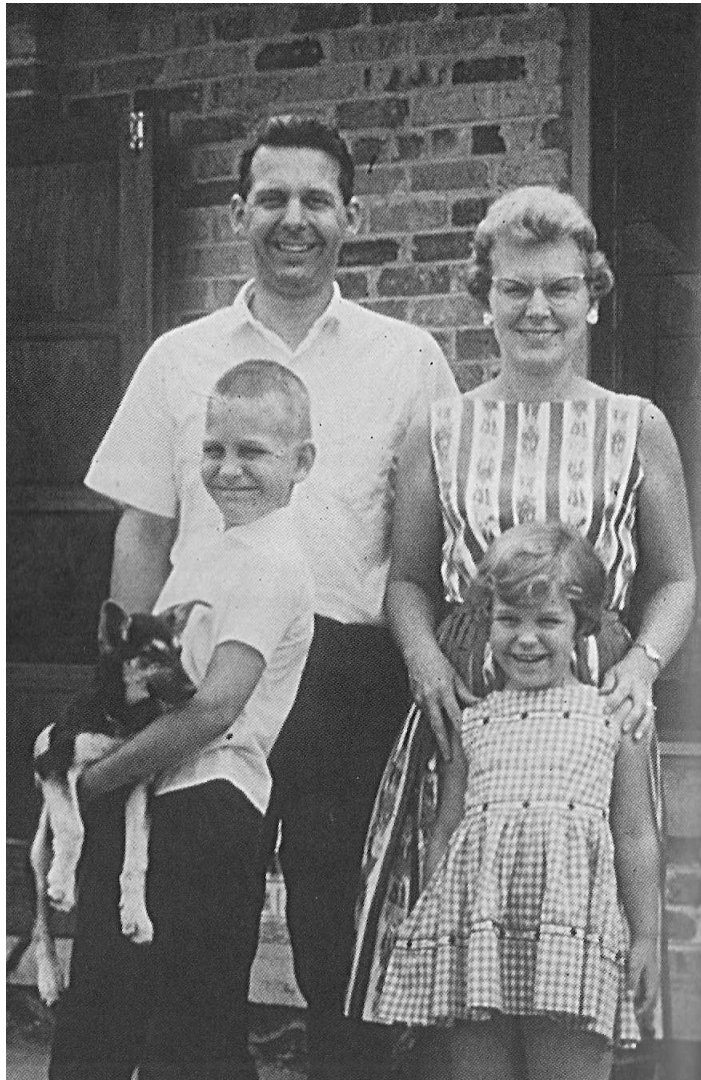


Monganga Paul

Dr. Paul Carlson's Life in Congo.



By Ben Thornbloom

Monganga

Paul

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For all of the people who are helping with the Paul Carlson Partnership and for Dr. Carlson himself who died for the people of Congo. Also many thanks to Bob Thornbloom who gave me the facts that helped write this story.

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About the Author

Ben Thornbloom wrote this book for a class project when he was in 6th grade. When he was four, Ben and his parents lived in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR) for one year. CAR is just north of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the events in this story took place.

Ben's grandparents and great-grandparents were missionaries in DRC. His grandfather worked with Dr. Paul Carlson. He knew Dr. Carlson as a good friend and now works with the Paul Carlson Partnership trying to ease pain and poverty. Ben interviewed him for his project.

Prologue

In 1960 when the Democratic Republic of Congo celebrated independence from Belgium the Belgian government pulled out all of its officials. This included the military and medical support. Congo was left with about fourteen million people who all needed medical care and no native doctors. Congo needed doctors horribly so a handful of missionary doctors took over all of the medical problems. Civil War became inevitable when provinces rich in copper, diamonds, and gold began to secede. The newly elected Patrice Lumumba was arrested and killed under the orders of Moise Tshombe, the leader of the Katanga province. With all of the political instability in Congo the threat of Communism increased.

Dr. Paul Carlson was a missionary in the Evangelical Covenant Church and already trained to be a doctor. Dr. Carlson, his wife Lois, and their children Wayne and Lynette were assigned to the mission station in Wasolo in late 1963. Wasolo is a village in the Ubangi province. Before going to Wasolo, Dr. Carlson and his family went to Liverpool, England to study tropical medicine and then went to Paris, France for language training. By the time they got to Wasolo it was early 1964.

