

March 2003
No. 48

Congo Church Association

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The Congo Church Association (ZCA) is a Registered Charity No. 285760.
Its Objects are a) To advance the Christian Religion in DR Congo
b) To relieve poverty among the Clergy and former Clergy of the
Anglican Church and widows and dependants of any such persons.

Chairman's Report for the year 2001-2002, given in his absence at the last AGM

It has been a great honour to chair the Association in the last year, and I am most grateful, as I know you all will be, for the enormous hard work of other committee members. It is not strictly speaking my place to express thanks to the Commissary – his work is entirely for the Province, and it is, in one sense, coincidental that he is an ex-officio member of the Association Committee – but I feel that it is only right that we should acknowledge the enormous and devoted work put in by Bill Norman, without whom the Bishops and other members of the province visiting Britain would find life almost impossible. I only add that it is always a very great pleasure to work in ‘proche collaboration’ (as they say in the Congo) with Bill, and especially so when there have been some real difficulties to face together this last year. We want to record our thanks also to Malcolm Wheeler for his excellent work as Treasurer of the Association. We were very sad to hear that after his illness last year he would not be able to take up his responsibilities again. We send him and his wife our very best wishes.

The committee of the Association meets three or occasionally four times a year. Last year we met on the 29th November 2001, the 23rd April and the 2nd July 2002. We meet in Lincoln's Inn (again thanks to Bill's good offices as Chaplain), and this proves to be an accessible central venue for almost all of us. At our meetings we hear financial reports, the latest news that we can from the Congo, and we consider what grants we can make to the dioceses in the next period. We have a policy that, besides designated funds we try to keep about £10,000 in reserve in case of emergencies, which arise all too frequently in the Congo. We try to make regular donations to the dioceses, and are careful to ensure that the help we give is spread evenly across the

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province. This means that the six dioceses normally receive a grant of £1000 each per year, paid in two tranches. The same is given to the Province, and half that amount to the church in Kinshasa, which we feel, being the capital, needs help to build itself up, and where until recently an assistant bishop to the Bishop of Kisangani was posted. This policy also means that other areas which receive assistant Bishops would be treated in the same manner. The other regular recipient of support is the ISThA. According to the direction that the Bishops of the Province have given us, this institution with its university level formation of clergy is something that they have regarded as being of the utmost importance. So we provide – both out of the funds of the Association and by channeling gifts from some other sources – money for six scholarships. This year also we have helped fund a student at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Kinshasa. The other category of need that the Committee has felt we ought to help with on a regular basis, though this is not as predictable as these other grants, is the matter of Bishops' transport. The province is geographically enormous, and the work of the church really requires that Bishops should be able to travel around their dioceses. The infrastructure of the country, already dreadful, has been further destroyed by four years of civil war. This can mean that for Bishops to meet, they have no option but to take long and expensive journeys through neighbouring countries. Even now, for instance, at the present meeting of the House of Bishops, the Bishop of Katanga is obliged to travel through Zambia and Kenya to get to Uganda for the meeting. Besides this we of course receive an enormous number of requests for help of various kinds. Most of these we simply do not have the funds to respond to, but we have been able to help with some special appeals.

This year we had the particular pleasure of welcoming Archbishop Njojo Byankya Patrice to our April meeting, which was the last opportunity we had of seeing him in Britain as Archbishop as he retires from that post on November 7th, though he remains Bishop of Boga. We were particularly pleased that on that occasion, when we were able to review the work that the Association has done with the Province during his time as Archbishop, we were also able to welcome to our meeting our new Patron, Rt Revd Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Winchester. It was at this meeting that the Archbishop invited Bishop Michael to come and lead the retreat for the Bishops at their November meeting before the election of a new Archbishop. Other Congolese visitors to Britain this year included Bishop Diropka Balufuga of Bukavu, who came to speak at a big CMS/MAM conference in April, and met with the Chairman and Bishop Michael at Partnership House. He also addressed the all-party Parliamentary Great Lakes Group with a briefing on the situation in Congo. Bishop Isingoma Kahwa, along with Revd Titre Ande, the Principal of the ISThA and the Revd Yossa Way were all delegates at a conference on the Future of Anglicanism in Oxford in July this year.

