

Robert & Esther Marsh

Congo Chronicle March – April - May 2006

Dear Prayer Friends, “MBOTE” from the Congo, DRC,

Our time in South Africa came to a close with our return to Congo on the 25 May 2006. We are blessed to be supported by many South African churches. At present, with the dollar/rand exchange, these churches make up 25% of our support.

The Lord blessed us with safety in our travels in South Africa: While waiting for the twins’ paper work to come through, we traveled over 17 000 km, visiting as many of our supporting churches as we could. Croyden Baptist church blessed us greatly by allowing us to stay in their manse for the time we were there.

We were able to get passports for the twins and then the 30 day visas they needed for entering the Congo. Now that we are here, we will have to apply for a 5 year work permit visa for the twins. On the 23 May we were finally able to pay for our tickets. I say this as the day before we wanted to pay for the tickets, we noticed some unauthorized debits made to my debit card! In the light of this I had to have my card canceled, but praise the Lord, we were able to still use Esther’s. It still took three attempts before we were able to pay for the airline tickets. We are still wondering what the Lord had in all of this, though there is one thing we know now, and that is that with the dollar/rand exchange the delay caused the tickets to be \$200 cheaper, so for that we are thankful!

The flight from Johannesburg to Kinshasa takes 4 hours and 45 min but with check-in and luggage collection, and the long bumpy ride to our home here in Kinshasa it made for a long 10 hour day! We said our sad “farewells” and our plane took off just 5 min. late at 12:35 noon. The kids all did well during the flight, and we had no “eventful” episodes for which we thank the Lord. We of course caused quite a stir going through the air-port as they saw all the children and the twins. Esther is called “mama mapasa” here (mother of twins) so every where Esther would go with the twins everyone would call out “mama mapasa”. One of the customs here is when you have twins they will powder you with fufu (kasava) flour, well it only happen once to us. The traffic here in Congo has increased since last time, and it took our driver three tries down different roads before being able to get through to our home at around 8:00pm. It was great to be welcomed by our family and friends who had stuck up welcome signs everywhere in our home and had put a meal on the table as well as made up beds and provided other necessities-like candles. It was wonderful to fall into our beds around 10pm and the electricity came on as we tucked in so we could have a peaceful sleep. Since being here a week and a half now we have thankfully had water come in 4 times and other times we are able to get from our neighbors across the road. The electricity goes off for a time period most days, but thankfully it has never been for more than 7 hours.

I will be returning to South Africa the first part of June to drive our car back to Congo. This is our 1985 Pajero 4X4 which has been a blessing. We are not sure what we would have done with out it while we were in South Africa. We managed to cram all 9 of us into it and do all the traveling we needed. Now it is time for it to return back to Kinshasa. We are also praying about getting a van for family use here in Kinshasa.

We arrived here in Kinshasa, with only one hitch in that they took Joshua’s and Jordan’s passport at the airport. While down in South Africa they both had to get new passports and so their resident visas had not be transposed into their new one. We are in the process of following up on this matter. Right

now we are waiting for them to do the transposing process. Please pray that they will not require a large fee for this. One never knows.

Do pray for each of our family members as they make the changes and adjustments required in many areas of our lives- food, way of life, and ministry. Each time it has been harder to leave our dear grandparents and friends, but we know we are all in Gods' hands and we are placed here to do His will, so "...until then with joy we'll carry on.."

Matters of Prayer:

- Kids schooling (they will have to do summer school with teacher Becky Bardon to catch up).
- Joshua's and Jordan's passports (That they will transpose the resident visas with out any problems).
- Work permits for the twins in process. (Sounds funny, but they do need them).
- Unpacking and getting settled.
- My trip back to South Africa to drive our car back to Congo.(safety, swift boarder crossings).
- Pray for the Country of "The Democratic Republic of Congo". Elections to be the end of July

The days are ticking towards the day that every Congolese is hoping will change the history of their country and will bring relief from their poverty and hardship. It will be a day that the Congolese people will VOTE for the first time in over 40 years, for their president. Do pray for this country at this time!

In Christ,

Robert, Esther, Joshua, Cherith, Jordan, Jeremy, Chelsea and Chaylee Marsh (all in one breath).

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Did you know: "It is estimated that at least 3.3 million died since the outbreak of fighting in August 1998. That is about 38% of the population of North Carolina ¹(8,541,221 – July 2004) or 17% of the population of New York ²(19,227,088 – July 2004), this would wipe out the population of Johannesburg, South Africa ³(3,225,812 – census 2001)."

¹ Don't remember the website I found it on.

² U.S. census bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36000.html>

³City of Johannesburg Official Website: <http://www.joburg.org.za/business/population.stm>