

A New Thing in Congo



There was no question, Canadian born Linda Stryker loved living in Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC). She loved working alongside her Congolese friends and colleagues. For 33 years, Linda served as a Free Methodist missionary

wearing several different hats – that of a nurse and ICCM coordinator, teacher, mentor, friend. Her friends describe her as brave and courageous; a “valiant missionary that worked with excellence in Congo.”

Linda, who died in May, loved people. However, this story isn’t about Linda, it is about her deep love – for Jesus, Congo (her “adopted” country), her friends, and the lost. Out of that love and commitment, a commitment to provide new opportunities for hundreds of Congolese children now and in the future is being established.

About 200 km from Bukavu, in Baraka where Linda lived near Mishimbakye in Fizi territory, a new school has opened in Linda’s honor. This is the first ICCM-sponsored school in Congo, and it bears the name Linda Stryker Academy (LSA). Although the children attending the academy will

never have the chance to meet and know Linda, by attending LSA, they have an opportunity to meet and know the same Jesus she faithfully served.

The academy will be known for its academic excellence. Exceptionally bright children who, because of financial limitations, haven’t had the opportunity of studying at top schools now have the hope of a quality education. Well-

educated, strong Christian teachers will prepare them to have an impact on their church, their community and their country. Those who may not know Jesus yet will learn about Him and how to live a God honoring life.

“Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (1 Corinthians 3:7, NIV).

Under the supervision of Linda’s long-time friend and colleague, ICCM National Coordinator for Congo,



Rev. Lukendobongo (Luk) Waenge, the school opened in September. The first classes include students in Primary 1-3. The school will eventually house both primary and secondary levels and a nursery. Love planted in each heart and mind is ready to grow.

This is a new direction for ICCM Congo. For many years we sponsored pastors' children there, but that program was discontinued in 2008. Since then, ICCM has supported Rev. Luk's work of training teachers of Religious Education, chaplains and pastors at the many Free Methodist schools in the DRC. At his seminars he distributes Bibles, song books, water filters and farm animals to contribute to holistic development of children. Since 2008 the long-term vision of Free Methodist leaders in the DRC has been to operate a "school of reference," an excellent institution to prepare students for university. At last, the Linda Stryker Academy has begun to fulfill this dream.

It is exciting to imagine the impact on the children now and those who will follow. The greatest gift to them will be the solid Christian teaching they'll receive under the watchful eye of Rev. Luk. If you knew Linda, you probably heard her speak about Rev. Luk. His passion is to share Jesus and to train others to share Jesus. We believe many young lives will be transformed as a result of attending LSA.

Linda's commitment to Congo, like her commitment to Jesus, ran deep. The Free Methodist Church DRC and ICCM are committed to providing a quality, Christ-centered edu-

cation to these bright but underprivileged children that they may also be deeply committed in all they do. We thank God for those who have made donations in memory of Linda Stryker. We believe God will use these gifts for the further building and growth of His Kingdom.

Approximately 100 children from LSA are available for sponsorship. People who have a special concern for this enormous, impoverished, war-torn country will be grateful for an opportunity to stand alongside children and families in the DRC. Call 800-342-5531 ext. 502 to ask for a waiting child.

