

# KINSHASA 14th - 29th June 2011

## GOD BLESS DR CONGO!

This was my seventh trip to DR Congo since the first tentative visit in March 2003. Each time, I promised myself that I'd be better prepared. True to form, just 18 hours before we were due to fly out, our lounge floor was covered with PA equipment to be backed in a box whose dimensions somehow had to be less than 158 cm's and weight less than 23 kg. This may not seem spiritual but it was my first call on the Lord for help!

Finally, our bags were packed with far more than personal belongings. We took new PA equipment, a laptop, medicines, vitamin supplements, clothing and gifts, our cup surely overflowed. The internet provided the first indication that we had problems; the only flight facing significant delay that day was our Kenya Airways flight via Nairobi. Departure had been delayed by 1½ hours which placed our connecting flight to Kinshasa in jeopardy. We arrived at Heathrow to find the delay had extended to 2 hours, necessitating a 24 hour layover in Nairobi before we could pick up a flight to Kinshasa via Brazzaville (French Congo) at 6.30 am on Thursday morning.

We were three in number; my son Adam and my pastor friend Lukas Roos. For Adam it was his first taste of Africa, Lukas was born in South Africa and so he has the continent in his blood. The layover gave us a chance to chill out a little and prepare ourselves for what was in store. Of course, Pastor Symplice was disappointed; the way things were we would miss the first crusade and possibly the first day of the pastor's conference. We shared in this disappointment.

Kenya Airways were very helpful. However, it took what seemed an eternity to get free of the airport; this involved queuing for vi-

sas, collecting our luggage and then an hour's journey to what can only be described as a five star hotel. Hotel Laico sat prestigiously in the centre of Nairobi. Having prepared Adam & Lukas for the somewhat Spartan experience of RDC, I was left with egg on my face. The hotel was amazing, Lukas' room was unbelievably big – the heart of the hotel was a sort of plaza which served as the restaurant with all the trappings of the empire, including a grand piano. There's nothing quite like being a twenty first century missionary, all at the expense of Kenya Airways!

We took a walk through the city centre which was spotlessly clean and bustling with friendly people. There were parks with trees and plants in exotic blossom, herons idly walked among people enjoying their early afternoon siesta. The plan was that we should be picked up from the hotel at 5 am on Thursday, hopefully arriving in Kinshasa at 10.15 am!

The early morning call on Thursday woke us from our sleep; surprisingly our names had been left off the manifest for the bus to the airport. The driver somehow shoehorned us in only to find when we arrived at the airport that somehow we had been reallocated to Friday's flight to Kinshasa!! After protracted discussions with three Kenya Airways staff we were allowed to board, breathing a deep sigh of relief as we eventually sank into our seats.

The flight stopped of at Brazzaville in French Congo and then after a short hop



across the Congo River on to Kinshasa. We touched down at 10.30 am. A miracle awaited us; a man appeared from nowhere and whisked us through immigration to speed across Kinshasa to the pastors' conference, arriving just 45 minutes late. Adam stayed forlornly behind to collect our six cases not knowing that they were on their way back to Nairobi!!!!

The conference was wonderful; about 500 people gave us a rapturous welcome and the warmest of smiles from Pastor Symplice. Both Lukas and I preached - it was blessed with the people responding with praise and worship. The theme of the conference was 'The Secret of Greatness'.

Pastor lives on the other side of Kinshasa. The drive home from Masina was quite an experience with heavy traffic spewing out exhaust fumes and kicking up dust as drivers fight hard to gain a car length. This was formula one without a track and any lane discipline. A wonderful meal awaited us and after a rest we left for the evening crusade in Pastor's commune UPN which is the university district of Kinshasa. About 25 people responded to the appeal for salvation and many, many more came forward for healing and prayer for breakthrough. It is so humbling to pray for children who ask for prayer for their father who left a year ago and others whose father had died. We thank God that He is a father to the fatherless.

