



When we speak of MAF, and the role we will play in Congo as an IT Specialist family, we often speak of partnerships. In the body of Christ, and certainly on the mission field, there are many parts with many functions. We recently met (well, became friends with on Facebook) Kent Rasmussen, a Linguist and Bible translator in Bunia (the town where we will live in Congo). His family is helping bring God's word to people who have never had an opportunity to read it before. He recently shared these insights with me regarding MAF and our family's roles within the larger "body" ministering in Congo:

Although I have received graduate training in Linguistics (MA at Oregon), I have spent a lot of time since we moved to Bunia on other things. Since we were some of the only Wycliffe missionaries in Bunia for some time, we have relied heavily on our MAF missionary colleagues in a number of ways. Before we were able to move into our current house, its water storage had to be re-plumbed, including reconfiguring the pipes so that all the water would not just run back to the city. Did I have *any* plumbing experience? No. But a MAF missionary, who had just finished doing the same job at his house, showed me the ropes (and how to use a pipe threader), and worked with me a couple days until I knew what I was doing. The same MAF missionary helped me rewire the electrical circuits for our house, crawling through our attic with me, in the grime, sweat, and bat dung. When we ripped out the very old ceilings (since we didn't want them raining allergens on us once we lived there), another MAF missionary loaned us his circular saw, and a third helped me find plywood in town, to paint and put back up—then the two of them helped me put it back up, standing on ladders and hammering overhead. That's just setting up our house.

We also depend on MAF to get gas bottles for cooking, which are purchased in neighboring Uganda. And did I mention our Internet connection? Much of my work transpires by emails, and other services that require an Internet connection—like backing up all our data offsite. Our Internet connection was set up, and is run and maintained by MAF. So I think we could easily say that we depend on MAF for several mission-critical functions, and without them, we could not live here. And I haven't even mentioned flying yet. I think most people understand the advantages of a 45-minute flight over two days in an old vehicle on a bumpy, muddy road—when it is passable at all. But please let me encourage you to think of the number of ways missionaries need technical support, including but not limited to air transport.

One particular help MAF has provided us deserves more attention: IT support. While the MAF Internet connection has been essential for us, there have been many times where missionaries in town feel the lack of local IT support. Our office network is still not set up. We're not waiting on MAF for that; it is just a symptom of the fact that everyone here (in a number of missions) was called to a particular task, and there's no one for whom that task is IT. So when we heard there was a MAF IT guy on his way, we cheered! Please consider supporting the Fullers with your prayers and finances, to speed them on their way to help us get the job done.

MAF has been a critical support to us in a number of ways, and I want you to know that our survival and health depends on their survival and health. The more I can stop thinking about daily survival and logistics (including IT), the more I can think about what I'm here to do—getting people writing systems, so we can translate Bibles that will be read and used, so lives will be changed for Christ.





Merry
Christmas!

There are many different traditions when it comes to celebrating Christmas. Some people eat a special meal, or go to a church service together. I (Owen) remember reading the story of Christ's birth before opening presents on Christmas morning each year.

Congolese Christmas certainly looks a little different than it does in America. For one, the Christmas season doesn't start the day after Halloween. In fact, it might be only a few days before Christmas when the local church puts up a tree with crazy lights out front. The rest of the church gets decorated with colored toilet paper and tinsel. The day isn't about gifts or parties. On Christmas day many spend the whole day at church singing, dancing, and listening to sermons. There might also be a reenactment of the nativity. After dinner the people return home to a dinner with meat, which is a rare treat for most people there.

The MAF team in east DRC has a tradition of inviting the Congolese staff and their families over for a big dinner of meat, French fries, and soda. They play games and decorate cookies. After a word of appreciation and prayer, each worker is given a bag full of food and soap, and they get to pick an ornament off of the Christmas tree.

As 2011 comes to a close, and we take time to reflect on the past year, we have a lot of reasons to be thankful! In May we welcomed our son, Omri, into the world, and it's been great watching him grow. Larinda, Gabriella, and Macy love playing with him. God has provided us with places to live. We've been healthy, and He has met our financial needs.

We've traveled to parts of Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, and Florida to share our vision for our ministry in Congo. Along the way we've made new friends. Our prayer and financial ministry support team continues to grow. Deputation can be stressful and challenging at times, but it's been great to see so many people and churches join us in this ministry. We really couldn't do this without you, and a mere "thank you" doesn't come close to expressing our gratitude.

We pray you each have a safe and blessed Christmas!

Owen, Stephanie, Larinda, Gabriella, Macy, and Omri

Prayer Requests

- We're thankful for a big jump in support in November; we're over the 70% mark and still going!
- In the past, the LRA has launched deadly attacks on or around Christmas. Please pray for the safety of the Congolese this month.