

January, 2007

Dear Ministry Partners,

We are thrilled to start another year of ministry together with you. Next month we will share some goals for 2007. Today we want to make you aware of what we are anticipating for this first quarter.

**TRIP UPDATE;** Jim returned from Congo just before Christmas thrilled with the results of Hermeneutics Conference at Nkara, where 269 graduates returned to relearn the art of interpreting Scripture. He brought back with him the 2500 watt transmitter as well as the 250 watt transmitter to be repaired here. Please pray that we will be able to take these back with us this spring.

**NASHVILLE BANQUET:** On January 23, we will hold our first banquet in Nashville at the Forest Hills Baptist Church to introduce Laban Ministries to that part of the country and hopefully open and expand Laban's support base. Our son-in-law, Greg Sponberg, will be speaking and the entire family will participate in this historical event. If you can come, please contact Shawn at 615 673 0567 or email at shawnlantz@aol.com.

**2006** was a great year. Evangelism saw tremendous opportunities through Radio Glory, mass evangelism, one on one, the Women's Literacy Center, Evangelism Explosion Program, and the Jesus Film. Staff solidarity is apparent. Financially, it was the greatest year yet. Laban is thriving. Without your prayers and financial investment in the various facets of the work, this just wouldn't be happening. Thank you Lord!

**RETURNING TO CONGO:** After participating in two mission conferences in the Detroit area in March, we will head back to Africa. Awaiting us is some serious upgrading of our home in preparation for 2008 when many of our family members will be coming for a visit. It is impossible to complete all the work this spring, and so we are praying about others joining us in October to help us with the kitchen facelift and plumbing, etc. Our homes there have been neglected for almost 30 years because most of the funds have been poured into Radio Glory, evangelism, and the Bible institutes. Parts of the homes there are practically in shambles. We just cannot put off these repairs any longer. Please pray.

**TRUCKS NEEDED:** Congo, particularly in our area, is so open to the Gospel. Last year when the evangelism team ran out of gas for the generator, chiefs from the village literally ran on foot after the big truck as it was leaving, trying to stop it, demanding that their villages hear the Gospel and see the Jesus Film. However, there was no more fuel to run the gas generator. What Iwungu needs and what I promised them is that if we and they would pray together, God would give us a pick up truck for the Iwungu Bible Inst. and, therefore, evangelism team. I watched a video taken by Pastor Kapem of himself and other school leaders, leading the students and professors on foot with food loads on their heads and their backs, a television on their heads, the gas generator on a bicycle, the sound system on their shoulders, and watched them cross a stream on a one-foot wide log bridge. They made it and continued on through the plains, arriving at a village where they spent 3 days witnessing, showing the Jesus Film, and instructing Christians of the past as well as new Christians. I saw Pastor Kapem's agony due to the fact that there are other villages, certainly within reach by pick up but very difficult by foot, who long for the Gospel, who repeatedly ask, "When are you coming? Can you come? Please come!" It will again take God's people in America who, out of obedience to the Lord, the grace

of God in their hearts and the wonder of Calvary in their souls, will cry out to Him to help with the \$18,000 needed for a pick up truck we can purchase in Kinshasa.

Tomorrow, if it is a weekday and you are in the north, you will turn your car on to warm it up. If you are in a warmer climate, you will just get into your car and drive off to work. We have 8 men who walk 12 miles round trip everyday to work at Nkara and have been doing this since 1979! Their black hair is beginning to turn grey and, even the Congolese body so used to walking, tires. Can you imagine walking 12 miles a day 5 days a week for 28 years? The 12 mile walk of these men has put up the Flossie Mae Bible School, has put up a building called Cell B, has put up the radio station, has put up staff homes, and kept the 3/4 mile runway in shape. We must have a pick up truck for these men who come from Longo to Nkara each day. It will also help them to put in a full day of work. Otherwise they have to leave in the middle of the afternoon. I am wondering if God will touch someone who is reading this letter—a businesswoman, a businessman—who will send the \$18,000 needed for this pickup. Think about walking 12 miles a day! They have gladly walked these 12 miles for 28 years, but now the grey hair is talking.

Last of all, we need a good pickup truck that Pastor Mbuku can use for evangelism. He has so faithfully led the outreach of Laban Bible Institute of Nkara, the main campus, for almost 20 years. The used refurbished military trucks we shipped in 2004 are good for long distances and the big campaigns, but there are many, many smaller campaigns that a team of 8 evangelists could handle so well and very frequently. Evangelism now is limited to the big crusades every 4 months, but with a good smaller vehicle, such as a Toyota pickup, they could be going out within a hundred miles of the Nkara station every weekend. The passion in Pastor Mbuku's heart is so strong. He lives, eats, breathes, and sleeps evangelism. His heart cry is for souls for Christ. He remembers the Busobe evangelism campaign, where they had to put all the equipment in a large pushcart and travel for miles to reach villages with the Gospel. He remembers the first village, where 6,000 people came to hear the Gospel preached and to see the Jesus Film. At the invitation, masses of people indicated their desire to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. He said there was no way to count. In the next village there were 4,000 waiting for him, the next village 5,000 anticipated their coming, and hundreds in the villages following these larger ones. Mass evangelism, group evangelism, village evangelism, and personal evangelism is changing a province and affecting a nation.

The pickups run on diesel fuel. We have two full time mechanics to keep them running. The evangelism pickup for the main campus at Nkara must be a good, strong, newer vehicle. Brand new, \$45,000. Used would be \$18,000 to \$30,000. I prefer the new. We have had more than our share of used. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is worthy of the new.

I have no need to beg. I just express the desperation for these three vehicles. If you can't give, would you please pray, and when you get in your car in the mornings to go to work or church, or to go shopping, remember the 8 men walking 12 miles a day to work. Remember the evangelism team carrying up to 200 lb. on their heads, and remember the scores upon scores of villages around Nkara who are waiting (and I am not exaggerating at all) with baited breath to have our evangelism team come and preach the Good News.

Nancy and I would be so thrilled when we return to the Congo in March to take in hand the funds to buy these 3 vehicles that our meager faith and the cries of our people out there and the passion in the heart of our evangelism leaders long to see fulfilled. Help us to tell them that God has supplied through His people these needs!