I am writing this report from outside Kampala at a guest house, where the Bishop of Winchester is now leading the retreat referred to. He and I have so far visited Katanga diocese, seeing work being done in Lubumbashi, and in particular being

struck by the good rapport that the Bishop and all the Christians have. This was not the case some years ago, when the Bishop's life was threatened by the presence in the region of some opponents who presented themselves as the real Anglican thing and took our Bishop to court. Those opponents have now disappeared entirely, and there is an excellent spirit of collaboration in evidence. We were able to accompany Bishop Isingoma to visits to local political leaders, the head of the Justice ministry and the Governor of the province, and to local church leaders, in particular the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Katanga. I believe that for Bishop Isingoma to be seen, as he was, on local television alongside not only a senior English Anglican Bishop, but one who is also active in the House of Lords, will have helped establish his position in a helpful way.

From there we went to Bukavu diocese, and had a very full and interesting three days with Bishop Diropka. Bukavu is in rebel held territory, and has a great number of armed bands roaming the countryside around it causing huge suffering to the local population. We again saw parishes and many individuals and heard some harrowing tales of woe. We met also local political leaders, and a very impressive ecumenical group who worked together and with the local military chiefs to persuade them to hold back from attacking Bukavu in September. This was a courageous piece of Christian witness and work, and they continue to meet to consider what they must do next. From Bukavu we went briefly to Goma, and saw there not only the devastation wrought by the volcano, but also heard how the church there with great joy, has ministered to so many who were made homeless and were traumatized out their great poverty. It is indeed a rich and humbling ministry, not least the work of the Mothers' Union and the young people. On our way to Uganda where the meeting had to take place because of the security problems that exist in this country still at war, we stopped at Butembo and Beni to collect Bishops and other provincial officers for this meeting. All have come, with the exception so far of the Bishop of North Kivu. You will perhaps recall from an earlier newsletter something of the troubles that there have been in that diocese, with the Bishop being suspended from office for a period and then reinstated. Sadly, things there are not yet good – there are still many people who have been discharged from their responsibilities by the Bishop, and who are regarded as his opponents. Some of these are good and experienced people, both clergy and lay leaders, medical staff and dental staff. It is not yet clear what the future holds for North Kivu, but I would ask you to hold the diocese and Bishop Munzenda and all the faithful in your prayers

At the end of the present meeting on Monday, Bishop Michael and I will travel north with the Archbishop to Aru for the last stop on our tour. We return home on Thursday. The meeting here is clearly of the greatest importance. It is not possible for me to communicate to you the news of the election outcome in this report as I will be away from email, but I will arrange to have it sent to you. For the two of us it has been an inspiring and humbling fortnight as we have seen how faithful Christian people have been ministering and proclaiming Christ in circumstances far beyond

what most people in our own land would imagine could be bearable. Yet their joy and faith has been palpable. We have so much to learn from them – our support, both spiritual and financial is little enough to give. Can we find ways of building it up this year?

Thank you for your support for the Association – may God give us faith and hope and love that together with our brothers and sisters in Congo we may glorify God in all we do.



Jeremy Pemberton

<p>Enthronement of the new Archbishop</p> <p>The Right Rev. Dr. DIROKPA BALUFUGA Fidele, Bishop of the Diocese of Bukavu and Dean of the Province, was elected as the second Archbishop for the Anglican Province of DR Congo. His Enthronement took place on 16th February 2003 in Bukavu.</p>
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AGM 2003

At the invitation of Bishop Michael and Mrs Lou Scott-Joynt, the AGM this year will be held at their home, **Wolvesey, in Winchester**

on Tuesday 18th November

12noon - 3.30+pm

Proposed programme:

12.00 noon	Welcome and talk
1.00 pm	Buffet lunch
1.45 pm	Discussion following on from the talk
2.00 pm	AGM
3.00 pm	Closing prayers

A buffet lunch will be provided, so if you can come, please would you let Liz Hallett know (38 Beechwood Crescent, Chandlers Ford, Hants SO53 5PD or liz@mhhallett.freereserve.co.uk) so that we have an idea of the numbers.

If you come by train from Waterloo, let her know your expected time of arrival and we can probably arrange transport from the station. If you are coming by car, we can supply a map. Please let her know if you would need to spend a night in Winchester, as this can be arranged.

