



D. M. Stearns Missionary Fund
P.O.Box 1578
North Wales, PA 19454 USA
<http://congoopenheart.org/>

Clement & Charlotte Kroeker
15, Ave. des Mésanges — BE-1480 Tubize Clabecq, Belgium
Tél. +322 355 99 06 — E-mail:kroeker@mac.com

September 6, 2015

Congo Trip #10

Dear friends,

A wonderful two months in Congo are now past history and a new page of history has begun for Matende Mission. We are back in Belgium and thankful for what God has done, thankful for your prayers and gifts and words of encouragement.

We started out with one main project in mind — to rebuild the roof of the school, take off the asbestos ceiling and build doors and windows to prepare for the group arriving in August. But as we look back, we realize that God had plans for five other projects as well which all demanded time and finances: (1) repairs for the truck in Kikwit caused us to spend time in meeting people, discussing and learning, (2) meeting a young doctor who could come to Matende, (3) cleaning up and getting the Health Center into operation, (4) finally borrowing a tractor for Matende and (5) installation of water filters. Quite a stretching experience this summer!

Truck repaired

After many delays and difficulties, the truck is repaired and has given good service this summer, even for the long trip back to Kinshasa with the team August 28. Nelson kept driving until the very last day, doing errands for supplies and serving with a willing heart in many different ways. Buying and bargaining in four local languages made him a valuable member of the team. As he drove everyone back to Kinshasa the last day of the trip, I was sitting next to him in front but the others were piled in the back with the luggage for 16 hours. His mother said good-bye to him with tears in her eyes as he left Congo to return to his job in Germany. She also had spent the two months at Matende helping and visiting friends.

New doctor and Health Center

A Christian doctor, Eleazar Kakesa, is on hand to treat the sick and injured. The building is fixed up, cleaned and painted. He, along with Bruno Feuillerat and his group spent their first week scrubbing and scraping off the white wash before putting on the first coat of white paint inside and out. A group of volunteers from Matende helped. A new door was installed in the much needed « hospital ». Other doors and windows with screens are still being built and boards are on hand to replace the ceilings. A supply of medicine on the shelf will last for a while, and more can be purchased in Kikwit as gifts come in.

Water is still in the cistern from last summer! Men hauled out water by the drum full to use in washing down the Health Center and for making cement, etc. The second cistern next to the school was emptied out, repaired, and a concrete cover built. The gutters that run the whole length of the school along the sidewalk are connected to this cistern, which will give a huge quantity of water once the rainy season begins. More water available means that folks can clean, wash, filter some for drinking, thus making possible a healthier life with less disease, while the teachers talk to the school children about hygiene and health. The new Sawyer water filters are in use.

Construction work

Toilets were installed in the residence house, and in the Training Center. For each toilet we had to find, uncover, restore and connect old septic tanks. Under ground next to the school, the men discovered septic tanks looking like bunkers hidden from sight for 60 years. An old friend, Mandongo, told us about seeing them as a boy. Sure enough, after digging down two or three feet in various places a whole network of drainage systems and tanks were uncovered. They are connected to the ancient outdoor toilets now in ruins. I called the men real archeologists. New school lavatories are yet to be built.

The new roof is on the school building. Thanks to David Torrini's leadership, the school now has windows and doors and can provide classrooms and an office for the principal. Other buildings made of old mud walls and straw roofs are still out in back for six other classes.

The school building was finished in time to house, feed and teach the delegates: 50 men and women coming from Idiofa, Iwungu, Gungu and Kikwit, and even from Kinshasa. Several came by bus to Kikwit and then hopped on the truck coming to Matende.

Training seminar

Bruno Feuillerat led the three day conference or seminar on Health Evangelism (CHE). He drew pictures on the posters, made object lessons come alive, and used team members to act out skits, all with the purpose of teaching important truths. The folks attending were able to understand and visualize the results of Biblical teaching and a healthy way of living with nutrition and sanitation all going hand in hand.

Pierrette Cayuella registered the guests, helped with children's activities and in the health center. Simon Van der Does took pictures and interviews, helped with skits as well as soccer and youth work. Roselie Murru helped organize the meals, seating and serving, and helped Bruno in teaching. Jeanne Lukeba also served and helped in skits. The women from the church at Matende did the cooking in one of the other school buildings built of poles and straw. They cooked huge kettles of manioc and rice in their traditional fashion using wood fires on the ground. 40 plates and cups had been purchased ahead of time in Kikwit but there weren't enough so 10 more were taken from our house where the team and I eat. I guess our faith wasn't big enough to expect 50 people. The benches from the church were brought over for the sessions with Bruno. (a narrow board seating four or five people). The desks from the school were used as eating tables. These had been built by the local boys taking the course in wood working two or three years ago.

Visitors arrive

One special surprise was the visit of a lady, Ebwi or Lydia, and her son who walked for two hours to see me and talk with me and daughter Roselie and grandson Simon. When my parents served as missionaries at Matende between 1945 and 1952, a man walked from another village and brought two twin babies to my mother asking her to keep them. His wife had died at child birth and back then, without medical care or baby food, it was the custom to bury twins with the mother. So my mother used the oven of her wood stove as an incubator. With no thermometer or thermostat she succeeded in keeping the temperature at the right level and the twins survived. This lady came to tell us that she was one of those babies. Since then her sister, Enim, and her husband had died. I remembered her name.

New sign and agricultural work improved

A sign out on the National Highway N1 indicates the entry to the road leading to the mission and the new Health Center.

A tractor is out plowing the field, making the earth receptive for seeds before the rainy season begins this month. A mechanic came from Bandundu, the provincial capital, to take care of it and drive it during the month that Matende is able to use it. Men of Matende spent weeks digging out the roots of many small trees in the field.

Prayer needed

Please continue to pray for the doctor Eleazar, who wants to stay and live at Matende to care for the sick and the maternity cases. He and his young wife are dedicated to helping. The government may help pay their salaries after formalities are completed.

Pray for all those who attended the conference, that the Lord will use them as they return to their churches and schools and places of work that they may share the vision, the Good News of a new life in Christ which takes place here and now... a total change in our way of thinking and doing.

Pray for all those who received a Bible and are now reading it for the first time. Pray that many more will be distributed as a supply of Bibles goes out from Kinshasa to this area around Matende and these other Missions.

Yours in Christ,

Bud and Char Kroeker



Health Center BEFORE



Health Center AFTER



School building finished



New sign on the highway, Nelson second from right.



Dr. Eleazar and Jeftine



Patients arriving at Health Center



Doctor unpacking medicines



Pierrette painting Center



Bruno teaching with posters



Simon, Pierrette, Roselie, Jeanne & friends



Ladies from church volunteer to cook



CHE Community Health Evangelism



Lydia and her son



The tractor in action



Trip Kikwit to Kinshasa in the truck



Bridge over the Kwilu River, Kikwit