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BACK TO AFRICA!

Dear family and friends,



To say that this letter is long overdue would be the understatement of the century! Indeed, in the last century, we actually wrote letters—frequently. Another lifetime ago that was, with most of it being lived in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, then Zaire), as most of you are aware.

Back in the States since 1991, life continued to be full with the usual joys and sorrows, gains and losses, highs and lows common to mankind. A huge part of those joys have been our children. John and Tara with their four (now all teenagers!) live near Shelby, NC where John trains missionary pilots and mechanics. Beck and Heather plus four live in Malvern, PA with Beck being part of a Family Medicine practice. Aaron and Sherry plus five are in Syracuse where Aaron is an engineer with Lockheed-Martin. Matt and Amy with their five are near us in Coatesville where Matt is a remodeling manager for a fine group. Yup, you counted correctly—18 grandchildren, aged 18 years to 8 months. God has blessed us!

Africa has never been far from our minds or hearts in the intervening years with Bob making quite a few trips back and forth during the 1990's until he took a full-time job in the pharmaceutical industry doing R&D work until a company reorganization effectively "retired" him five years ago. Also during those decades Bob served on the Board of Directors for the Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International (CPFI) and with Plesion International, a not-for-profit charitable organization with self-help projects for assisting children and others to obtain clean water and nutritional products for malnutrition. Through his contacts with former colleagues in the DRC, Bob recently became aware of the need to help supply natural plant products with proven ability to help combat HIV-AIDS and other medical problems in Africa. After some initial clinical research to prove the effectiveness of Aloe Vera Capsules, work was expanded with the help of Plesion to also provide Whey Protein Powder supplements for these patients.

Bob traveled back to the DRC in May of 2014 to follow-up the research of these products and to meet with church leaders, CPFI members, and a number of other Congolese medical personnel interested in possibly expanding the work that had begun with Aloe Vera Capsules and Whey Protein Powder by adding a third natural product, Artemisia Annua Tablets. Long-term, and as the Lord continues to open the door and show us this is His will, a local pharmaceutical production facility could be built since nothing has replaced the Central Pharmacy at Nyankunde that was destroyed in 2002. Community health work under the auspices of the local churches, supported by a chain of Hope Pharmacies could also be established. The legal framework for this was set up during the trip in May.

Since that trip and seeing the tremendous medical needs that still exist in the DRC that have only been accentuated by decades of war and tribal fighting, we have shared with the Malvern Bible Chapel (MBC) elders our burden to do more to help with these incredible needs. After much prayer they have encouraged us to

pursue the opportunities that the Lord has laid on our hearts. In September they commended us to the Lord's work in the DRC once again, but this time in the capacity of those making periodic trips to the DRC to oversee some of the technical aspects of the pharmaceutical work while collaborating with the local assembly leaders to promote community health evangelism (CHE) in the many DRC assemblies. In that connection, we have been invited to return to the DRC in January 2015.

We hope to go together for this first trip. Bob will teach in the assemblies and also follow-up on the Hope Pharmacy Project as it gets started in Goma, DRC. We will be staying with the family of one of the young leaders of the assemblies in Goma who is responsible for the CHE work among the assemblies. We plan to travel by air to Bunia with the church leader. From there we expect to visit the various districts where the assemblies have had medical work in the past (Nyankunde, Lolwa, Tchabi, Itendey) as well as a number of new areas where the church and medical work has expanded as a result of the wars (with Goma we hope to visit 10 districts). The trip will culminate with Bob attending the Annual General Assembly, an important conference held at Itendey this year with delegates from several hundred assemblies attending. This will be a great opportunity to evaluate the overall health and spiritual needs in the DRC and be an encouragement as the Lord gives opportunities both on this trip and in the future.

After returning to Goma by air, we plan to head back to the USA at the end of February after finishing up any remaining work there. For the first time we will arrive and leave the DRC via Kigali, Rwanda, located just across the border from Goma in the heart of Africa. Another big change in the paradigm of missions is the ability to use the internet and mobile telephones to rapidly communicate with those we are working with in the DRC even if we are based in the States. This was not possible when we were there years ago.

How can you help? The Lord has graciously provided funding for this initial trip and we are so thankful! We would especially covet your prayers for wisdom and discernment as we will be faced with many needs and challenges that will far exceed our ability to meet. We seek to be open to how the Lord may be leading us both in the future. And if the Lord leads as we expect, this will mean future trips (at least two per year of 1 month each). Bob may make some of those trips by himself and follow-up with the Hope Pharmacy Project and the procurement, manufacturing, and distribution of the new medicinal products being supplied by Plesion as well as other essential medicines that are so desperately needed. Prayer is also needed for the spread of the Gospel and the furthering of the community outreach ministries of the many local assemblies through the CHE work. This is the primary thrust of this new work and an exciting avenue for the assemblies to be involved with as they reach their communities.

Thank you for partnering with us in this new adventure as we step out once again in faith in the DRC. Our contact information is above, and here is also the address where support gifts can be sent:

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c/o CMML, Inc.
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Let us take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your prayers and support. We wish you a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2015!

Joyfully in Christ,

Bob & Glenda