Setting the scene

An Oxfam report, (oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/drc/drc2.htm). was written over a year ago but the situation now is if anything worse. It notes the following facts:

- More than two million people are internally displaced; of these, over 50 per cent are in eastern DRC. More than one million of the displaced have received absolutely no outside assistance.
- It is estimated that up to 2.5 million people in DRC have died since the outbreak of the war, many from preventable diseases.
- At least 37 per cent of the population, approximately 18.5 million people, have no access to any kind of formal health care.
- 16 million people have critical food needs.
- There are 2,056 doctors for a population of 50 million; of these, 930 are in Kinshasa.
- Infant mortality rates in the east of the country have in places reached 41 per cent per year.
- Severe malnutrition rates among children under five have reached 30 per cent in some areas.
- National maternal mortality is 1837 per 100,000 live births, one of the worst in the world. Rates as high as 3,000/100,000 live births have been recorded in eastern DRC.
- DRC is ranked 152nd on the UNDP Human Development index of 174 countries: a fall of 12 places since 1992.
- 2.5 million people in Kinshasa live on less than US\$1 per day. In some parts of eastern DRC, people are living on US\$0.18 per day.
- 80 per cent of families in rural areas of the two Kivu Provinces have been displaced at least once in the past five years.
- There are more than 10,000 child soldiers. Over 15 per cent of newly recruited combatants were children under the age of 18. A substantial number were under the age of 12.
- Officially, between 800,000 and 900,000 children have been orphaned by AIDS.
- 40 per cent of health infrastructure has been destroyed in Masisi, North Kivu.
- Only 45 per cent of people have access to safe drinking water. In some rural areas, this is as low as three per cent.
- Four out of ten children are not in school. 400,000 displaced children have no access to education.
- Of 145,000 km of roads, no more than 2,500km are asphalt.

News from the Congo as of 5th November 2002: (from reports given at the CCA AGM)

Reconciliation :

The Bishops are going on from Synod at Kampala to meet with the Bishops of Rwanda and Burundi to discuss the way forward for the Church. There will then be a major meeting in Kampala at the beginning of December to work for reconciliation and the Anglican Church should be represented there. Women's ordination has now been accepted by Synod, but the first ordinations have been delayed, probably until some time next year.

News from the dioceses :

Boga Diocese : there are some young people still in Boga, but almost everyone has fled to Uganda across the river. Some have gone on to Fort Portal to escape disease which is rife. If the Ugandan soldiers should return, then people may feel they can come home. The Congo Church Association has sent money to help these refugees.

In Bunia: the church remains active. A few young boys of the congregation have joined the killing but the rest who have not fled try to carry on. So much killing has been taking place and there are tensions between the different tribes, causing trouble. There is no water and almost no food. What food there is has been brought in from Mahagi, a border town. Many have left because it is too dangerous. It is the wealthy and those in leadership positions who have been killed.

ISThA: the theological college campus is still in the town because the campus beside the airport is too dangerous. At present there are 24 students in their 2nd and 3rd years. They expect 8 more to start their 1st year in January, but it's not easy to get there. One tutor was forced to leave and has gone back to her home village. Two other Congolese are doing their best to keep the college going. Recently rebels came and tried to take the college car, threatening to kill someone if they couldn't take it, so eventually the college let it go. A week later it was returned to them by some of that same rebel tribe who were Christians and who didn't want the college car to be taken. They found the car awash with blood. Many of the killers are Christian.

ISThA is now working more closely with other Christians. They have changed the methodology of their teaching and are encouraging students to think critically and to become leaders who will have a vision for the future. There is a great need for well-trained pastors.

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) is being encouraged in the Province rather than Bible Schools. There is a problem getting suitable books so the meetings of TEE students are important. They want to reduce the number of Bible Schools where the level of teaching is very poor: the catechists they train should be better

trained - often they are taught by people with little primary education and using only a Bible - not adequate. It would be better to have fewer centres providing a better level of education. However Bible Schools are still continuing at present.

Funding for students comes from mission agencies (MAM, CMS and other churches) as well as the CCA. The college had a great problem when the former principal took on 17 students but with funding for only 11 of them. They did their best by sharing what they had among all 17, but this must not happen again. There are students from Kisangani, Butembo, Kinshasa, Bukavu and Kindu, and they expect three from Lubumbashi (S. East) in the next intake. Formerly students have come from Guinea and Madagascar, but now (with travel difficult) it will be just from DRC. They have 3 women students, 2 of whom are Anglican and the 3rd from another Church.

Most dioceses don't contribute anything towards the cost of students who come from that diocese although they should, so the bursaries from the Congo Church Association (CCA) and elsewhere are vital.