Chapter 1

The Monganga Arrives

It was a hot day, but still we were all very excited. We had heard on the radio that a new American doctor was coming and his name was Paul Carlson. He was going to live in Wasolo (my village) and work in the hospital (or clinic). We also heard that he would be coming in a white pickup truck and that we were supposed to call him “*Monganga*”. Monganga means “doctor” in Lingala. Monganga Paul was going to bring all new things for our hospital and make us all better. His wife and two kids were also coming to stay with him. The older kid was going to be a boy about my age, and I hoped that we could become friends. When it was about twelve o’ clock, the whole village lined the street to watch the arrival of our new doctor. I stood next to my mom, dad, five brothers and sisters.

Monganga Paul was a very nice looking man and he seemed to have a sense of humor. He wasn’t very tall and he had black hair. He almost always had a smile on his face. The day after he got to Wasolo the church leaders gave him a tour. There were other American missionaries at Wasolo but none of them were doctors. Three days later Monganga Paul went to the hospital to start his work. He brought a big metal box with lots of buttons on it that looked like a radio but had a screen on it. The box was for the hospital. All of the missionaries were calling it an “x-ray”. When Monganga Paul hooked it up it “short circuited” and broke. The broken x-ray did not stop Monganga Paul from his work, and he spent about two days doing what he called “evaluation of the problems at hand”. When you “evaluate the problems at hand” you ask all of the sick and hurting people what’s wrong and try to find out a way to deal with it. Monganga Paul always worked on the worse problems first.

Chapter 2

Here We Go; the Healing Touch

The work that Monganga Paul was doing was amazing. My village had never thought that he could be able to do so much. When he finished “evaluating the problems at hand” he began helping the people with the worst problems. One of my sister’s friends had fallen out of a tree and broken her leg. Monganga Paul was able to fix it. Another little boy had come down with a fever and needed to be taken care of, so Monganga Paul gave him some medicine that made him better. After Monganga Paul had been in Wasolo for a few weeks lots of people began feeling better.

There was still a lot of work and medical care that needed to be done, so Monganga Paul began to teach some of the adults how to do things like surgery and take care of sick villagers. He also asked for the assistance of “fresh young men” who would be willing to get things for him like wood for a fire or a fresh glass of water for a patient. He needed “sweet little girls” that could be comforting to a patient. Since we had nothing else to do, my two brothers and I decided to become some of the “fresh young men” Monganga Paul wanted.

Working for Monganga Paul wasn’t very hard. There were two other boys that had also wanted to help so we all took shifts. After the first day of work for Monganga Paul, I decided to go swimming at the spring. After the walk through the woods I got to the spring, and there was Mama Lois and her kids. By now I had seen the Carlson kids enough times to know that the boy’s name was Wayne and the girl’s name was Lynette. Mama Lois saw me and invited me to come down to play with them. After introducing myself to them I jumped into the water.

Wayne and I became quick friends and had a lot of fun together. Every day, after helping Monganga Paul, we would go exploring. One time we had so much fun trying to catch monkeys in the woods that when we did we had no idea what to do with it. The next day when we were about to go out and play in the gardens my mama told me that I had to stay home to watch my baby brother. When I told Wayne this he said he would come over to my house and we could play there.

The next week one of the village elders, elder Mokembe got really sick. All of the helper boys had to do extra work over at the clinic. Wayne and I had to put all of the plans we had made off to the side while we tried to help elder Mokembe get better. After three days of care, elder Mokembe finally passed on. The funeral for elder Mokembe was very big because he had been the oldest person at Wasolo. A couple of days after elder Mokembe's funeral I got very sick. I had to stay in bed at the hospital. Wayne brought me get well presents until I got better and then we both went outside to play. I was still very weak from my sickness so we had to play carefully.

Chapter 3

The Simbas Are Coming!

The news was flying in over the radio one day. *The Simbas are coming!* “Who are the Simbas? What do they do?” Those were only some of the questions in my head that day. Wayne and I had been playing in the woods when Mama Lois came running to get him. She told us what they had heard on the radio. When I got home I asked my mama who the Simbas were. She told me everything.

The Simbas were also known as the rebels. The Simba Movement was a move against the central government. They had started gathering people all around them because justice had broken down. If the Simbas found somebody they didn't like they would kill them. They were an anti-American organization and would capture any expatriate, including missionaries. That would mean that they would take Monganga Paul if he didn't hide! The biggest problem was they were planning to take over all of the Democratic Republic of Congo (the DRC) and their course was set right for us!

