

April 2006 Update of Preparations for the Katako Kombe Project

Marty and I have completed a trip to the Congo to procure supplies and materials for the Katako Kombe Camp Meeting project as of the 9th of April. We left on March 1st for Kinshasa where we spent a week in urgent purchasing in order to have things ready to ship to Lodja by the first available means.

Marty had to return to the States prematurely due to the sudden hospitalization of her father and the fact that her mother could not stay alone at home. Fortunately, the assistance of a dedicated Christian layperson enabled her to complete all the buying of food supplies that she needed to get. Her return increased my work load and made it more difficult, but it was possible to complete all the preparations that we needed to make.

The timely assistance of a friend and native son of the Katako Kombe area, who is the Minister of Defense for the DR Congo, His Excellency Adolphe Onusumba, made it possible to transport all the food supplies to Lodja by military transport. Nearly 2 tons of supplies are now in Lodja awaiting the arrival of the Work Team in June.

I was able to travel on up country to Lodja and to Katako Kombe to access the situation first hand and begin the preparatory work that needs to be done before the Work Team arrives. Several days were spent working on the sawmill at Lodja. While the mill did not operate before my departure from Lodja, repairs were made and the final parts that are needed were identified so that the repairs can be completed as soon as we get back to the Congo in June and the mill will be available for the project to use.

Katako Kombe was visited and the work that awaits the Work Team evaluated. We really have our work cut out for us! The mission is generally in a state of disrepair. The house that the team will occupy while they are there is the building in the best repair on the station, but there is still significant work needed to make it livable. Plumbing must be opened up and temporary facilities need to be built to meet the immediate needs when the team arrives. Ceilings need to be put in with mats and doors need to be repaired. The kitchen is bare, no cupboards, sink, stove or any other tables. Everything will have to be set up from scratch and from what can be found locally.

The Camp Meeting site is truly abandoned and overgrown. Please see the pictures under Photos on our web site www.appointmentcongo.org for an idea of what we are facing. A group of some 15 young men eager to work were hired for the next 2 months to begin preparing for the construction and renovation work that the Team will do. Almost immediately, the Tabernacle site was cleared and the old columns could be seen that outlined the old meeting area.

Before actually beginning the work of clearing, Pastor Kitambala led the workmen in a prayer time that was very moving. He referred to the passage in Nehemiah that speaks of the King asking Nehemiah why his face was downcast. Nehemiah replied that it was "because the walls of Jerusalem laid in ruins". He then prayed that like Jerusalem of old, these sacred walls would rise again and the

Gospel proclaimed again and lives transformed in this place. There was much excitement and eagerness as the workers began the first clearing of the area.

The dam and site for the water system is intact. The rams are essentially stripped and will need to be rebuilt, but we pretty well knew that. The good news is that the essential parts are there, the main body of the rams and the air chambers. The other parts can be purchased out of England and will be taken with the Work Team for rebuilding and installing the rams this summer. The pipe, fittings and other materials are purchased and awaiting the departure of the river boat from Kinshasa.

The trip was a challenge, but encouraging. Needless to say the people around Katako Kombe are elated. Over and over they would say to me, “now that we have seen you in person, we know that this is not an empty promise, but a hopeful reality!”. People were eager to work and pleased to tell me that they had managed to save 174 sheets of roofing from the old Camp Meeting buildings for us to use in the re-building project. That will significantly increase the number of buildings that we can repair.

The greatest need now and prayer request is for the timely departure of the river boat from Kinshasa. The barge that was needed to carry the truck for the project was acquired, but needed some repairs. Those have taken longer than expected and have delayed the loading and departure. We desperately need the boat to depart Kinshasa no later than May 1st in order to arrive in Kela in time to supply the project by the time the Team arrives.

Please continue to pray with us for the details that remain to make this project a success. Pray for the workers and leaders at Katako Kombe who have hope again after so many years. Pray for the workers who are now making preparations for our arrival and especially for Pastor Kitambala who is now back at Katako Kombe overseeing the preparatory work there. He has gone back over from Lodja on a motorbike and will make several visits over the next 2 months to pay the workers and see that the work is getting done as we discussed and planned.

Thank you for your interest, prayers and assistance in making all of this possible for the Glory of God and advancement of his Kingdom in the Congo.

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Nicholasville, KY
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