



The Fuller Family Link - July 2012

Commissioning Chapel at MAF HQ

Spring Highlights

It's been awhile since our last newsletter, so we'll try to bring you up to speed on the details. The last few months have been absolutely crazy! In February we announced our May 30th departure for Congo. It's as if the dam broke, and we've been caught up in the current. The water is refreshing though, and we're really excited to be in Congo!



St. Mark's Lutheran—Marion, IA

February and March we tried to get around one more time to visit some of our supporting churches. We did share in Marion, Grinnell, and Ankeny,

Iowa, as well as Omaha, NE. We always enjoy spending time with old friends and making new ones. You are a huge part of our ministry! **Our new prayer card is enclosed in this letter, and we invite you to pray about whether God is leading you to join our team and help make up the deficit in our ministry support. Thank you.**



Once March came we focused heavily on packing. In other words, we spent several days (and nights) out in the shop sifting through piles of our possessions, fitting them into plastic bins, and recording each item and its replacement value in a spreadsheet. It's quite possible we single-handedly kept Amazon.com in business with our frequent supply orders. Some days the UPS and postal trucks would arrive at the same time. It was a lot of work, but

it was one step closer to Africa.

In April our church family, First Family Church in Ankeny, IA, commissioned us for missionary service. Several of our relatives were there. The day was extra special, because I (Owen) got to baptize

Larinda that day as well. It was great for us to celebrate her decision to follow Christ, and an important reminder to Stephanie and me that our mission field starts at home with our kids.



IT Training at MAF HQ

The next day we departed for MAF headquarters in Nampa, ID, for two weeks of pre-field orientation, and a week of IT training. Orientation focuses on cross-cultural training and making sure new MAF missionaries are prepared for the physical, mental, and spiritual challenges ahead.



At one of the weekly chapel services, the HQ staff held a commissioning service for the new missionaries. We learned a lot through the whole experience, and grew in our relationships with God and each other.

One of the highlights in Idaho was the evening our family spent with another MAF family (also heading to Congo) and a Congolese pastor and his family at their home. He leads an African church in Boise. We ate a delicious Congolese dinner prepared by his wife, and they both gave us lots of great information about DRC. They also gave Stephanie a beautiful African dress. When the evening was over we all sang a song in Swahili and prayed together. It's an experience we won't forget! ☮





We Finally Made It!!!

After months of preparation—raising ministry support, training, packing—we finally boarded a plane for Africa. Let me tell you, we were quite a sight as we rolled through the airport with two car seats strapped to our suitcases. We saw several smiles, heard a few comments, and even caught a guy trying to look inconspicuous while taking our picture. It was a journey not free from challenges. However, in the end, none of the terrible things we thought could happen actually did. We eventually got to Uganda for a week, recovered from jet lag, and did a little shopping before moving to a more remote location.

On the plane rides to Bunia (our new home in Congo) Larinda and Gabriella rode in the co-pilot seat. They were thrilled! The kids were also excited to meet Brooke, Chad, and Cole, who are about the same ages as ours, and they love playing together.

We spent the first couple of weeks getting to know our MAF family, and getting an overview of life in Bunia. We still have some settling to do, but our house is starting to feel like a home. We are slowly putting up decorations, finding places for all our stuff, fixing things, and establishing routines. **While things like water and power management take extra care, and everyday tasks like cooking and cleaning require extra steps, overall we are enjoying life here.** We have had a Congolese family over for dinner, and even invited the whole team to our home to celebrate Gabriella's 4th birthday. We're getting to know where things are around town, and there are plenty of things to keep us busy.



Near the end of June we, along with the entire Bunia team, joined the MAF Congo teams from Kinshasa and Lubumbashi for a week-long family conference in Kenya. It was a time of physical, spiritual, and emotional renewal. It was great to unwind a little, and also get to know some other MAF missionaries. It was also a good chance to see some of our friends we originally met at MAF headquarters in Nampa, ID.

The IT projects are in no short supply here either. Owen has been busy getting to know the network in Bunia, and meeting the people we serve. Among the organizations he's worked with so far are SIL (Wycliffe Bible Translators), MSF (Doctors Without Borders), and ISTM (a Christian nursing school). He has been up on tin roofs, and even a radio tower to change antennas, and has walked, ridden, and driven to many parts of town.

There are many more opportunities for ministry here, and we are excited to begin becoming part of some of them! Dr. Mike, a Congolese doctor who works with the Centre Médical Evangélique (CME), a medical ministry run by local churches of various denominations, recently told us that many of the missionaries left when the war broke out in the late 90s and early 2000s. Though relative stability has returned, most of the missionaries have not. As a result, many of the ministries where Congolese and expatriates were working side-by-side have suffered. There is a real need here for MAF and other missions organizations to work alongside the Congolese church. It's for this reason we thank you for your prayer and financial support of our ministry which allows us to serve in DRC. Please continue to pray for our adjustment here, and for more opportunities to serve.

Owen & Stephanie Fuller