It was August 5, 1964, just days after we heard the news about the rebels (or the Simba) we got another message over the radio. The Simbas had taken Stanleyville! The staff of the U.S. Consul at Stanleyville had hid in the communications vault when the Simbas attacked. When the Simbas had found the staff in the vault they forced the staff to eat an American flag.

This message had disturbed everyone. The Simba had gotten too close for the other American missionaries and they began to make plans to evacuate. They would go to Bangui and stay there until the threat of the Simbas had died off. The Wasolo church leaders asked Monganga Paul to stay and not evacuate. The whole village still needed him to work in the hospital. The church leaders told Monganga Paul that they could evacuate him and his family by boat when the time came.

The Carlson family stayed for a whole week before the Simbas got too close. Monganga Paul was still not able to leave because if he did some of his patients would die. Mama Lois, Wayne, and Lynette would evacuate by river and go join the other missionaries in Bangui. I was afraid that I would never see Wayne again but my mama

told me he would be back. All I could do was hope that she would be right. When the day came to say goodbye I told Wayne that I would watch out for his dad wherever he went until Wayne returned. Monganga Paul escorted his family to the other side of the river but then he returned. The days seemed to grow darker as the Simbas got closer.

Then it came flying over the radio. *Dr. Carlson leave Wasolo now! The rebels are on their way!* They're coming, run! That thought was on everybody's mind. I burst into the hospital to deliver the news to Monganga Paul. I told him that it was time for him to leave because the Simbas were here.

Chapter 4

Captured!

They came in from Monganga Paul's escape route, making any chance of escape impossible for Monganga Paul. I heard shouts. Monganga Paul who had just finished prescribing some medicine for a little boy came running down the hall. Suddenly Monganga Paul and I heard a truck coming down the road. There was an explosion and bullets shot through the wall. One of the assistant nurses screamed and then collapsed on the floor. Monganga Paul ran outside and two strong men with guns grabbed him. I remembered that I had promised Wayne that I would watch out for his dad, so I slid into the back of the truck and under a tarp before anyone could stop me.

Underneath the tarp it was hot and very dark. I could feel the truck moving and every time it bounced something sharp would poke me in the back. I was too scared to move and didn't know where we were going. I missed my mama and the only thing that could keep me from crying was thinking about the promise that I had made to Wayne. Every single time we stopped there would be the sound of guns shooting and then the truck would rumble and start bouncing again. Once when we stopped I heard shots, but then there was the sound of an argument. There was a click and then somebody that was yelling was thrown on top of me. That was too much. At that moment I took a peek and wished I hadn't. There was Monganga Paul, sitting on the bed of the truck with two other guards. The person on top of me was an American man that was also being guarded. "Just great," I thought "I don't think that **that** man will be moving anytime soon." A guard started to turn towards me so I pulled the tarp back over my head.

After what seemed like forever I felt the weight of the man get off of me. "We must be at the Simbas base," I thought. I waited for a couple of minutes and then crawled out from underneath the tarp. It was dark and there was nobody around. There was the sound of a meeting going on in a building not far away. I snuck up to the window and listened. I heard a mean voice telling someone to put Monganga Paul in building 5, cell number 1379 with the Americans from the U.S. Consul. Building 5, cell 1379. That's where Monganga Paul is.

The days passed by with a blur. I had to rotate between watching Monganga Paul and hiding from the guards. Then one day I heard a guard say that Monganga Paul and the prisoners from the U.S. Consul were being taken to see Christophe Gbenye, the Simba leader. Once again I climbed into the back of the truck, but this time there wasn't a tarp! There were men coming so I dove behind a crate that was in the back. When I heard Monganga Paul's voice get into the truck I peeked out from around the side of the crate. There he was sitting with two other American men. Three guards with machine guns sat watching Monganga Paul and the other two Americans. The truck started and we drove away from the base.

After a little while the truck stopped and Monganga Paul and the other Americans were forced to get out. The noise told me that there was a very large crowd and I wondered if they had come to see what would happen to Monganga Paul and the other Americans. I could tell that a speech was being given. There were only certain words that I could hear clearly and those words were, "execution," "mercenaries," and "prisoners," I could not help myself from wondering "Is this the end?" Then suddenly there was the sound of angry shouts and I saw the guards pushing Monganga Paul and the other Americans towards the trucks.