Travel to Aru at present is possible only with a Ugandan army escort. One journey took four days, with no food or water in that time. Aru is more peaceful at present but they are expecting fighting to break out there. There have been discussions where to set up a new hospital after the total destruction of Nyankunde – without causing further upset.

The Ugandan soldiers have helped both sides - whoever will pay them - and trained up men from both sides in warfare - a difficult situation. It is thought that, if they left, there would be peace because neither side would be getting their support. The Ugandan army went away following the peace agreement, but this left a power vacuum so a battalion has come back following an agreement with the UN etc.

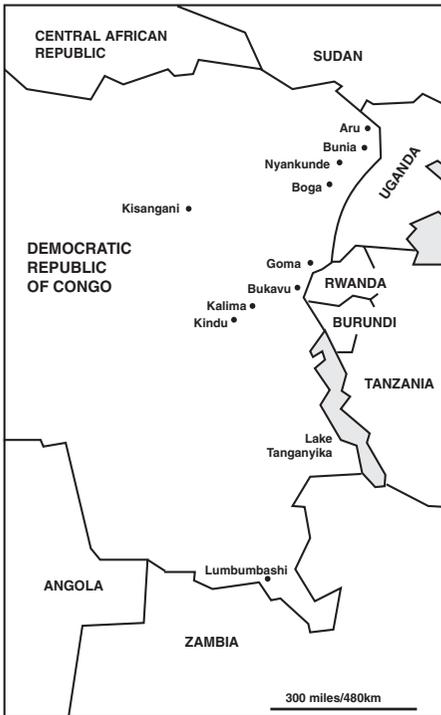
Kisangani : A very depressing situation. People have given up hope, and desperately need our prayers. There is much fighting in this area.

Katanga : The local Christians are working well together. There have been youth (18 – 30) seminars, which were greatly appreciated

Kindu : The diocesan office has just been looted for the 3rd time. The situation is very unstable, but great work is being done there.

Bukavu : Their Bishop is to become Archbishop; please pray for him and his wife, who is unwell. Much fighting between rebel groups, and great problems for the Church. Many people displaced. Kasai is cut off by the fighting, and will need to become a separate diocese as it is a large area to cover. They are trying to train up people there with this in mind.

Nord Kivu : The diocese is still very divided.



Apologies for the delay in sending out this newsletter. A further edition, describing the recent serious troubles which involved much massacre and looting, will follow soon after Easter.

Meanwhile, here is an update of the activities of those Mission Partners who are still working in the Congo.

Francesca Elloway

Francesca wrote in April 2002 of a series of seminars:

HIV/AIDS Seminars

'We ran three seminars in March. In the first week we held the seminar on HIV/AIDS in conjunction with ACET, Kampala, that we'd had to postpone back in December. It was particularly good that it was able to happen and it seemed to go well. The two facilitators from ACET were

excellent and I think everyone was touched how they'd tried to learn some French to help communication. Most of the seminar, though, was conducted in English with someone translating into Lingala, a Congolese language. Representatives came from a whole variety of different churches and denominations, probably the first time such a group has got together here to discuss any topic. Will this be a catalyst to encourage folk to work together to try to tackle the problem of AIDS in this area? In true Congolese style, at the end it was decided to create a committee to discuss the next step and indeed that has been set up, with two meetings having taken place so far.

Prevention to avoid catastrophe

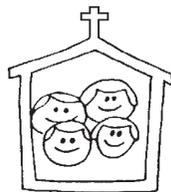
I feel extremely strongly about the AIDS issue, because our area of Congo does, I feel, still have the chance to avoid the catastrophe that the disease has caused in certain other countries. There is currently less infection here than in various other places, one of the few positive spin-offs of the problems in the area. Because of the difficulties of travel, trading, insecurity, etc, fewer folk come and go and there is generally less movement around so the disease has not spread so much. However, I can see a marked increase in the number of cases now compared with two or three years ago, so the problem is certainly on the increase and will only get worse if nothing is done to stop it. I hope that message got through at the seminar.

We also ran a seminar for village health workers, and then another for community health nurses, primarily on vaccination. Inevitably, because of the lack of sufficient health care facilities, it is awfully easy for the nurses to spend all their time on curative medicine and neglect the preventative side. I guess there is also more kudos in curing a patient than giving them a jab to prevent one, and your health centre earns some money for your salary for treating a patient but not from talking about how to avoid getting sick! But, of course, in the long run far more lives will be saved by ensuring that there is good vaccination coverage in the area than by treating patients. It is sometimes hard to get this message through!

