



ITM (high school) students of IMCK



Staff of ISTM, the college at IMCK



Waiting to be seen in the hospital ER



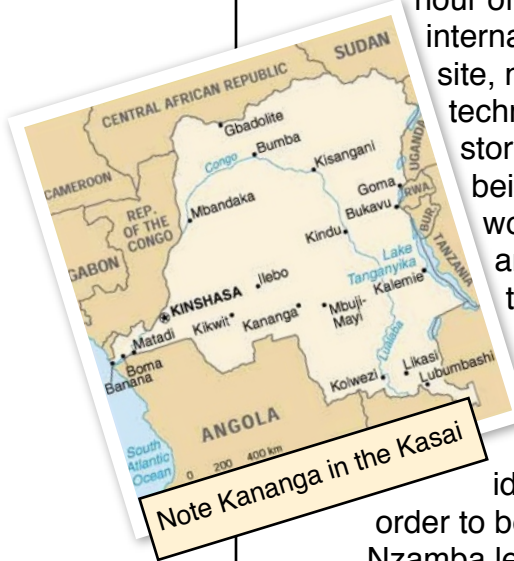
New mattresses at the IMCK Hospital!

The purpose of my travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo in February 2013 was to collaborate with staff of Institut Medical Chretien du Kasai (IMCK) on behalf of Friends of IMCK (FIMCK) and Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF) and to make reports back to IMCK, MBF, IMCK, Presbyterian Church USA, Rivers Of the World (ROW) and my church, First Presbyterian Church of Hilton Head, SC (FPCHH). The focus of the trip concerned IMCK publicity and developmental goals. The trip also included a meeting with members of IMCK and Communauté Presbyterienne au Congo (CPC) regarding the current construction of the IMCK Founders Chapel. I also met with CPC staff and American mission coworkers regarding some of their projects at Tshikaji and in Kananga. Since I edit a monthly newsletter about IMCK, I arranged interviews and took photos and videos during the week.

**Here is a summary of activity related to IMCK.** Meetings related to CPC are in the next section. Marcia Murray, PCUSA volunteer mission coworker, accompanied me on most of these trips and was invaluable in better communicating, due to her superior French and Tshiluba:

- Sunday, Feb 17 – Worshipped at IMCK Parish service. Visited with Marcia Murray, who teaches at ISTM. Met with IMCK Director Alexis Nzamba and Prefet Jacques Mpoi regarding plans for the week.
- Monday, Feb 18 – Visited two IMCK programs, ITM (high school) and ISTM (college), to take pictures and interview individual students. Interviewed Dr. Banza Pepe Kalenga, Medical Director of Education. Two physician residents, whom I also interviewed and photographed, accompanied him. We attended a meeting Dr. Kalenga had arranged with the 12 medical students at IMCK; they presented their primary needs. The ISTM students, medical students and residents at IMCK need scholarships, computers and books. Dorms are greatly needed. I sent a report on IMCK education programs to MBF and will send IMCK, MBF and PCUSA a report on major future repair or construction needs of IMCK.

- Tuesday, Feb 19 – At the Tshikaji Guest House, I hosted a meeting for IMCK administration and physicians on behalf of Friends of IMCK. The purpose was to address IMCK publicity and development. During the first hour of the meeting, I proposed projects for collaboration regarding international networking and publicity for IMCK in such areas as web site, monthly newsletter, updated pamphlet, and future information technology options. I emphasized the need for them to tell their own story, to tell others the stories of patients served and of students being taught. I explained my role as IMCK newsletter editor, working in the USA. We reviewed some ways USA organizations are working with IMCK, but we also discussed the need for IMCK to diversify their partnerships with others besides Presbyterians of PCUSA. I invited them to produce a one-page information sheet with their mission statement, five annual priorities or three major goals per department, and ways others can partner with them or support their major goals. In presenting fund raising ideas, I encouraged them to improve their accounting system in order to better qualify for grants. During the second hour, Director Alexis Nzamba led a discussion about ways to promote IMCK locally and about goals for publicity and development. The names and email of the 18 leaders, who attended, are listed in an attachment. We then enjoyed a good lunch and fellowship. After this meeting, Dr. Kabasela Kabata, IMCK Dentist, and Mr. Jean Pierre Tshisanga, Dental Clinic Coord., took the trunk full of dental supplies sent from Dr. Bob Gardner.



Note Kananga in the Kasai

- Wednesday Feb 20 - I traveled into Kananga and began a tour of PAX Clinic, interviewing clinicians and patients and taking photographs. At PAX and later at Good Shepherd Hospital, I photographed new vinyl-covered mattresses that are a dramatic improvement for patients. These were provided in a major collaborative project during the last year by Charles Johnson, PCUSA and ROW participant; multiple Presbyterian churches and women's organizations, Jimmy Shafe PCUSA and ROW; Ruthie Schaad, RN in Kinshasa with Communaute Presbyterienne Kinshasa (CPK); Larry Sthresley of PCUSA; and Simon Ntumba Tshitenga (CPC). I spent the evening visiting with Bob and Kristi Rice and Ruth Brown, PCUSA mission coworkers living in Kananga.



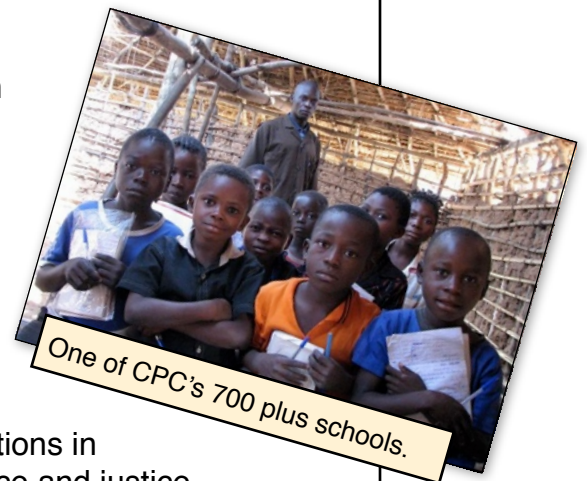
Hydro Repair Team prays thanks for completion of repair of second engine.

