

June 29, 2007

Dear Friends of Laban Ministries,

As I write to you, I am praying that the Lord will direct my thoughts so that I can articulate facts that will help you understand what has taken place in Congo since our departure in March. Let me say first of all that His glorious hand was and is continuing to be seen at every turn. All three vehicles we purchased, thanks to your help, are running and in good order. Two of these are dedicated to the winning of souls through the evangelism teams at Iwungu and Nkara. The other oversized-type van is transporting work staff who for 29 years have walked 12 dusty miles to and from Nkara every day to work. Our staff cannot thank you enough. Praise God for your obedience to His leading!

Our Sunday School superintendents have been outfitted with two new bikes, games, and various toys provided mainly by Abby and Ellie's 4th birthday party gifts and the Pioneer Girls at First Presbyterian Church of Trenton. Thank you girls! These will be dispersed to some of the 1200 children who have faithfully attended Sunday School this last quarter. One hundred radios were purchased by a couple we met at a Selah benefit concert last November. We are thrilled to tell you that these have been given to 70 policemen who came to our area to protect Jim over this past week. As many as 35 of these men professed Christ and soaked in the Word of God taught by Jim each evening in our home during the days of turmoil on the mission station. Their radios fix-tuned to Radio Glory are ministering to them and others all over the Bandundu Region of Congo where the men are stationed. The remaining radios have been given to the 2007 graduates and people in villages that will be evangelized this summer. They thank you from the bottom of their hearts.

The 2500 watt transmitter sits in the white house in Congo waiting for a new sound board, which will run about \$400. The only person who can install this is Jim Hulse, who along with Connie, Cayla, Tom Garrels, and Bob Meier are seriously considering returning to Congo in the fall to help us with the hospital foundation. They are people of many talents. Please pray about this. We need help getting things ready and in order before a team from the United States comes in July of 2008 to build a hospital wing. Because the transmitter was made in Italy, and its parts are interdependent, it will serve as a good back up, but Jim Hulse of Towers for Jesus advises us that we really need to purchase a 2000 watt American made transmitter, so that if one part breaks down, just that part will not keep the whole transmitter from functioning. The cost of the transmitter is \$15,000 and can be purchased from HCJB in Indiana. Shipping and customs are additional.

The evangelism generator and our personal generator blew up, continue to function at below par, and the backhoe shot another hose. Two hoses are being sent DHL today to Kinshasa. MAF will fly them up to Nkara. MAF flew April salaries to Nkara today.

Graduation took place in grand style with 4,000 people in attendance. There were almost as many outside the church as inside. The 4 hour service was pure jubilee, as we graduated our first class of 9 from the Women's Literacy Center and 22 men and 7 women from the Bible Institute at Nkara. All were decked out in their new clothes provided by you, including jewelry donated from a downriver party for all the women graduates and women professors. Thank you Laura! For \$250 all 44 people were outfitted. The evangelism team looks great in their new jeans, shirts, boots, running pants and sweatshirts (gets chilly in the truck at night, even in Congo). Thanks Connie for all your hard work. We need new tents for evangelism at Nkara and Iwungu. The ones they have are literally threadbare. Thirty villages are begging our evangelism team to come and minister. What a great problem to have.

One of our graduates is a former military man. Each Monday morning he accompanied Jim to the local commander's office to hold Bible studies with the police who serve near our home as well as additional policemen who were meeting in the area for several weeks. Forty policemen made decisions for Christ during those meetings. The commandant is asking that this graduate become their chaplain. The Bibles you provided have been distributed to these spiritually starving military men as well as to each graduate of our schools, and to villages where evangelism will take place during July, August, and September. That's the good stuff.

The Chef (as in government chief) we talked about in the last newsletter has been dealt with and is quiet for the present. The Longo village chiefs wrote to Bulungu headquarters, and Bulungu sent a representative to deal with the Chef and his cohort. The representative met with the people of Longo and told them that Jim was to be left alone to do the work God has called him to do. Peace prevailed for a couple of days. Then utter chaos broke out from another source. The turmoil I mentioned on the mission station is over a property dispute. There really is no dispute. Nkara was given to Dr. and Mrs. Smith in 1950. However, before they ever thought of setting foot in Congo, a village by the name of Mpene fought for ownership of that land. Mpene is focused on evil, sin, and violence. They were the only village to object to Dr. and Mrs. Smith's coming and have fought the Lord Jesus Himself as long as we have known them. The fight continues, even though we have legal documents stating the land is in the Smith name.

I left Congo on June 13. Jim remained behind. On June 20, forty men from a sister village of Mpene stormed into Nkara chanting, throwing rocks on the church roof, the tin roof of the men's Bible school dorm, three of our staff homes, and Pastor Nzunzi, creating an atmosphere of intimidation and bewilderment on the mission itself. Local

police were called upon by Jim to protect the three families that were attacked, our home, and our radio station. Armed soldiers slept outside and guarded Jim's every move. On June 21, the next day, 40 more men from Mpene literally ran onto the mission station, chanting angrily, carrying knives, and wanted to see Jim. Our local collectivity recruited 70 more policemen from Bulungu, and they stayed in close range until all was quiet once again. They returned to Bulungu on June 26.

Mpene was told that if they ever riot again collectively or even if one single person walks to Nkara to create havoc, the village will be burned and the villagers will be killed. The police would have burned and killed this time, but Jim pleaded with them not to shed blood. Jim is alive and in his right mind, but he is weary. He arrives in the States on July 6. Please pray for him. Nahum 1:3 says that God has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm. The commandant, major, and government administrator who accompanied the police from Bulungu all accepted the Lord while protecting Jim, our staff, and dealing with the two rebellious villages.

Many people who came to our house for one reason or another accepted the Lord, including two men from Bulungu who gave us legal permission to start proceeding with the hospital buildings. Amazingly, after Jim preached at the village of Niadi, 150 men and women raised their hands to make professions of faith. Satan is angry.

We owe so much to you. To all who give so that the work can continue to flourish--and it is flourishing despite Satan's dart-filled attacks--we give you our heartfelt thanks. Your prayers are so felt, needed and effectual. They avail much! Habakkuk 3:18 and 19 sum up our sentiments: ". . . I will rejoice in the Lord. I will exult in the victorious God of my salvation. The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army. He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk - not stand still in terror - but to walk and make spiritual progress upon my high places of trouble, suffering, or responsibility." HE IS WORTHY. Amen and Amen.