

*Lowell & Claudia Wertz
P.O. Box 1344
Kigoma, Tanzania*

March 23, 1997

Dear Friends and Churches,

Four years ago in the middle of the night, Dar Es Salaam seemed like a foreboding place. Glad to still be missionaries -- although exhausted and without visas -- we struggled off the airplane. There stood Pastor Muyombi. He had spent three days and nights on a train to meet us. Quiet and reserved by nature, once you gained his confidence there wasn't anything he wouldn't do to help you.

Pastor Muyombi was the founder of the United Methodist Church of Tanzania. Now forever a part of the history of the United Methodist Church, he traveled from Zaire by boat across Lake Tanganyika and planted the first of several UM churches in Tanzania. How he loved those churches! Administration was his specialty and he served as UM representative to the Tanzanian government. Recently, when the church was electing its new Bishop, he refused to be a candidate. He got 50 votes anyway.

Faced with problems that would crush a lesser man, I marveled at his continual and cheerful willingness to do whatever he could to advance the cause of Christ. After undergoing some awful ordeal, he would shrug off any words of appreciation or compassion by saying, "it was nothing" or "I'm not bothered by it".

Our friendship was based on mutual commitment to the work of the Gospel. And what a rich friendship it was for me. God, in His wisdom, permitted us to work together for a time. The work Pastor Muyombi accomplished will stand the test of time.

While I was in the States last fall, I noticed Pastor Muyombi was struggling to communicate on the telephone. When we arrived back in Tanzania, as always he was there to meet us. He didn't complain but seemed a little ill. A few weeks later he was with his Lord. The doctors had missed the diagnosis of non-pulmonary TB. I wept for our loss.

His wife wanted to bury his body in their home village in Zaire. They asked us for a piece of black cloth to make the required flag for the boat. He was crossing the lake one last time. The place where they arrived in Zaire was being threatened by rebels. The Methodist airplanes couldn't help the family. They had to bury him there. Mama Muyombi and some of their children continued on the long trek to their home village but soon war engulfed the entire region. For the past three months she has not been able to return to Tanzania.

Our faith in Christ bridged our cultural differences and in His love we had become Christian brothers. I am grateful that I was able, for a while, to be a Timothy for this great United Methodist missionary pioneer.

Love,

*Lowell, Claudia
Kimberly + Luke*

Joy in the Harvest



35 TRUCKLOADS OF ROCK FOR THE FOUNDATION

Construction Begins !

If God had suddenly shown us everything he was going to do in the years to come, I would have said, "Wait a minute, you've got the wrong man! ..."

But God inched up the curtain just a little bit at a time and said, "Take a look, and take a step."

Clarence W. Jones, 1900-1986
missionary to Ecuador

The first building of the new mission station, containing the missionary residence, mission office, and children's school room, is going up!

Just one year ago we announced plans to build a new mission station in Tanzania. Today, the foundations and slab are finished and the walls are being constructed on the first of seven buildings. All

the cement blocks are made. Our Toyota dump truck is working every day hauling rock, sand, and gravel for construction and also helping refugees.

The two containers of construction and relief supplies have arrived safely.

The windows and other fragile items arrived without any breakage. With those goods in hand, construction is proceeding at full speed.

After an eight month wait for the bulldozer, the site for the ministry building and the guest houses is also being leveled.

We praise and thank God for each of you who have given so generously to make the new mission station a reality. ✠

→ CHECKLIST →

☺ Addresses:

Joy in the Harvest
P.O. Box 496
Lansing, IL 60438

E Mail to Tanzania:
Wertz@MAF.org

We love hearing from you!