- Thursday, Feb 21 – I visited PAX Clinic and toured various departments for interviews, photos and videos: OB/GYN, Lab, Diabetes, Ear Nose and Throat, Ophthalmology, AIDS/ HIV, Surgery suite, and Dental. I returned to Tshikaji and later interviewed Dr. John Fletcher about the repair of turbine two of the hydroelectricity at Tshikaji. Bill Kell of Atlanta, Georgia visited Tshikaji recently and helped complete this project. A more detailed report to MBF on the hydroelectricity repair will follow.

- Friday, Feb 22 – I toured the Good Shepherd Hospital and took pictures and videos and interviewed patients and staff. Then I visited the Sewing School supported by ROW, where I interviewed students and took photos. In the afternoon, I interviewed an IMCK physician and returned to ISTM to tour the girls' and boys' dorms, both old and new. MBF provided funds for a dorm recently renovated and filled with new beds, which I filmed.
- Saturday, Feb 23 – I met with the following people about the construction of the new IMCK Founders' Chapel: Pastor Simon Kibue Mbala, IMCK administrator Bernard Kabibu, IMCK Chaplain Kabasela Bantubiabo, and contractor Ilunga Munyoka. I will submit a report on this to PCUSA, MBF, FIMCK and to my church, FPC of Hilton Head.
- Sunday, Feb 24 – I again worshipped at the Tshikaji Parish Service and filmed the celebratory thank offering. In the afternoon, I purchased dresses made by students and faculty of the sewing school; these will be sold to support the school. Marcia and I returned to visit with Prefet Mpoi about a new Volleyball field for female students and to tour and photograph the large campus building called the Refrectoire. It shows major deterioration.
- Monday, Feb 25 – Before departing, I took pictures of some of the IMCK Administrative staff.

**The Communauté Presbyterienne au Congo (CPC) has at least 2 million church members in 926 churches.** CPC administers over 700 primary and secondary schools and numerous rural hospitals and clinics. CPC administers or partners in at least three postsecondary schools: UPRECO, Protestant University of Congo and IMCK. The Presbyteries and Synods of CPC have active programs among women of the church, evangelical programs, youth programs, development programs, a printing press and a radio program. Communauté Presbyterienne de Kinshasa (CPK) is a separate and active Presbyterian Church in Western Congo, but this report does not cover CPK. Currently, ten American Presbyterians are serving in Congo as staff or volunteers with PCUSA. Any visit to Congo is greatly enlightened by visiting with or learning from any of them as listed below:

- John Fletcher, a surgeon, works at IMCK and works with CPC hospitals.
- Gwenda Fletcher coordinates education programs with CPC.
- Bob and Kristi Rice work with CPC in the Department of Evangelism, Christian Education and development projects.
- Ruth Brown works with CPC in the development of coalitions in community issues such as food security, health and peace and justice.
- Marcia Murray, a volunteer, teaches at the new IMCK University, called ISTM.



- Larry and Inge Sthreshley live in Kinshasa, where Larry partners with other organizations and churches to administer major community development programs in the Congo and Sudan. Inge works with the local mission guesthouse and with nutrition programs.
- Clay and Cindy Dunn, volunteers, live in and administer the Methodist Presbyterian Hostel in Kinshasa, which serves as a guesthouse and small conference center.

Jeff Boyd, PCUSA Liaison for Central Africa, does not live currently in Congo, but travels and speaks extensively on behalf of church activity there. PCUSA churches partnering with churches and programs in Congo coordinate with Jeff.

While in Congo in February, I continued as a reporter, news writer, or facilitator with CPC members in the following ways:

- I met with CPC Secretary General Rev Dr. Joseph Mulumba Musumbu and some of the CPC Administrative Staff concerning ways for CPC to start more information technology efforts, such as a monthly newsletter.
- I met with women of the Tshikaji Parish, who started a “Pain” Project or bread-baking project with a donation from First Presbyterian Church of Cranbury, NJ. I will share photos and a report on that project with FPC of Cranbury. The women presented a request for expanding the project, which will be processed through the CPC Development department.
- I met with Rev Charlotte Keba Ndumba, about whom I will write an article concerning the work of a woman minister in CPC.
- I briefly visited IMPROKA, where Simon Ntumba Tshitenge invited me to photograph new printing equipment donated by Newcastle Presbytery. I will send that report and photos to Newcastle Presbytery.
- Willie Lushimba administers an English teaching program located at IMPROKA. I took new teaching material to him from Marcia Whitney-Schenck, who has a certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and who spent 3 months at Tshikaji teaching English.



Sylvain Kazadi, Kristi Rice and Charlotte Keba

**For those of us who visit Congo, each trip can introduce travel adversities and astonishing cultural issues.** At the same time, we are visited by people of Congo who sit next to us and deliver powerful prayers of thanks. Amidst suffering and food scarcity, they genuinely thank God for the rain, for hope, for love. We are left humble in often knowing that, in fact, we the visitors are more helped by this visit than those we come to see. We also witness the leaders and staff of IMCK and CPC, who while shouldering great hardships, relieve suffering, provide hope, teach and spread the Christian message of love.

Submitted by Charlotte Rule White, March 2013