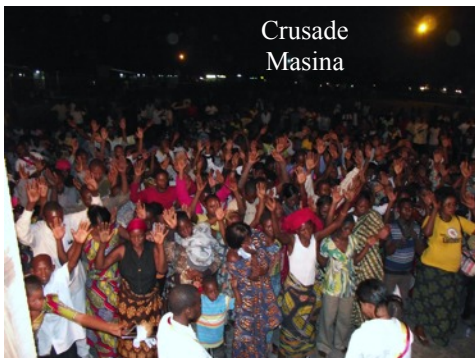
Friday arrived before we knew it; once again it was an early start. Adam went on to the airport to collect our baggage. Our taxi driver recognised our faces from a huge bill-

board and was overjoyed that we were his fare, he saw it as God's blessing.



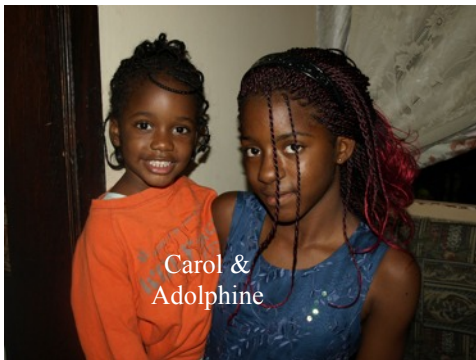
At the conference Pastor Lukas spoke about the person of Christ and the call to servant leadership. An hour later Adam returned having secured our bags, other passengers were not so blessed, some for a second day running! The customs insisted on opening one bag even though Adam didn't have the keys! We praised the Lord, because not only did it mean we had clothes but now we had the PA for tomorrow's big crusade. Adam could hardly catch his breath before he was asked to sing and play – he brought the house down as rejoicing people stood to praise and dance. It was wonderful. I spoke once more about knowing the mind of God and walking in His ways. The interpreter, Pastor James got so excited and animated that at one time he stopped to play an 'air guitar' and on other occasions he just rejoiced, people stood and cried out. There is no doubt that God was among His people.

Ninety minutes back across this city bustling, with pedestrians and vans over spilling with passengers, to lunch, unpack our bags and freshen up. In the evening we split up, Adam and I went to a crusade in Kingabua and Pastor Lukas to Pastor Symplice's church in Lingwala. The last day of the conference was a real blessing, many were touched and challenged. The Holy Spirit did what only He can do and somehow drew together our separate contributions into a complete whole.



The schedule was tough for our hosts; organising the conference and a major crusade in Masina on the same day. Financially and logistically it was very testing and they were stretched to the limit. The welcome was rapturous no matter where we went – the care and evident joy of our hosts touched our hearts causing our weariness to evaporate. As a team we got along so well – this made things so much easier and fellowship was a joy! I think this was one of the reasons God blessed us as He did. It was good to see Pastor Symplice’s daughters, Adolphine and Carol Moore once more – Carol, now three years old, has grown so much since my last visit.

Yet another 90 minute journey home meant just a short break before leaving for the evening crusade. Adam sang two of his songs on the guitar unrehearsed with the worship band. Something broke in the spirit-

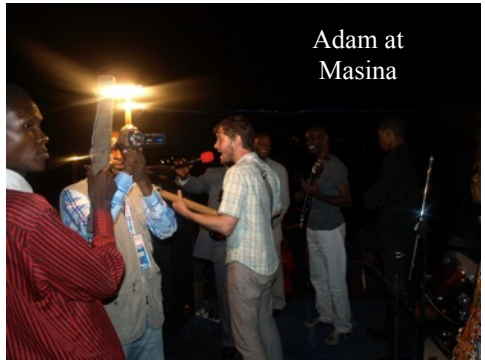


Carol & Adolphine

ual realm, and the people cried out, “Encore, encore .....” Pastor Lukas spoke a strong evangelistic message centred on the story of blind Bartimaeus – many, many people came forward for salvation and many more for healing, some of whom testified to receiving a miracle.

We returned home tired but elated. God had blessed us beyond anything we could imagine.