At this last seminar I was particularly pleased that, in addition to nurses from our own health centres, we had nurses from 15 health centres in the area that we are not responsible for. These nurses get virtually no support or supervision and are very much left to their own devices. I think the seminar was quite an eye-opener to some of them. Of course, once again, the crunch is, will the seminar result in more effort being put into vaccination programmes etc? ... time will tell.'

Francesca had home leave during the summer, thankful for a little stability and security after all the moving to and fro and uncertainty of these past two years, The highlight of her leave was the visit to the UK of her two colleagues, Ezati and Baba, for a month in June. *'It was a busy time but very rewarding, and a lot of fun. There was a mixture of work-related things: visits to some of my link churches and the organisations that support our work; people-related things: catching up with ex-Congo CMS folk round the country; and culture-related things: paddling in the sea for the first time, playing croquet, bouncing on a trampoline, and sitting on an open-topped bus around London. Then, of course, the World Cup football just happened to be on at the same time, and at every opportunity Ezati and Baba would be glued to TV watching the matches. In one shop we went into in a very white middle-class part of Bristol, the shopkeeper was obviously very bemused by us and asked me if they were my minders. From then on they were nicknamed "mon garde-corps" (my bodyguards)!*

It was interesting to see Baba and Ezati's reactions to some of the things they saw in this country - some that I had anticipated and some that I had not. They commented to me that our churches were much more alive than theirs, which might seem a surprising comment when sadly so many of our churches are not flourishing. But I guess the churches they saw were the more active ones, and what had particularly impressed them was that the churches they saw had events going on during the week, and not just on Sunday.



The church they attend is very much a Sunday-only church. Over the years I have several times tried to start up bible study groups but they have always petered out for a variety of understandable reasons. It's been hard to find a suitable time to hold them as no-one goes out after dark (i.e. 6 pm), so the meetings had to be in the

day time when often there were other things to do – digging fields, going to market, etc. Almost everyone is a subsistence farmer, so these activities are vital for their survival. We talked about this whilst my colleagues were here, and a month or so after their return, I was delighted to hear from Baba that he had just started a bible study group in his home. Please pray that they will persevere with this and that the insecurity in the area will not prevent them continuing to meet together.'

Baba said *'the most important thing you can do is pray for us . . . indeed, that is all we want you to do at the moment.'*

Francesca's return was delayed by the tribal unrest in north east Congo where the situation deteriorated over the summer, so that she was advised not to return to Aru at that time. She wrote: *'I do not think that I can begin to try and explain what has been happening, indeed some of what I have heard does not make sense to me. Although at one level over the last six months there have been a number of peace initiatives and various peace treaties signed between the different parties involved in the civil war, at the grass roots level this has had little impact, or maybe even a negative impact with folks trying to get what they can whilst they still can, making the most of the lack of any strong stable leadership. So, tribal, ethnic and factional conflicts have led to horrendous clashes in some areas.'*

It was decided that she should plan to return in mid-January, hopefully to Aru, but if not, then to Arua over the border in Uganda. Meanwhile she learned that she had developed malaria – one of the types that can hang around in the liver - and she found it odd having someone else in charge of her diagnosis and treatment.

Judy Acheson

In August 2002, two months after Judy's arrival back in Bunia, she wrote of the very difficult time the church members had been through during her absence: the level of insecurity and fear had risen considerably as the tribal fighting had actually begun to move into Bunia. She saw much suffering, with few people in Bunia able to sleep in their own homes. The surrounding villages were gradually being wiped out, with many people being killed and more homeless. The only road that was at all safe was the one to Nyankunde and Komanda.

