seriously ill. Within 2 days he had gone to be with the Lord. Fortunately, there was a flight out of Lodja and Doug arrived back in KY over that weekend. We were all in shock, grief and disbelief for days. Our prayers continue for Doug and his family in their loss.

Our boat/barge did not get out of Kinshasa until June 24 which was 2 months late.. It is due any day at Kela, the nearest river port.

Paul has had one major repair or breakdown after another with the sawmill. The sawmill sat in the forest for seven years until he brought it out in Dec.

Physically, he has pushed himself and only a few days ago his sugar dropped to 49, its lowest ever (normal is 90-120). Please pray for his strength and stamina.

The problems with the sawmill have brought discouragement as day after day it has been one step forward and 2 steps backwards.

Humanly speaking our plans have not gone at all as we had planned but we are reminded that His way and His thoughts are not ours. We are, also, reminded that this is His project. Our circumstances and our time are in His all knowing and all seeing Hands.

As a result of the circumstances we each one are finding how we deal with delays and discouragements. Are we trusting Christ in us or are we dealing with our situation in the flesh?

Our Congolese brothers and sisters grow up very much in the spiritual world. They see our problems as much spiritual opposition. They say satan is the prince of this world and 'Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the in the Heavenly realms. (Eph 6:11-NIV).

We, as a team, are learning how to endure and how to persist and how to persevere and 'how to be strong in the Lord in His mighty power.' We are fighting the good fight.

Fight for us in prayer!,

Marty and for Paul, too