As yet, there had been little rest. On Sunday we were up before 6 am for Pastor’s church and then we split up. I spoke at Pastor Emmanuel’s church (he co-hosted the



Adam at Masina

Conference) and Lukas at another church in Masina. In order to avoid the long journey home we stayed in a restaurant and watched a local team on TV. Fortunately they won and soon the street outside filled with hundreds of boys cheering and running en masse, full of glee. The crusade was in a prominent market square close to an arterial road. The new staging was put to a stress test by a nationally known Christian singer Maria and her band along with backing singers and dancers. She was excellent and helped to draw a large crowd. The people danced and gave glory to God. I preached on Christ’s invitation “Is anyone thirsty?” Again lots of people responded to the call of salvation and many more for the Lord’s touch upon their lives. At times like this as the Holy Spirit moved we had no idea what the Lord had done apart from hearing those who offered testimony afterwards.

We crashed into bed exhausted, once again praising the Lord for all that He had done.



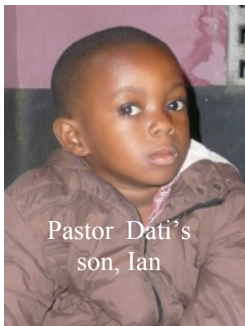
Lukas at Masina

At 4 am we crashed out of bed for what turned out to be a 12 hour car journey to Muanda on the coast, in Bas Congo where Pastor has a church. It was the first time I had been there. We travelled via Matade and Boma – stopping only to fix a puncture. We arrived two hours later than expected, feeling quite shattered but that didn't last long because what seemed like the whole church stood on the outskirts of the town to greet us with screams of joy, whistles and a cavalcade of cars waiting to usher us through the streets. It was surreal but such a blessing. Everyone was so happy to see us – it was wonderful. In the morning, after a night's rest and breakfast, we went to the local radio station and then on to the conference where Lukas and I spoke and Adam sang.



Radio Station Muanda

The women ran ahead, laying down brightly coloured material for us to walk on, others dusted our shoes with handkerchiefs – it made us feel humbled but also that the effort and sacrifice were worth it. Pastor Dati is such a lovely man, I met him two years ago in Boma – his little son has been named Ian! The crusade was just great – two walls of the church building were removed so that all the people could be accommodated.



Pastor Dati's son, Ian

Lukas preached and about 20 came to Christ. The worship here is so joyous and liberating – we were truly blessed.

I had struggled with a stomach problem since our arrival. This came to a head when in unknown surroundings, with no electricity and no water; I had to try to sort myself out in pitch darkness. Such experiences make one prize one's sight! I guess it was some sort of a battle because the devil feared what would happen at conference; the Holy Spirit came!! The people rejoiced and over 100 pastors were touched by the Spirit of God. Unknown to him, Pastor Dati was to be appointed overseer for the state of Bas Congo – at the news his wife cried with joy. An hour of farewells, prayers and countless photo calls ended a joyous morning.

Where ever we went we gave greetings from the church in the UK, the people always responded with rejoicing. Joy is a part of life – laughter and conversation are everywhere although poverty is never far away. The sort of 'comforts' to which we are accustomed just do not exist there. The people wear gladness not only in their faces but also in their actions.

Late in the evening, we went to the only TV station in Muanda for a thirty minute live broadcast. It's amazing what can be done with one non-commercial video camera, a



Crusade Muanda

couple of monitors and a transmitter. The room we were in was not sound proofed, in fact we could hear the hubbub of traffic less than 5 metres away!

Following the joyful climax of the conference, we had an afternoon of rest before going into the bush to see the Congo River which is very wide at its estuary. Across the river we could see Angola. The army are very jumpy about photographs being taken of anything in the open, so we had to be

the close, the joy continued, such happiness is contagious – we stayed for endless photos before returning home.

Adam had stayed behind to cook with the ladies, something unheard of in RDC. They taught him to gut and cook Captain's fish, freshly caught from the River Congo and to make fufu from ground maize. The people of Muanda were so thankful for all the Lord had done, the leaders of the church turned up in force for a tearful, yet joyful farewell.

The twelve hour drive back to Kinshasa was not without its moments! We left in two cars, had two punctures and a tyre blow out while travelling at 70 mph! Praise God! our driver



very discrete; even so there was one noisy altercation with an officer! We moved on to the beach where the cool Atlantic breeze blew the toxic aroma from our faces. The potential for tourism here is immense if only there was some sort of infrastructure together with reliable electricity and running water. Muanda is oil rich but it's largely untapped!



