

April 27, 2007 Awaiting the container

Dear Praying Friends,

Greetings from Kinshasa. As I write this, Paul is at the police station. We have been stopped 10 times since we have been here and yesterday he refused to bribe the police thus his summons to court this A.M.

We have gotten some supplies on a boat that left last week for the interior. We have part of an ocean container that is 'suppose' to arrive next week at Matadi.

He is getting involved in expediting it quickly through customs and on into Kinshasa. This could days or weeks.

Please pray that the Lord will blind the eyes of the police as we drive. Also, that He will aid in the quick process of the container.

We long to be at Lodja and not in Kinshasa. Kinshasa is a challenge.

Blessings for your prayers,
Marty

P.S. Paul says I need to explain about the police in Kinshasa! They are street police, no guns, no motorbike nor car. They are there to extort from whomever they can. They are not there to protect. May the Lord blind them from now on from seeing our borrowed vehicle. Marty

April 09, 2007 Kinshasa to Lodja, an Update

Dear Praying Friends,

As I write this, it is the time for a full moon. There is nothing quite like a bright brilliant full moon displaying itself beyond the magnificent palms trees where no lights from a human can obscure the magnitude of our Creator's imagination. How privileged we are to have the opportunity to see this each month. It only adds to our love and appreciation for The DR Congo.

February 21, our departure from the states, seems so long ago. We hit the road running once we arrived.

We were only in Kinshasa for about a week as we purchased a few supplies to send to Lodja by airfreight. Two boats had left just before our arrival, so we were unfortunate in not being able to get supplies sent by that means.

Once in Lodja, we immediately tackled the immense task of cleaning and repairing before we could possibly move into our house here on the mission station. The house is over fifty years old and has been badly abused in the last 12 years.

Chickens, ducks and guinea were being raised in the kitchen pantry. Open charcoal

fires had left the kitchen walls black and greasy thus began the task of completely scraping and plastering the walls. We are in now the process of completely scraping all of the walls in the whole house.

Nothing in the bathroom worked so Paul tore it out completely. That was quit the challenge and left him sick as well, though medication did cure what ailed him. With all of the dust and filth, plus the droppings from rats and roaches, I, too, succumbed to a bad sinus infection. I think now we are almost back to 'normal.'

Our oldest daughter, Stephanie, asked us on the phone, "When do you two get too old to completely redo a house out there?" This is our eighth house to repair or build! I suppose the answer to that is: when we are unable to do so any more.

We stayed eight days in the village with Pastor Kitambala and his family, and we sincerely appreciated their wonderful hospitality. But after time with the livestock in his yard (sheep and ducks and chickens) and 17 grandchildren right outside our window, we decided to come 'camp out' in our own home even though we had no bathroom yet.

There is no Lowe's or Ace Hardware here, so Paul has had to go into town several times to scrounge the local market or ask around to find parts to repair this and that. He is gifted in knowing how to repair about anything and is great at 'improvising' to get the job done until he can get to Kinshasa and get the real parts or even wait until something is sent from the States.

It will be months or perhaps closer to a year, before we can get the house really like we would like. We have ¼ of a forty-foot ocean container with our supplies arriving April 17th in Matadi, the ocean port. Please pray that it can be 'processed' through customs quickly so that we do not have to pay unnecessarily high custom rates which can run into the thousands of dollars rather quickly.

Once the container clears customs, it is then trucked to Kinshasa where it will be unloaded either on to another truck or into a warehouse. We will then have to find a boat coming to the interior in the direction where we live. From that river port, it will have to be trucked here to Lodja. This whole process can take as little as three months, or as much as six, depending on the availability of a boat.

It is wonderful to be here at long last. We have been welcomed by the local District Council and the local ladies group came last week to welcome me. Both times, we have received lots of rice (our main staple), eggs, chickens, and a stock of bananas. Two Sundays ago, we re-opened a church in a village about three miles from our home. The people are so generous in their poverty with chickens, rice, this time-monkey meat and manioc. To refuse their generosity is to insult them, so we accept their gifts.

This is Easter Week and we are having a revival. Each day at 5 A.M. there is a service and each evening at seven o'clock. Paul has preached five times. He found out that he would be preaching five times this week when they made the announcements in church! He has been able to repair a very old generator near the church and has now installed lights for the first time in 12 years or so. This has certainly helped to increase the crowds.

