

The Fuller Family Link

Training Congo's Christian Leaders by Owen



Students Make Fishing Nets



Academic Conference



USB Graduates

In 1961, just a year after the Democratic Republic of Congo gained independence from Belgium, the Theological School of Northern Congo opened in the village of Banjwade. A few years later the campus moved to Bunia to escape the turmoil of fighting in the area. The school underwent a series of name changes over the years reflecting both the changes in location and course offerings. In 2007 the school transitioned from a theological seminary to a Christian university opening schools of Administration and Management, Development, Science, and Agricultural Science under the new name of Shalom University of Bunia (USB).

Today, in addition to programs like Evangelical Theology, Bible Translation, and Missiology, students can study programs such as Hydrobiology and Aquaculture, Business Management, Rural Development and Planning, Information Technology, and Development and Management of Natural Resources. All of USB's twenty-some programs are taught from a Biblical perspective, so while students are gaining skills they can use to affect positive changes in their world they are also developing a Christ-centered framework for understanding it.

MAF partners with USB by providing satellite Internet service for their campus. A dedicated VSAT system connects their faculty computers and student computer lab to the world. Internet has been a key to opening new doors to learning previously closed in this part of Africa. Now that these doors are open, many are walking through them.

"The VSAT has been a big boost for the effective communication of Shalom University with the outside world. It enables quality research via the Internet essential for a University in the center of Africa where books are extremely expensive and hard to come by. The connection has been reliable and a blessing," said Ted Witmer, Director of Development at USB. I love hearing comments like this that illustrate how MAF is carrying out our mission of sharing the love of Jesus Christ through aviation and technology, so that isolated people may be physically and spiritually transformed.

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RELEASING THE GRIP

By Owen

Before we started the process of raising support for our ministry we had many ideas about how this process would go. Nearly all of our preconceived notions about presentations, appointments, travel, and timetables have all gone out the window...multiple times. It seems that whatever plans and expectations we make along the way are different from what God has in mind.

Let me share an example. In the beginning I thought fundraising would be finished in six to eight months, and we'd be to language school within a year. Today we are 15 months into the process, and with our monthly support in the mid-sixty percent range, language school has been rescheduled twice. Next September is the new goal to start our French language studies.

In many ways it has felt like the last several months have been filled with making plans that don't come to fruition. Why is it taking our family so long to raise support? Why is it that so many appointments fall through? When will we get to language school? When will we get to Congo?

Lately God convicted us that we have been focusing *too* much on our plans and timing and not enough on His. Instead of holding our own desires in open palms we've had an iron-clad grip. We need to be asking different questions: How can I minister to people around me today? How is this pre-field time preparing our family for service in Africa? In what ways do we see God at work in this process?

God's plan is bigger and more intricate than anything we as humans might dream. We may never fully understand it, but as we relax our grip we are starting to catch glimpses of how he is using our pre-field experience to bring Himself glory.

Financial Support...

Monthly: \$4,278 of \$6,500 (66%)*
Outgoing: \$26,522 of \$28,900 (92%)

*Before language school. Ultimately, we need to reach the new goal for all MAF families of \$7,200.

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***“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,” declares
the LORD.***

***“As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways and
my thoughts than your thoughts.
Isaiah 55:8,9 (ESV)***

While in Omaha our paths crossed with a person involved with starting a Christian university in Uganda. We learned that one of the problems they face is a shortage of library space. To combat this dilemma they are considering going digital with some of their books, however they weren't sure the best way to go about the process. Wouldn't you know it; one of the things MAF Learning Technologies specializes in is digital libraries! I was able to pass on some information that may prove helpful for this ministry in the future.

As one of MAF's few IT specialists in the east Africa region it's also quite possible I could travel from Congo to neighboring Uganda to work with this university if they ever request IT support from MAF. Like Joseph's connection with the cup bearer in Genesis, God could be building this relationship now to further his plans in the future.

Over the last 15 months, God has also been teaching us a lot of lessons about patience, trusting him, perseverance, balance of ministry and family life, his love for people, and how we can be more like him. We know these things will be important in Congo. There are a lot of plans we have for when we get there. I'm sure many of them won't work quite the way we want, and some won't work out at all. It's something we need to be prepared to deal with.

So...with open palms we continue on the path towards language school and ministry in Congo. It's tempting to retighten our grip, but we're trying to trust God and his timing.

Prayer Support...

-We're thankful for our new ministry partners! Please pray that monthly support keeps growing.

-Pray for safety and stability for MAF staff and the Congolese during elections in DRC in late November.

-We're thankful for some needed family time lately—game night, the tire swing, trick-or-treating, etc.