

Dear Friends,

Nov 20, 2017



Wheelbarrow and mattress strapped to the roof, Katherine and her team left Friday at the crack of dawn in a bid to get to the Inzia river ferry before dark. If successful (they were) they would make the 400 mile trip to Mulolo in one day, most over muddy, unpaved roads. Their purpose: to encourage Dr. Alain as he sets up a hospital “in the middle of nowhere.” She intends to be home by Thanksgiving.

Congo does not have a national Thanksgiving holiday. That, however, does not hinder Congolese churches and Christians from choosing a special day to give thanks to God for his providence throughout the year. In Congo Thanksgiving is a Sunday service called Matondo which means ... Thanksgiving! It is a big day,

planned for weeks in advance and has little to do with food and everything to do about Giving. Most churches plan a project towards which the offering collected at the Matondo service will go (the purchase of musical instruments or a generator). To meet their goal, most churches suggest an amount of money that people should give, according to category: pastors, deaconate, men, women, youth, even visitors!

Though they are poor, Congolese give sincerely and enthusiastically. Matondo services are LONG, packed, and colourful. Choirs abound. It is also traditional to take the Matondo offering by category of parishioner: first pastors, then the deaconate, followed by visitors, men, women, youth, individual small groups, and the choirs – one by one. The offering alone can take an hour. If you are a deaconess, leader of a small group, and member of the women’s choir, you can dance your offering to the baskets at the front four times! In churches in rural Congo, where cash circulates minimally, many bring their Matondo offering “in kind”. Sticks of manioc, cobs of corn, and basins of peanuts stack up in the front, as the congregation dances and sings. God loves “a cheerful giver” takes on a new meaning in Congo.



This Matondo season we take the opportunity to thank each of you who give faithfully and generously so we can serve God in Congo. I am happy to report that Katherine has had ‘a great trip’ and if all continues well, will get back Wednesday. Your gifts propel and enable us, and through you, God shows his faithfulness to us.

Thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving.

Wayne + Katherine