

March, 2008

Dear Laban Family,

His Name is Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end! This is the God we serve. He is the Resurrected One, The One who ever lives to make intercession for His blood-bought believers, The One Who not only created us but Redeemed us. We are twice His. We bow before You, Lord Jesus, in total adoration and praise as we begin this newsletter.

Last month we informed you that 2008 commemorates 70 years since Dr. and Mrs. Laban Herbert Smith left for Congo and 30 years this December since we left. Pray for us as we attempt to salt and pepper the remaining months of 2008 and almost all of 2009 with activities to celebrate God's faithfulness.

In the meantime, teaching in the Women's Literacy Center, adding two mud/stick buildings to accommodate more classroom space for the women, maintaining our 3 Bible colleges, treating patients in our small dispensary, delivering babies, evangelizing villages and cities, the returning of the Exposition Team exposing the Book of Colossians to new believers in these villages and cities, daily Radio Glory broadcasting, lengthening the airstrip, gathering of stones and sand to make bricks, and the making of thousands of bricks for the new hospital ward all continue to take place. Praise God!

It is our practice to return to Congo on a regular basis. Sometimes that means two times or more per year. We never fail to hear when we go there that our presence gives an incredible degree of stability, encouragement, and sheer joy because of the hope we bring along with us, because of the relieving news that they are not forgotten by you here in America, because of their being able to catch up with stories of answered prayer on their part for you, and because we are individuals who live outside the oppression, poverty, and accompanying clouds of despair they must deal with everyday. We bring freshness, hope, intervention needed to solve staff problems, love, news from you, stories of answered prayers, miracles God has done in the ministry here, direction, and they give back love, appreciation, hard work, happy spirits, their own ideas, all-night prayer meetings, rapturous praises to our Heavenly Father, convictions, and team work at its greatest level. The atmosphere is electrified with God's glory.

Now when you have that kind of working, loving, praying, breathing, vital, and serving relationship, it is hard to miss out on. We are missing out on it right now because there is no funding for our return. There is no funding to pay our staff for January and February. There is no money to buy meds for the dispensary. There is no money to take the Towers for Jesus Team back with us, who can help us get ready for the team in 2009 to build the hospital, repair all kinds of machinery as many times as it breaks down, tweak the radio tower, install communication systems, put in basic wells, and help supply us with thousands of solar radios because they simply love our people in Congo and Connie Hulse is willing to repeatedly call Galcom for scholarship radios. There is no money for supplies to take to Congo. There is no more money for fuel for evangelism. There is no money to buy the bulldozer we need to move tons and tons of dirt for the new hospital. The backhoe in time will not be enough for this huge undertaking.

There, we have spelled it out: the plain truth. These are all human roadblocks. The Lord could change all of these roadblocks in a moment, but we must make you aware that this is why we have no date in sight to return to Congo. People ask us all the time. We don't know.

Angie and Todd are continuing to get ultrasounds and examinations. Today's ultrasound says there are no changes. The baby's head continues to grow, but her body growth is 6 weeks behind her head growth. Keep praying. We cannot leave them in the midst of their circumstances nor do we want to. Audrey continues to kick and move. Angie's due date is May 29. She has been assured Audrey will come before then. No one knows what to expect. We have heard all kinds of stories of hope. We will hope in God to the very end for a miracle.

Thank you for allowing us to share our hearts. It is better to be forthright. Lest we overwhelm you, we are not going to give you a dollar amount that is needed to break down the financial needs listed above. If anyone wants to inquire, we will be glad to tell them. The Lord knows, and for His glory's sake He will provide when He is ready for us to move once again. His arm is not too short to save nor his ear unable to hear. We covet your prayers. The Lord is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think!!