



Patricia and Peter Wyard

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Location: DR Congo



What we do: Patricia is a palliative care doctor teaching and supporting local medical staff. Peter teaches students preparing for ministry in Aru.

Dear friends,

As we write this letter we are still in the season of Easter, when we are reminded that Christ took our sins upon himself and that death has lost its sting. We had joyful Palm Sunday celebrations, a moving Maundy Thursday and a very joyous Easter day celebration, when Peter both preached and celebrated communion (in Lingala). Right now, we are in the UK for our son Henry's graduation ceremony, a bit of a holiday and a retreat. This will be our last UK visit before we finally return to the UK at the end of the year.

Lent was overshadowed by the dark clouds of the war in Ukraine, and of course the slow, grinding conflict in Eastern Congo, which daily claims victims who never reach the headlines.

The year started with the enthronement in Kinshasa of our bishop, Titre Ande, as archbishop of the Anglican Province of Congo. We were very grateful that our passports, after six months waiting for a missionary visa, were finally returned to us by friends who had been in Kinshasa. We immediately used the opportunity of being able to leave Congo to visit friends in Uganda and have a short holiday.

Our work:

Patricia supported her colleague (and dean of the cathedral) Madhira's visit to Kinshasa through funding and helping with connections, and he managed to contact several palliative care teams based there. Meanwhile, the team, the only rural palliative care team in Congo, is a member of the ANSP (Association Nationale des Soins Palliatifs) in DRC. The team receives some online teaching via Zoom orchestrated from Belgium, which is great as long as the quality of the internet is good enough. Patricia also submitted some abstracts for the African Palliative Care congress in August. This congress will be followed by the team's 10th anniversary celebration, one year late, when we hope to welcome our foundress, Dr Francesca Elloway.

To understand the rural situation better, Patricia made a series of training visits with nurse Anguyi, such a kind nurse that one would want to know he would be present at one's deathbed. This was a challenge, hours on the motorbike and interviewing staff in the health centres. The situation is difficult: the centres are self-financing and have to compete with "féticheurs" who offer "cures". Some centres are very run down and staff standards are not as high as they could be. Then of course, one meets a nurse who gives it his/her all and transforms the lives of the people in their health centre and you think what a hero this



*Washing feet on
Maundy Thursday.*

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



person is... *Pray for inspiration and generosity as Patricia tries to fundraise for a viable future for the Aru palliative care team.*

The work in the hospital: after a fantastic fundraising effort by our UK friends, the fence which our hospital badly needs has not yet been built because the service medical's bank account was blocked for a long time. To all our donors: rest assured, your money is safe with Congo Church Association and we pray that the fence will have been erected before we leave Congo. Otherwise, in the hospital, Patricia continues the continuing education programme and tries to enable staff to be a bit more dedicated.

Peter enjoys guiding students in their projects, which often address very interesting contextual questions. One is studying, through interviews, the thinking of Christians in a local chapel in the bush about premarital sex and "marriage". There are some very amusing and surprisingly honest answers!

The Rooted in Jesus (RIJ) work goes on at steady pace and it was nice to get it acknowledged by the RIJ team in the UK (<https://rootedinjesus.blog/2022/01/25/the-diocese-of-ar-dr-congo/>). Peter works hard, with his committed team, on many different fronts: translation, organising translation and publication of the materials in the three local languages, running the conferences and organising the follow-up, which is the most challenging of all, greatly supported by the dedicated Rev Etsegeri.

Peter had a very fruitful meeting with Canon Moses from CMS-Africa who stayed with us and supports the idea of a CMS local (African) partner who would be in charge of Christian education after our departure.

The RIJ conferences in Kumuru and Mahagi were wonderful occasions where the Holy Spirit really entered the hearts and minds of the participants. We witnessed how much people enjoyed the group work and exploring issues. The conferences are training events for future trainers – leading a group is difficult if you are used to being talked at or talking at people, rather than interacting. It is encouraging to see young people taking to the course and leading a training session quite well. *Please pray for the future of Christian education in our diocese and for the RIJ leaders to take their tasks seriously. Pray for the selection and funding for a suitable successor for Peter.*

We end this letter with an amusing incident. At the Ugandan border a customs official asked Peter whether he had a "message". It being the first week after Easter he duly replied: "Yes, Christ is risen!", the most wonderful message you could ever hear, but we soon found out that the question was a code for a request for a bribe. Having arrived from Mahagi our cases were full of dirty clothing, but they were thoroughly inspected by the Ugandan officials. They may well have regretted not accepting the good news!

For further updates on our life and work, please see our blog <https://patandpeterinaru.wordpress.com/>

Yours,

Patricia and Peter



Photos from top to bottom: Thanksgiving service for our new Archbishop Ande; Caring Anguyi; Rev Etsegeri smiles as we leave for the Mahagi conference; Ministry session at the Rooted in Jesus conference in Mahagi.



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