We have tackled the huge task of working on our yard where the previous occupant made charcoals, leaving the back with one mound after the other. We have, also, cleared out lots of forest that had grown closer and closer to the house. The foot high grass is cut

by a coup-coup, a hand swung instrument and/or jungle knives. It is a slow tedious task and requires several men to really get the job done. After our yard, we then continued on to the median of the station and now the men are working on the District Superintendent's yard.

Paul has been checking out the electric cable on the station that has been cut and misused. He is trying to come up with a way to get electricity to most of the station. Not only has he gotten an old generator running he has, also, repaired an old brick machine. Now we await being able to go to Kinshasa to purchase cement, ship it up here and truck it in. Of course, the sand and gravel are dug out of the creeks locally and are a part of the 'home made' cement brick.

I will be sharing the Bible through flannel or felt graphics. Most folks now days in the US do not even know what it is, but out here it is a useful tool for teaching and evangelism. I will be working with the local women in teaching Bible lessons and then will add the children on a different day. I am excited about this Biblical tool and the enthusiasm it has generated.

I have had some of the workers come for medicine and today we started feeding five children of our Pastor's School students suffering severe malnutrition. I feed them here at the house to make sure that they eat the protein rich food themselves.

As we have gotten more into the work, the need for repairs could almost be overwhelming if we let it and this is only one mission station! We have hired about thirty men to work. Paul has the knowledge and the gifts to get the work done. We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the container so that he can send the new sawmill engine to Lodja by air in order to get the old sawmill running again. The need for boards is endless. In fact, every door in our house needs to be replaced and it would be nice to have cabinets in the kitchen! Right now our sink is sitting on two empty barrels.

We need a water system for our home. We have two women with large jerry cans on their heads coming up a steep hill in the valley where they carry our water. We have one barrel in our kitchen and one in the bath. Our laundry is done by two men that go to the creek and do it by hand. It is then brought back up the hill and hung on the line to dry. After drying, it is ironed with a charcoal iron. We are also asking the Lord for a solar system so that we can have use of the computer 24/7 and some lights during the night. We are trusting the Lord for the funds required to make all this happen.

Our church is in desperate need of benches and many of the buildings that are in disrepair need boards. Please, pray for Paul's work on the sawmill that he can quickly get it up and operating. He will have to go into the forest and fell the trees, load them on a large old truck and bring them to the station to saw.

I know this has gotten long but there is so much to share. Believe it or not, I have only shared a portion!

Life is exciting and challenging and it is FUN being able to be here and encourage the local people and sense their excitement over our arrival. There have been no missionaries with the Methodist Church in over 12 years. Many have told us that they appreciate the fact that we are willing to leave American and all it has, to come here and be a part of this land.

Please keep us on your prayer list and remember us as you pray and as you give.

Blessings,

Marty and for Paul, too

April 06, 2007 Lodja, Democratic Republic of Congo

Dear Praying Friends,

We are having a time getting on to the Internet these days. We are at a place like none of you can imagine! We had to take two liters of gasoline out of our motorbike tank so that the men could put it in their little generator that runs the computers. Printers are on the floor covered in dust and the computers are VERY dirty.

Anyway, Paul and I were sitting on the last row in church on Wednesday night (where the breeze was moving through because of a cross breeze) and suddenly all of the women in front of us started to 'peel' off of their bench and looking down there was a snake slithering just past them. Everyone started to holler and scream and I quickly pulled my legs and feet up into my seat. Immediately, two men went after it and it was soon history.

The woman pastor then continued to preach and the service was continued as 'normal.' I must say that I have never seen a snake in church before and one only three feet from me.

Hey, keep those prayers coming our way. Paul preaches tonight and Sunday.

Happy Easter Weekend. He is Risen Indeed! Marty

April 02, 2007 Lodja, Democratic Republic of Congo

Dear Praying Friends,

This is Easter Week and we are having a revival at our mission church. The first services of the day are at five A.M.! Then we have the second service at 6 P.M.

Paul preached yesterday there as well. He found out yesterday during announcements that he will be preaching five times this week! Pray for our revival that it will be just that!

As most of you probably know, Kinshasa was calm again after 1 1/2 days of conflict. The UN has destroyed the arms of the opposition.

Blessings, Marty and for Paul, too