The Youth Team

She wrote *'As a youth team we have had our differences of opinion since I have been back, but we are grateful because it has drawn us even closer together with a new openness between us. We have sorted out a new way of doing our accounts - we're still learning this, as well as a different way of planning the use of the money we receive. So, we are carrying the financial decisions as a team, which already is making such a difference. It is very important that we keep together as we are seeing more and more division, even within the church folks, and tribes becoming more polarised. This is because people are believing the many lies that are going around.'*

Jacques wrote: *'I thank God for enabling us to have such a special relationship between us in the work of 'Agape'. We work hand in hand in unity as children of one father and one mother and even as one tribe with no difference between us. This teaches us so much about the Body of Christ in the way that it is made up of people from all tribes and that each and every one is of equal value. As we visit each other this is also a witness to others and a means of sharing the Good News. To live in unity like this brings the peace of Christ to reign in our hearts. It is amazing to see how we do work together in our youth team. There is Deo a Hema, me, Jacques, an Ngiti, Sinza a Hutu, Richard a Hema, Jijika a Nyali, and Judy a white person. In this team each one supports the other and that builds us up spiritually.'* He asked for our prayers, both for the work of the Diocese and that God might enable the youth team to be a light to young people and in their society.



In December 2001, after Judy had left for England and with the help of a sizeable gift from CMS, Deo and the others organised a conference on reconciliation which opened the eyes of many to the importance of this work and what needs to be done. Deo described what happened: *'Now to share about the value of conferences on reconciliation. When the fighting actually came to Bunia, with the Lendu moving into Rwankole, a district just near Sinza's and my home on the 14th June, the Hemas began to retaliate by burning Ngiti homes in our area and some even killed the Ngitis. God showed us that we needed to organise a seminar about reconciliation for three days in our home area for those Hemas. We were thrilled because other tribes joined in, including four Ngiti men. At the end of the teaching many repented, and what was so amazing, one Hema man who had burnt down a home belonging to a Ngiti decided that he would build him a new house using roofing sheets. He asked me to bring him and the Ngiti together so that he could ask the Ngiti to forgive him. That, in this society and climate, is a miracle from God as it just doesn't happen here! We thank you so much for carrying us in your prayers and even for helping us with funds. We are really grateful to CMS for having confidence in us and therefore for sending us money for this work. God is greatly blessing us as a result.'*

After discussion with the Bishop it was decided that, after only a few days there, Judy should withdraw from Bunia for a time. Her departure was delayed due to much shooting between the different armies and many attacks by the Lendu around Makabo on the Nyankunde road and again in Mudjipela on the other side of town. The situation was very tense, and people lived a day at a time. ISThA buildings near the airport were overflowing with maybe 5,000 displaced people. Judy wondered how they would survive there, many sleeping outside, and what they would eat.

Sinza gave more information of events in Bunia: *'Here in Bunia we have the major problem of the tribal war. Makabo has received many displaced people. During June and July we had more than 70 families from Lengabo and Makabo. Revd Upenji, who lives there and works with us as our chaplain, has been doing a*

great job amongst them. The Ugandan soldiers who are guarding a local farm were amazed to see so many people congregating on our land and asked why these people preferred to run to our centre instead of fleeing home. The people replied that there is security in this centre because God's angels protect them! Some of them are beginning to return home but there are still many problems in the area. We had a real problem to sleep them all but we used the chaplain's house and that of the watchman for the women and children, whilst the men and boys slept in the paillotte.



We continue to pray that money will become available to complete the building of the agricultural centre, because we are already seeing that it will do a great work for the glory of God. We are also continuing to plant the fields and the vegetable gardens and to plant trees. But please pray with us for rain. We feel that if we can plant enough trees, they will draw the rain to us. We also want to encourage other people to plant trees as well.'

Judy travelled on to Nairobi to visit Bisoke and Furaha, a wonderful chance to chat about the future of the youth work. From there she went to Aru to join Sinza and Ven. Ise-Somo for a youth seminar. They then intended to return to Bunia whilst Deo would come to spend time with Judy, talking, planning and visiting Mahagi to visit the youth training centre there. Judy then expected to travel to Lubumbashi around 7th September for their Synod followed by time with the young people and their leaders. It was not possible to visit Kinshasa and it seemed sensible to have enough time with the youth department in Lubumbashi as she wasn't likely to return there. The intention was to return to Bunia on 17th October.

Patricia Nickson

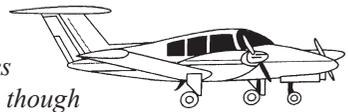
Early in October 2002 Pat returned from a very short but immensely helpful trip to Congo, where she was able to meet colleagues who had evacuated from Nyankunde when the hospital and Institute (IPASC), as well as the village, were destroyed by rebels in early September.

