

**NEWS UPDATE FROM DEBBIE HOWARD, CONGO
OCTOBER 2010**

Dear Friends,

I'm now back in Lubumbashi following a road trip to Kipushya with Eddie Rowlands, a retired missionary and AOG minister, Pastor Mukala, one of the Kisongye Bible translators as well as my Kisongye teacher and Mudimbi, a musongye now living in Lubumbashi. I'm at a loss of what to write. Where should I start? What should I focus on?

I could write about the journey – a 4 day trip which took 6. Day 1 was quite uneventful if we forget about almost being stoned at Likasi, 120 kms outside of Lubumbashi, by the local population protesting over the state of the roads. Day 2 was okay for us but try as we might, we were unable to pull another vehicle which was well and truly stuck in the mud in a particularly bad part of the road. By day 3 the condition of the roads had deteriorated to the state where we were now driving on roads which were terrible and didn't deserve to be called roads! That night we stayed in a village where I tried to sleep, whilst wary with no mosquito net to protect me that the rats scurrying along the floor might decide to pay me a closer visit. On the morning of day 4 we paid a quick visit to a church en route but ended up spending the day and night as we discovered that one of the vehicle springs was broken. By day 5 we were off again and almost made it to Kipushya. However we stayed the night 15 kilometres away as it was getting too dark to safely cross the river with the local ferry. By midday on day 6 we finally arrived at Kipushya while almost everyone was still in church.



I could write about the hospital maternity/operating block where the night before our arrival, a tree had fallen during the storm taking a good proportion of the roof with it and demolishing part of the wall. Inspecting the damage with a local builder, I became more aware of how cut off we were as most materials needed for the repair were not available at Kipushya, some only required an 8 hour round trip by motor bike to Kabinda 120 kms away but others could only be found at twice that distance at Mbuji-Maji meaning they would take rather longer!

There was also the installation of the goods we had brought with us. Before leaving Lubumbashi, Nick had patiently gone through with me how to set up and work the radio as well as fix the antenna. A local team was found and after what seemed an eternity, the solar panel, battery and antenna were successfully installed and the radio was functioning. The radio operator proudly showed me a table with a cupboard enclosed which he had put aside for the radio. However as soon as this was picked up it simply fell to pieces meaning a local carpenter was called and an order for a new table placed! Setting up the bookshop with the solar panel to power the computer and printer was straightforward but when it came to trying out the new photocopier, despite much discussion and re-reading of the manual it simply didn't work. Therefore another trip to Kabinda was arranged which confirmed my suspicions that there was no problem with the photocopier but with the generator!



There was of the course the Spiritual retreat which was the primary reason for Eddie's visit. Eddie was the main speaker and spoke on the life of David, encouraging everyone to follow David's example as worshipper and servant of God. People had come from all over, almost all the 42 stations were represented and people were challenged, encouraged and blessed.



For me, the highlight of the trip was visiting the Katenta church on the Sunday with Pastor Mukala. On our last visit this church was totally divided and in serious difficulty with the local authorities asking the church community leaders to intervene. The two groups were brought together and a new Pastor was brought in to lead and oversee the church. How awesome to see just a few months later, people who previously couldn't even sit together now worshipping and praising God as one. Pastor Mukala summed it up when leading communion – we eat from one bread and drink from one cup because we are united and one in Jesus Christ.



Learning and speaking the local language is simply par of the course when you're a missionary but I could never have imagined how grateful I would be to be able to say in Kisongye: I'm very sorry but I am not prepared to wash in the same room as a monkey!

And with that I think I will conclude my report of our visit.

Thank you for all your interest, prayers and support,

God bless you,

Debbie

All gifts for my ministry in Congo should be sent to Elim International Missions or as appropriate to the Irish Missions Director. Cheques payable to Elim International Missions. Thank you.

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Charity nos 251549 / SC037754