

A medical missionary's life in the Congo

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Editor's note:
Dr. Jim Evans is the son of Dr. J. Lewis C.T.E. Evans and is currently serving with the United Church of Canada's Institute Medical Evangelists in the Republic of the Congo.
Jim and his wife will be writing to The Witness periodically on his experiences in the Congo.
Dear Friends,

We are somewhat uncertain as to how we should format our first letter as a married couple. Since many of you know only one of us, we feel that some sort of introduction is called for. There will be biographical sketches for some of you and adequate for many of you. But they seem to be our only alternative for this kind of letter so we hope that you will understand.

Jim's home is Trenton, Ontario where he lived until he entered the University of Toronto. There he gained his medical degree and completed a year's internship. He then went to British Columbia to work in a large children's hospital of the United Church of Canada. After two years there he had a marked change of scene by going to Congo for four months. Upon his return he "delivered" his theology for a year and then took a year's sabbatical residence in Vancouver. It was during the latter experience that he decided to return to Congo. Then, as an appointed missionary of the United Church of Canada, he took a tropical medicine course in Belgium and arrived in Congo in 1963. Three and a half years is almost

not only quite interesting, but provided Jim with an opportunity to assess the needs. During an extended furlough he took various refresher courses and completed a certificate in Public Health program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. This new experience and knowledge should be helpful in his new overseas the Public Health program here at U.M.E. (Institute Medical Evangelists.)

The ship he left Montreal in July 25, and it was exactly two months later that he was married. The first week back was spent with Jim's family in Canada and all the good friends. Jim's brother, Rob, and his family (the family wedding) in one summer. That Patty began a very busy but happy three weeks at home in California seeing family and friends after a year's absence and finishing up wedding plans.

Short honeymoon

Our wedding was an meaningful and happy an occasion as we could have hoped for. All of our family and friends who were able to share this experience with us made it all the more special. For those who could not come, we wish we could tell about it in detail but there just is not enough space.

After a "short honeymoon" of two days, we returned to pack our possessions and make all arrangements necessary to enable us to leave a week and two days later. It was a hectic time but some how everything was accomplished and we left Congo September 18, spent a day and a half in Seattle seeing many of Patty's friends and family there, another day and half in Toronto and Bradford, and on September 14, left for a two week honeymoon in Scandinavia.

What a wonderful two weeks that was! We spent the longest time in Norway where the scenery was spectacular. We traveled by plane, steamer, and train, thus getting a variety

of views of many areas. We stopped in Stockholm for a couple of days and ended our Scandinavian visit in Copenhagen which is, indeed, the charming city we had hoped for. This trip to Denmark included a trip to the Hans Christian Andersen country which was one of the highlights of our two weeks. September 29 we began the trip to Congo which included a planned furlough in Brussels of eight hours and an unplanned furlough in Geneva of six hours

due to technical problems and the strict security measures. Were we ever happy to arrive in Kinshasa? We were happy still to arrive at I.M.E. which is now our home. After our many travels over the last year we were eager to settle into our home.

Like home

We have been here six weeks now and, indeed, it does seem like home. Jim is very busy in the public

health program for even as varied programs continue; the Public Health team is evaluating the situation in which it is working and potential opportunities for contributing further to the public health program in this region, as well as public health interventions here at the U.M.E. grounds. Jim is teaching two courses in the school of nursing in addition to taking his share of patient calls for the hospital.

Patty has been quite busy as she supervised the painting of the interior of the house after our arrival and is presently doing those final touches to make it look like home. She is also covering the challenges of keeping house and cooking where there is no hot water (although now there is running water but only since the rains started), where there is the "problem" of boiling the milk, where all water must be boiled before drinking, where doing the laundry is not just pushing buttons on a washer and dryer, etc. One could go on forever—but the important point is that such aspects of life do not continue to seem an inconvenience but rather become those things one just does in daily living. Patty is also making some progress in her although study as she attends class two times a week and tries to keep her regular study hours. Her first opportunity to hear a sermon so far have been on road trips when she has accompanied Jim. One trip was to a village with the public health team to carry on clinics, another to a vil-

lage where T.B. patients were being followed up, and the third to a community health center which was originally sponsored by U.M.E. and is now being run by the local people. They have been opportunities to see some village life, to meet village people and to understand better the physical, social and spiritual needs of the Congolese.

Hope

There are three days for us as we are beginning our first year, and looking for some, making and receiving many friendships, and looking to the effect to provide better health care to a worthy hope of helping to meet the basic needs of these people that we have come, and we trust that our efforts, your prayers and God's participation here will help to realize through our lives. Our first year will become a really interesting experience.

Especially as we approach Christmas, we are thankful for God's call of his Son and we want to take the opportunity of this season to share with you.

of you our wish that you will be a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.
Blessings,
Dr. Jim and Patty Evans

Patty Evans

Patty (nee Parks) up her pre-college years various California cities where her father has served American Baptist churches. She began college days at Whitman College in Spokane, Washington, and after two years there, transferred to the same university to complete the work for her nursing degree. Following a post work in Covina, California (where her family is living), Patty entered Western's program at the University of Washington. She changed her major to that of nursing and completed her at the end of a year and a half in a core program at the University. In she began the challenging and exciting experience of working on the hospital and the U.M.E. staff as it was in the Congo—this time in Kinshasa. It was a full year as she works in the Infectious Care Unit and had an opportunity to learn about the language and culture of the people and the Congolese counter part nurses. It turned out to be a year and only a few learning experiences but also for travel and throughout Kinshasa and parts of Europe. One's first trip was to meet Jim in London for the week of Christmas which was, of course, a most happy holiday. The year in Kinshasa ended on a high note with the visit of a group of friends from the U.S. and Canada to see how things were going and how they were doing. It was a most interesting and happy experience.