She wrote 'Last Monday morning (September 30th) my suitcase was packed with nearly 30 kgs of second hand clothes. Lily and Alain (studying in Kampala) were at Entebbe to meet me as I emerged from immigration at midnight. We hugged one another, laughed and cried. It was a wonderful but painful moment to share in meeting after such a short absence (four weeks) during which so much devastation had been wrought. The 30-mile journey to the hotel in Kampala seemed to be faster than ever, as we went through the events of the past few weeks in Nyankunde. Who had escaped? Who was where? Who was dead? How were they killed? How could this have happened? Could it have been avoided? What had IPASC lost? There was so much damage and pain. The questions continued until 2.00am when we separated to catch a few hours sleep – but sleep has not come easily during these weeks.'

Pat chartered an AIM 6-seater Cessna aeroplane for two days and they travelled to Beni in DR Congo on Wednesday, 2nd September. *'Paluku Sabuni (academic dean of IPASC) had arranged every detail meticulously. It was so good to see him. Beni is his home, and so he and his wife had become host to over 40 IPASC personnel (including families). They slept, ate and functioned together as one family – five tribes, of which at least two were at war with one-another – but not at IPASC!'*

She had a short visit to Oicha. *'Although it was tragic seeing friends displaced and with so little, it was clear that the Nyankunde Hospital staff were being well looked-after by the Oicha Hospital staff. They had been given accommodation, albeit very basic. We met many friends, but we were conscious of those who were not there. We listened to stories of courage and hope, of despair and tragedy. Very few people had plans to move on, or any vision of ever moving back to Nyankunde.'*

Landing and taking off at Oicha was strange. There was Anecho, the Nyankunde MAF booking clerk doing the bookings, and Abel waving the planes in just as he did at Nyankunde. It simply seemed as though Nyankunde had been transplanted to Oicha – which I suppose it had.'



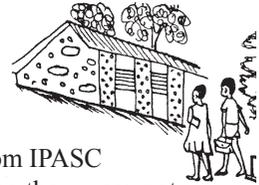
Back at a Beni guesthouse, the various members of the IPASC team put together reports they had been writing. Compared to the Nyankunde hospital staff at Oicha, Pat found the IPASC team extremely positive and creative in their thinking. Amazingly soon after their arrival in Beni they had put their emergency thinking into action. They had already surveyed all the villages along a 100 km stretch of road from Eringeti in the North to Beni, and had details of over 22,000 displaced persons, and their needs.

It was suggested that a temporary move be made to Aru (in the far North of Ituri Region near the borders with Uganda and Sudan) with hopes of seeing IPASC hosted by the Anglican health service there. Three people were ready to fly to Aru the following day, with others willing to follow a week later. *'The plane was ours for another 24 hours and the pilot had enough fuel for the trip. I was overwhelmed by their attitudes. They were badly traumatised but wanted to forget the experience and get on with work. For the first time for a couple of weeks, I slept soundly, comforted by the tremendous strength and unity of a very diverse team, and thanking God for each one of them.'*

Next morning, the three, wearing sweaters sent from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine flew off to start a new (hopefully temporary) life for IPASC, with no guidelines and fragile communications. They hoped to have the new school year up and running in two weeks – just one month late! Pat met the rest of the displaced IPASC 'tribe' and heard their stories.

Much had happened by mid-November when Pat returned to the Congo. Within days of arriving in Aru, the 'pioneers' had rented buildings from the Anglican Church, were making blackboards, gathering classroom furniture together and preparing

staff and student accommodation. The following two weeks were spent contacting students and chartering the AIM's DC3 plane (27 seater) to bring them to Aru. At the same time they held admission exams for the new intake and settled the fourth (final) year students into modified field experience situations. Two students from this course had been killed during the massacres and a few were unable to make it to Aru – mainly married ones who did not feel able to leave their families during the continuing insecurity.



There were also some gains. The Ngiti students, for whom IPASC had had to make special provision for courses in Bunia, as they were not allowed by the Bira Chief to come into Nyankunde during the past year, were now able to join the main group at Aru. For them life has been very difficult. While their ethnic kin were massacring people at Nyankunde, they were trying to finish their school year. They did so, finally, and went straight into the new school year in Aru. Term was able to start only six weeks late, at the beginning of November. In all, remarkably, the student numbers for the diploma course have increased this year and the end-of-year results were the best ever!

