



Adresse Régionale : Université Méthodiste au Katanga
Mulungwishi
B.P. 521 Likasi, Katanga
République Démocratique du Congo

Université Méthodiste au Katanga

April 25th, 2010

Friends of Mulungwishi

Dear Friends of Mulungwishi:

During the last week we were visited by an evaluation team from the Church of Christ in Congo (the equivalent of our National Council of Churches). We had contracted with them to do an evaluation and strategic planning for the University and the mission station. This evaluation was generously paid for by Connexio (the Swiss Mission Board). The most critical assessment that was found was that the titles for the land at Mulungwishi were out of date. According to the law, the titles need to be renewed every 25 years. Nobody at the University, the mission or the Church at large knew of this regulation. The last negotiations about the land date from the late 1950s when my father was the Legal Representative for the Church to the Belgian colonial government. Since then, nothing has been done by the church with regards to the property. So we find ourselves having missed three renewals (1959, 1984 and 2009). Part of this problem is our fault for not keeping up with the property laws. Part is due to procedures falling through the cracks with independence, secession of the province and eight different governments since independence in 1960 of which only one was settled through an election process.

The evaluation team told us to get working on this matter right away because churches in the capital, Kinshasa, have lost their property or have had to pay heavily in court because others have bought the property out from under them after the time had expired. This is particularly dangerous for Mulungwishi because of the minerals that people are trying to extract from our property. Already there are 15 operational pits being mined on the Mulungwishi hill by diggers (freelance prospectors). There is a real fear that a mining company will come in and purchase the land; we could lose the entire complex, have to rent our own buildings or get into a very expensive legal battle.

Because of the urgency, Dr. Kasap, President of the University, came to Lubumbashi and has been working with the land title office of the government. Today, we were presented with the bill of some \$45,000 that it would cost to have the property completely surveyed, given complete title to the land, pay back renewals and penalties. Dr. Kasap and I took this bill to Bishop Katembo. Bishop has asked me to write this letter on his behalf to all of our partners in the United States and Europe. It is imperative to get this problem resolved as quickly as possible. It is because of the urgency that he is appealing to you as partners. In the meantime, the church here is mobilizing to see what it can do. Also Church and University authorities will be trying to meet with government leaders to see if the figure can be reduced.

On a personal note, we know so many of you and are so humbled by your generous giving through the years. In July, we will be celebrating the Centennial of Methodist work in this Katanga Province of Congo. Mulungwishi has been called the heart and lungs of the Church in this area. The testimony of what the Lord has done through His servants on this property is immense. I dare add my voice to that of Bishop Katembo's request for help in this circumstance. The future of the training of the leadership of the United Methodist Church in this area would be severely hampered by the loss of the property at Mulungwishi. Would you prayerfully consider a one-time gift for Mulungwishi in terms of an offering of thanks for the Lord's goodness to us during the last 100 years? At the same time, and most importantly, pray for the Church here as it steps into the next century of involvement in what the Lord is doing on the earth. "It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit that the Kingdom is built," says the Lord (my paraphrase)

Those wanting to send gifts should send them through the Advance Special Program of the United Methodist Church. It should be sent for Katanga Methodist University #14433A with the designation "Mulungwishi Property".

In Christ's service,

David and Lori Persons

2010 Bishop's appeal for Mulungwishi (2)

*Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire
Facultés de Théologie, de Science d'Education et d'Informatique*

Adresse Postale Internationale UMK-Mulungwishi
United Methodist Church
PO Box 22037 Kitwe
Zambia