☺ Wertz's Furlough Calendar Filling Fast

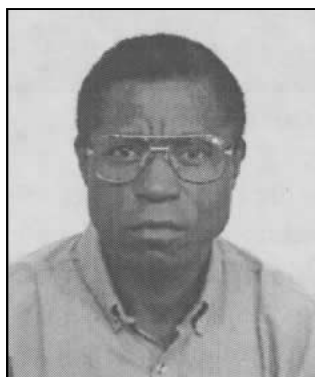
Word from our "furlough bookie" indicates our calendar is getting filled. If your church would like us to visit (dates during the week remain), please get your request to Rich Hutchins, 847-803-1871 (in the evening).



WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

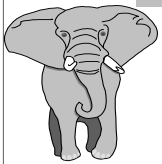
A great friend of ours and the founder of the United Methodist Church of Tanzania went to be with the Lord this past December.

While serving as District Superintendent of Kalemie, Zaire Rev. Muyombi crossed Lake Tanganyika by boat to preach the Gospel in Kigoma, Tanzania and founded the United Methodist Church of Tanzania. He was



Rev. Muyombi
1947-1996

instrumental in the Wertz's serving as missionaries in Tanzania and he served on the board of trustees of *Joy in the Harvest* in Tanzania. His effectiveness as a church administrator was unsurpassed. He died of T.B. after a short illness. His body was returned to Zaire for burial. This servant of Christ will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife and five children. ✠



Look What's Happening in Africa

WAR IN ZAIRE

Rebel forces have captured the eastern third of Zaire. The Zaire side of the border with Tanzania is now under rebel control and new rebel advances are taking place daily. Information from the rebel held area indicates that the civilian population is being treated well. Reports of Zaire Government soldiers looting and harming civilians as they flee are being received. Many missionaries have evacuated and refugees continue pouring into Tanzania. The Tanzanian government has several large refugee camps in the Kigoma area.

REFUGEE COALITION FORMED

A new organization, *Christian Alliance for Refugees*, with members from many denominations and Christian organizations has been formed in Kigoma. Its two-fold purpose is to provide spiritual ministry and material help to refugees. Five large "circus" tents have been donated to the group and are being set up in the refugee camps as temporary places of worship, education, and evangelism. *Joy in the Harvest* is a founding member and has been providing air transportation with our airplane — 5H-JOY.

AMERICAN CHRISTIANS MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Donated health kits, school kits, and sewing kits are being distributed. The neediest people in the world are rejoicing to receive the "love gift" from America given in the name of Christ. Thanks to all our



Leprosy Victims Rejoicing

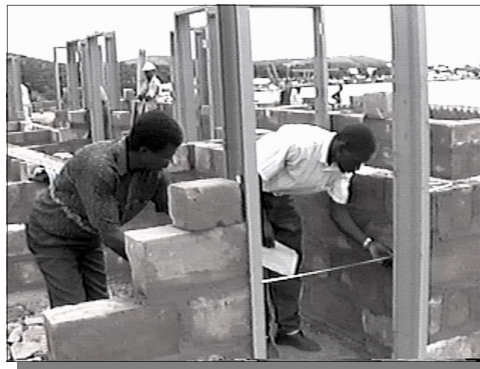


QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the Biggest Challenge You Are Facing?

Q. We are hearing about wars, refugees, construction, evangelism, and other things. At this time, what is the biggest challenge facing you.

A. Tough Question! Every task has its problems. Flying an airplane — there will be bad weather, short landing strips, and unexpected maintenance bills. Planting churches — expect people problems galore. Working in an unstable political climate — be prepared to evacuate and leave everything behind.



It Is Not Our Construction Program

Where is the balance between lost souls needing an evangelist and your children needing your time? Can you remain tender toward the suffering of refugees, sensitive to the needs of other missionaries, and realize that most problems

you will bear alone? How do you pray when you don't know what to ask for? How can you cope with too many wars, too much work, too many people, too many needs, too many requests, and too little time and money? How do you remain sane in bizarre circumstances?

There is a special place. A place of grace and mercy. A place filled with His presence. Finding that place. Not wandering away. Making that place your base of operations. That's the greatest challenge. ✠