Meanwhile the Bunia staff defied the insecurities in the town and their students finished the academic year. Unlike Nyankunde, they did not have to evacuate, though there were long periods of curfew, a massive immigration of displaced persons and frequent attacks from armed rebels, militia and military personnel. Graduation was planned for mid-December and then straight on into the new academic year. The Bunia HIV/AIDS team was very active during this period, aware that unstable situations bring more risks, and that the Nyankunde Hospital programme is no longer available,

Some IPASC staff members remained in Beni, helping TEAR FUND with relief for the 35,000 displaced persons from the Ituri Region (Bunia and Nyankunde). The condition of these displaced people is miserable. Families from the Boga area are refugees in Uganda. Bishop Njojo (recently replaced as Archbishop by Bishop Dirokpa of Bukavu) is amongst the refugees.

Pat wrote *'The IPASC staff remains complete and intact, and I am abundantly grateful for that, realising that it is this amazing team which carries the key to the future. Thank you for your continuing support and concern.'*

Louise Wright

When Louise wrote at Eastertime, Bishop Masimango was still in South Africa, a delegate at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue since the middle of February. He was asked to lead an Easter service there and was amazed how many of the 350 delegates from all over the country attended. He said God blessed them greatly and since that time things certainly seemed to have improved. A final settlement seemed in sight.

Louise, still on leave in England, had been preparing Sunday School material for use in the Congo. She was able to pass this on to Bishop Dirokpa at the special service celebrating the integration of CMS and Mid Africa Ministry. The material had been specially requested by Sunday School teachers both in Bukavu and Goma. There is a new Congolese Swahili Prayer Book which follows the same lectionary as Common Worship, so that English Sunday School books based on Common Worship have proved a great help.

In Louise's absence her helpers have continued the work with the Sunday Schools and were planning to start training a new teacher. Louise wrote *'We had planned that the village Sunday schools should pay for their primary teaching books when they started harvesting rice. If each child brought a cup of rice it would cover the cost. However with all the armed men in the forest, where the rice grows, many people were unable to get their harvest in. The situation improved recently but some of the rice was lost so there will be hunger and the books may not be paid for.'*

Louise left England in July, expecting to go to Bunia to work with the Anglican Provincial Sunday school team. However, the situation there deteriorated quickly and at a meeting with the Archbishop it was decided that it was best to go to Bukavu, where she had lived from 1989 to 1996. She was established in a 'bed sitter' at one end of the diocesan guesthouse and was able to try out twenty of the lessons prepared in England. She began teaching and completed further Sunday School material, intending to send a copy and a floppy disk to each diocese when the Bishops met in November. Thus they would be able to print lessons locally as they need them.

'It is belief in God's love and faithfulness that keeps people going in these uncertain times. The Mai Mai troops have not yet entered Bukavu. There was great joy two weeks ago when the Rwandan troops left Bukavu. I watched lorry-load after lorry-load of happy soldiers going home while the Congolese waved to their enemies, saying, "Go well, greet your wives." There were high hopes that the remaining Rwandan-backed rebels (RCD) would give up their opposition to the Government in Kinshasa and make peace with the Mai Mai militia.'

Church leaders in Bukavu, including Bishop Dirokpa, formed a mediation committee, meeting daily with the different leaders of Mai Mai groups, the RCD and the UN mission to Congo, in the hope of finding a peaceful solution to the current situation. They produced a statement which was read in all churches, which concluded: 'Let us show maturity and wisdom to prove to the world that the Congolese are capable of agreeing and uniting in the national interest without negative forces either internal or external.'

Louise expected to be in Bukavu until returning to England in mid-January for a short break. Kalima, her Congo home, continues to be insecure and travel to and from there is uncertain. She wrote *'Uncertainty is the one thing that is certain. No, that can hardly be true for Christians who can be "sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1).'*

PRAYER AND PRAISE



PRAISE for the strong faith of many Christians in trying times.
PRAY for those who are displaced and face uncertain futures.

PRAISE for the election and enthronement of Archbishop Dirokpa.
PRAY for the Spirit to give wisdom to all church leaders.

PRAISE for the continuation of medical services and the dedication of the nursing staff.
PRAY for the health of all the church leaders and those suffering hardship.

PRAISE for the progress of peace talks and the hope of an end to the conflict.
PRAY for the withdrawal of foreign troops from all of the Congo.

PRAISE for the great beauty and natural wealth of Congo.
PRAY for reconstruction and development.

PRAISE for the Lord's help and support always.
PRAY for PEACE.

