

Patricia and Peter Wyard

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The call in action

Dear Friends,

Time seems to have flown by since our last newsletter!

We were then preparing to visit Isiro, which is 500 km from Aru in the interior of Congo, and rarely visited by our diocese. We wrote extensively about this trip in our blog www.patandpeterinaru.wordpress.com. It was an exciting journey and a rewarding visit. When we were there the Anglican Church building had been in an unfinished state for a decade. But now we have heard some very encouraging news: partially due to renewed energy resulting from the Rij (Rooted in Jesus) teaching, the building is now nearly finished, only waiting for a few more corrugated iron roof panels. We hope this is matched by an increased rootedness in Jesus!

A highlight for our diocese has been the election in the national synod of our bishop Ande to become Archbishop of Congo. Everyone in the diocese is very excited about that and his consecration will happen in Kinshasa towards the end of January 2022. We pray for him that he may be, as our cook Clementine said, a good shepherd, “un bon berger”.

The work of Rij is slowly evolving. Peter held a well organised archdeaconry training conference in Opinyani, which is a lovely hilltop village. We were very grateful for our dear Robert's support for Peter because the lead up to the conference was far from easy. The subsequent rollout of Rij work in the parishes has recently been hampered somewhat by a three-month intensive evangelism campaign, which the archdeacons and pastors thought had been promoted by our archbishop-elect. In fact, what Ande asked for was something we may call in the West friendship or relational evangelism: each Christian should seek to win one soul for Christ. But it was misunderstood by some archdeacons and pastors to be a call for a “classic” evangelisation campaign: gathering all the catechists, descending on one village after another, knocking at every door and encouraging people to say “yes to Jesus”. Understandably, this distracted the pastors from looking after their fledgling Rij groups. Please continue to pray for this important work, and that evangelism and discipleship can go forward together.

Patricia's work in the hospital and for palliative care was completely derailed when COVID-19 showed its ugly head around August, with people dying for lack of oxygen. The pandemic's impact seems to have completely disappeared for now; in fact, there is no PCR testing available and only a few have been vaccinated. Pray that we do not get another wave of seriously sick people.

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Name: Patricia and Peter Wyard

Location: Aru, DR Congo

Our call: Supporting the local Anglican Community in their holistic mission to this remote part of DR Congo.

Our role: Patricia is a palliative care doctor teaching and supporting local medical staff. Peter teaches students preparing for ministry and offers training in Aru diocese.



Handing out certificates at the end of the Rooted in Jesus conference in Opinyani.

Thanks to medical and nursing friends from Ipswich and Sue Ryder, and a generous grant from Semiliki Trust (see <https://www.semiliki-trust.org.uk/>), we have been able to refurbish a very dilapidated old dentistry building. We are also working towards building a fence around the hospital compound and again we have been very touched by the generosity of friends through Congo Church Association. We thank you all.

Since our return to DRC, Patricia has not been able to concentrate fully on the palliative care work, partly because of the pandemic. In Congo there is hardly any palliative care expertise available. During her remaining time here, Patricia would like to work towards national recognition of the specialty and towards securing the provision and funding of palliative care locally. The team is supporting a third year nursing student who wants to learn more about pain management after witnessing ignorance and neglect in hospital wards. It is an opportunity to help train the next generation of nurses! We also hope to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the palliative care team in Aru a year late in 2022: watch this space.

We mentioned Piriyo before and here is an update. Despite our best efforts, bringing a wheelchair and agreeing with his grandad that they will do x, y and z to improve his life, every time a team member arrives the situation has not changed, and Piriyo still sits on a mat in filthy clothes, but never complaining. The team, who understand the culture better, think this behaviour is linked to the fact that Piriyo's father abandoned the family. Patricia visited Piriyo on the way to the Rij conference in Opinyani and read the same reading our Canon Agupio had prayed with Piriyo before, Romans 8: nothing can separate us from the love of God. The team now visit Piriyo every two weeks to be somehow God's hands and heart in his life. We are grateful for the donations which enable the team to visit Piriyo regularly. Pray for Piriyo and all those who are rejected.

On a much happier note, our dear Robert finally got married to his Marie-Jose in a splendid ceremony. Peter conducted the marriage service in Lingala, and preached the sermon in French. What a happy day it was. Pray for Robert and Marie-Jose's married life. We hope to do a blog entry about wedding preparations in Congo: a fascinating insight into a crucial part of Congolese culture!

On 11 November, our faithful and wise cook Clementine reached her 72nd birthday. She can still lift two heavy buckets without batting an eyelid and we pray that she may see us through our time in Congo and stay healthy long afterwards.

By the time this letter reaches you, Christmas will be close and we hope and pray that you may be blessed and at peace as we celebrate the birth of the King of Kings.

Yours,

Patricia and Peter



Photos from top to bottom: A friendly meeting with the pygmies in the Ituri rain forest en route to Isiro; Clearing out the old dentistry building; The wedding reception of Robert and Marie-Jose; Clementine about to enjoy her birthday meal.

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