The evening crusade was blessed; seven men came to Christ and God came to His people – I've no idea what the Lord did! All we knew was that the Holy Spirit took control and waves of prayer and praise rolled over and through the people – it was impossible and quite inappropriate to do anything but kick off our shoes before a holy God. At

was 'fit for purpose'. En route we stopped off in Boma to see the GPP church there and also put a toe in the fringe of the jungle. Where ever we stopped people seemed to come from nowhere to surround the car trying to sell anything from tasty bananas to a live armadillo!



Back home in Kinshasa we were reunited with this bustling city oozing a constant cacophony of noise and a fragrance of burnt charcoal and engine fumes. People naturally smile, it's the way their face muscles have been trained to act since childhood. How refreshing and heart warming this was – it just makes life so much easier!

At Friday's Crusade in GPP Lingwala 13 people came to Christ and many, many more sought God's help and direction for their lives. After the meeting a stream of people waited patiently to see Pastor for

help. The needs are profound; one woman, pregnant and with four other children whose husband had recently left her and is now in prison sought comfort. The church building provides a roof over the head of this dear family.



Lukas went to Masina to preach only for the taxi to somehow get stuck in the mud (quite surprising as it's been over a month without any rain here!). Saturday started with a morning baptism, some 45 minutes away. This meant rising at 5.30 am – we arrived late at the fast-flowing Ndjili River. Thirty recent converts were joyously baptised – what a privilege for us to part of the celebration. On the way back to change our clothes, we were asked to pray for a woman with three young children who had lost her husband just two weeks earlier. Her face was empty, wracked with sadness – prayer seemed inadequate but we know that God is the only answer through the arms and hearts of His people.

We then went to GPP Limete church where those baptised had gathered to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. They stood on Acts 2:38 – “believe, be baptised and you shall be filled with the Holy Spirit”! Seeing 30 people, young and old, all crying out to God for this Gift was so humbling. We can learn so much from what happens here!

The days seemed to pass so quickly. It was encouraging to get news from home that our families were well. How good it was to have

old friends and pastors pop in just to say, “Hi” – some of them had travelled miles in taxis carrying perhaps 20 people squeezed into converted transits with four rough benches in the rear. No one seems to complain – life is accepted just the way it is.

In the evening, we had one final crusade at Pastor’s church in Lingwala. Adam had spent the afternoon with the musicians – he enjoyed this so much. It was great to see Adam go with the flow – he managed with a five string guitar but that evening he met his match with a bass player who seemed to be in another world!! Once again people came forward for salvation and many others for prayer needs.

The traffic is a real problem here – I don’t think we travelled the same route twice. When faced with heavy traffic; simply form another lane off the road or even on the other carriage way! If that fails simply take a detour down a labyrinth of unmade side roads. Here everyone shouts but no one seems to get mad.

Sunday always starts early – beginning with the 45 minute journey to get to Pastor’s church which began at 6.15 am. Lukas and I preach at two churches each. The programme seemed to change by the minute but God continued to be gracious to us and everyone was blessed. Generosity continues to well up out of poverty – one lady gave us each a beautiful African shirt. After lunch we spent time just talking with Pastor Symplice and walking around UPN, the university district where he lives. We visited some of the members of the newly planted



church here which has already grown to more than 50 in number.



Several young men who stayed on the compound went gone down with malaria, the initial fever is intense. Having said that people are generally very fit and strong – I'm sure it's all the walking and carrying that makes this so. There were some weights in the compound – the result of the international contest was S. Africa 15, UK 10, RDC 9 and me 0.5!!

Water is an ongoing problem; the supply is intermittent, some areas of Kinshasa were even worse. As you drive through these districts, you can see hundreds of women carrying yellow 25 litre containers of water on their heads with a 5 litre container in their hand, labouring up strength-sapping hills. This is the hard face of life – if this does not make us value what we take for granted at home then nothing will. Lord, help me to complain less!