When we stopped again I could hear the sound of another speech being given to a smaller crowd. This time after the guards had left with Monganga Paul and the other Americans I climbed to the edge of the truck and took a peek out. The way that the man who was giving the speech was standing told me that he was Christophe Gbenye, leader of the Simbas. Gbenye was ranting and jumping and he kept switching from Lingala into French. At the end of the speech Gbenye ordered that all of the prisoners at Stanleyville (that's where Monganga Paul had been kept,) had to be moved to a hotel called the Victoria hotel and kept there so that government troops from Belgium and the United States could not find them. Monganga Paul was going to be safe for today! That was the best news I had heard in a long time.

Chapter 5

Run for the Escape!

After everybody had been piled back into the trucks, they took Monganga Paul and the other Americans to the Victoria hotel. About an hour later when the rest of the prisoners from Stanleyville were brought to the hotel I jumped out of the truck and hid among them. After we got inside the lobby the guards began to separate everybody. There were six levels of rooms and each room was able to hold about four people. Two guards would count out four people and then send them off with another guard to take them to each room. There were some boxes in the back of the lobby so I hid behind those. After everybody had been placed in a room, the guards let Monganga Paul and the other Americans out of a closet. Then they divided them up and sent them up to different levels. I made sure I knew where Monganga Paul was going to be kept and then hid in an empty room on that floor.

The days passed by quickly and because there weren't enough guards to watch every single door all of the prisoners roamed free and undetected. There was no way to escape but at least everybody wasn't cooped up in one place. With everybody roaming around I went over to see Monganga Paul. When I walked in, he was very surprised to see me. After I told him about my promise and me following him, I came up with a good idea. If Monganga Paul would teach me some French words, then I could hide downstairs and listen to the messages on the radio. He didn't like the idea very much because I would be in a lot of trouble if I was caught, but I finally convinced him to teach me.

Some of the French words that I learned from Monganga Paul were "kill" the name "Monganga Carlson" and "Americans". In french the words "missionaries" and "mercenaries" sound alike so I kept mixing them up. When I finally mastered those five words I began my eavesdropping mission. I would go downstairs to the communications office and hide. There was a closet in the communications office, and inside that closet there were some boxes. I would prop the closet door so that it was almost shut and then I would hide inside a box.

After two days of doing this something interesting finally came in over the radio. *Kill the missionaries*, was all it said. The head guard was in the office and he heard the message. He asked one of the radio workers if the message had said “missionaries” or “mercenaries”. The radio workers said that the message had said “mercenaries”. I wanted to scream with worry. As soon as everybody had left the communications office I ran upstairs to tell Monganga Paul. When I reached his door I heard the sound of running feet. I jumped inside and saw that Monganga Paul and the other three Americans were looking out the window. Suddenly the door flew open and there was a guard standing in the doorway. “Everybody gets out of there NOW!” he yelled. I was scared. I began wondering. What was going on? Where are they taking us?

It looked like all of the prisoners were being taken outside. I looked up at the sky in time to see planes flying over to the airport. There were people jumping out off those planes. “The Belgians have sent paratroopers to save us!” one of the Americans said. “Did he just say parrot troopers?” I thought. Then the guards began making us march towards the airport.

When we were about halfway to the airport the guards made us stop and sit down in the middle of the road. A truck came driving around the corner and it was filled with rebel (Simba) soldiers. When the soldiers jumped out two generals started arguing. I couldn’t hear what they were saying but suddenly one of the soldiers turned around and shot one of the generals. Then all of the soldiers started shooting into the crowd of prisoners. Nobody moved because we didn’t want to get hit. Then the firing stopped. They had to reload their guns! Everybody knew this and so we all ran. Monganga Paul and some other Americans were running towards a house that was just off the road, so I followed them. When we got to the house the Americans all jumped over the porch wall. I couldn’t jump that high so one of the Americans turned and pulled me over. I turned around in time to see another American grab Monganga Paul to pull him over the wall. Suddenly a rebel soldier came from around the corner of the house. He pulled the trigger on his gun and shot Monganga Paul. The American that had been helping Monganga Paul pulled him over but it was too late. Monganga Paul was dead.

I couldn’t believe it. It just wasn’t possible. How could I ever tell Wayne? He would want to know. But it was true. It was all true and Monganga Paul was dead.

Epilogue

Dr. Paul Carlson is buried in the cemetery at the Karawa Mission Station. All of America came to know about his death through the news and TIME and LIFE magazines. His death inspired the Evangelical Covenant Church to start a new program to help Congo, the Paul Carlson Partnership. This partnership helps the world's poorest people to meet their needs in health, education, and poverty relief.

To find out more about the Paul Carlson Partnership go to <http://www.paulcarlson.org/>.