

March 2011

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, last August in Tshikaji there was a ferocious storm that killed three people and destroyed over a hundred homes. The Congolese Presbyterian Church (CPC) quickly established a storm recovery team that developed a two-pronged plan to respond to the needs of the people impacted by the storm.

The first prong was designed to address the immediate and urgent needs for shelter, food security and resumption of daily activities. Churches, presbyteries, the Africa Office at PC(USA) headquarters in Louisville and many, many individuals responded generously and rapidly to the recovery team's appeal for help. This enabled the immediate purchase and distribution of tarps to families whose



homes had been damaged or destroyed. That was quickly followed by the distribution of seeds. The storm hit at peak planting season and ruined many families' stocks of seeds before they had a chance to get them planted. The last part of the rapid response effort was to assure that the storm wouldn't prevent families from being able to send their children to school. Most of the people of Tshikaji, even in good times, live day to day and this was even truer after the storm. Families' meager resources were being directed toward recovery leaving nothing with which to purchase required school supplies. So the team gave school kits to every school age child in every

family whose home was damaged or destroyed by the storm.

The second prong of the CPC storm recovery team's plan focused on helping families to repair or rebuild their homes. Realizing that the scope of this part of the project would benefit from input from experienced professionals, the team contacted **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** for help. PDA came through in a big way and generously granted the team's request for \$57,907.50 to repair and rebuild homes. Because the number of needy families was so great, the team chose to focus on meeting the crucial and expensive need of roofing. For homes whose roofs were entirely destroyed, PDA funds paid for complete roofs – tin sheets, rafters, beams, etc. Repairing the walls is the family's responsibility. For homes which lost portions of their roofs, tin sheets were provided. It is up to the family to install the new sheets and to make any necessary repairs to the walls. In the seven cases of utterly indigent elderly people whose homes were completely destroyed the team supplied bricks in



addition to installing new roofs. Members of the two local Presbyterian churches are providing the volunteer labor to construct the walls of their elderly neighbors' homes.

As natural disasters go, the Tshikaji storm was small potatoes. But to the villagers who were impacted, it was catastrophic. The outpouring of help from brothers and sisters in Christ in the US has not only enabled them rebuild their lives; it has affirmed for them that they are not forgotten. When



expressing thanks on behalf of the entire village, spokesman, Tatu Mutoke, said, "We know that what these friends have done for us is what they do for many people around the world who are in the same situation as we are. They share with those who are in need."

Thank you to all who helped turn this crisis into an opportunity to demonstrate God's love in action. Next month at Easter, US Presbyterian churches will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance receives one third of that Offering. Please be generous in your One Great

Hour of Sharing giving to help PDA make a difference in the next little village in the middle of nowhere whose disaster may too small to capture the world's attention but isn't too small to be noticed by brothers and sisters in Christ.

With our thanks for your partnership,

John and Gwenda Fletcher  
Mission Co-Workers, Democratic Republic of the Congo

**For more information about:**

**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**

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