In the morning we visited a family nearby who had requested prayer, the grandmother had TB. We were welcomed into their humble home which served an extended family of children and grandchildren. Lukas left early for the long trip to a meeting at Kimbashi. Age has its privileges; Lukas graciously accepted the long haul journeys. Adam and I had a great time at GPP Bumbu with Pastor Kimbanda – the Lord touched lives and brought conviction on many, including ourselves. The praise and worship was exceptional – it goes to show that you do not need many musicians just anointed tom toms!

On our last day Pastor spoke about his desire to evangelise remote villages. Late last year he left Kinshasa for a remote village, travelling to the interior on a motor bike – he fell off 18 times on the rough tracks but, by



God's grace, managed to get there in one piece! Many pastors simply look for a big city centre, high profile church. Pastor has God's heart, like our dear friend Pastor Ebenezer in India, for the lost. Symplice heard the Lord direct him and in obedience went to villages without water or electricity, sleeping rough. We were lost for words as we looked at photos – there were astounding miracles of healing and villages turning to Christ. Hallelujah! Faith is contagious.

It was so good to relax together before leaving in the evening for Limete and Lingwala – the Lord continued to bless. Graciously, Lukas took the long journey once more, returning to the church where the baptismal



candidates called on the Holy Spirit. At Pastor's church in Lingwala we bid farewell with great joy and tears.

The journey home was without incident, arriving back in UK full of thanksgiving and wonder at the grace of God. Lastly, we thank you for your support, encouragement and prayers which were instrumental in all the Lord did. To God be the glory!

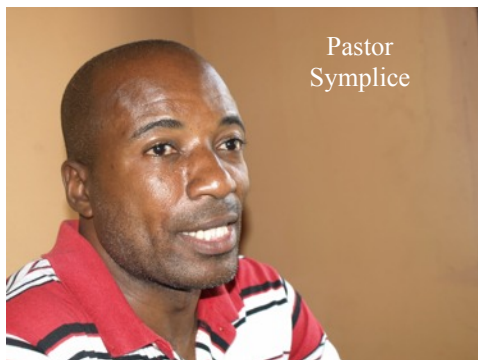
May God richly bless you.

With sincere love,

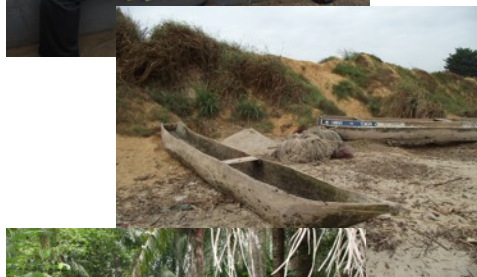
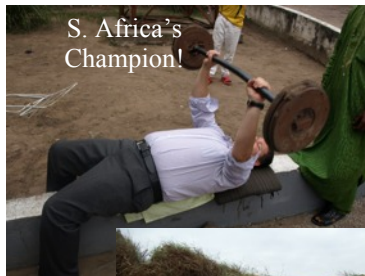
Ian

*After our long journey to Muanda, God did amazing things. Over 110 pastors came to the first Conference held in Muanda. Many unsaved gave their lives to Christ in the crusades. Muanda is not same. The people were amazed that the team did not ask for money like other foreigners. The teaching was very powerful and the people were very glad church.*

*We thank God for all He did and next year we believe for greater things. We also thank everyone who supported this mission in any way."*



Pastor Symplice



Ps. Symplice began to feel poorly on our last day. We arrived home to hear that Pastor needed to be admitted to hospital. His blood pressure was dangerously low and he had malaria. Symplice had poured out his life in preparation and throughout our visit. We are relieved to know that he is now well on the way to full recovery PTL!

Finally, a comment from Pastor Symplice:

*"On the first day of the Conference, I was preaching and then I saw at the entrance two men – Pastor Ian and Pastor Lukas and we were filled with joy. They preached and brought revelation and blessing to the Conference. In the evening Pastor Ian preached at a crusade at UPN, many were healed and saved. The church has expanded and God has done many things. At the Crusades in Masina over 400 people came to Christ. Adam's songs blessed the people and brought great joy to the church.*

