



The Great Commission Fund

FRUIT THAT ABOUNDS TO YOUR ACCOUNT—PHILIPPINES 4:17

March 2024

ADVANCING THE GOSPEL IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Did you know there is more than one Congo?

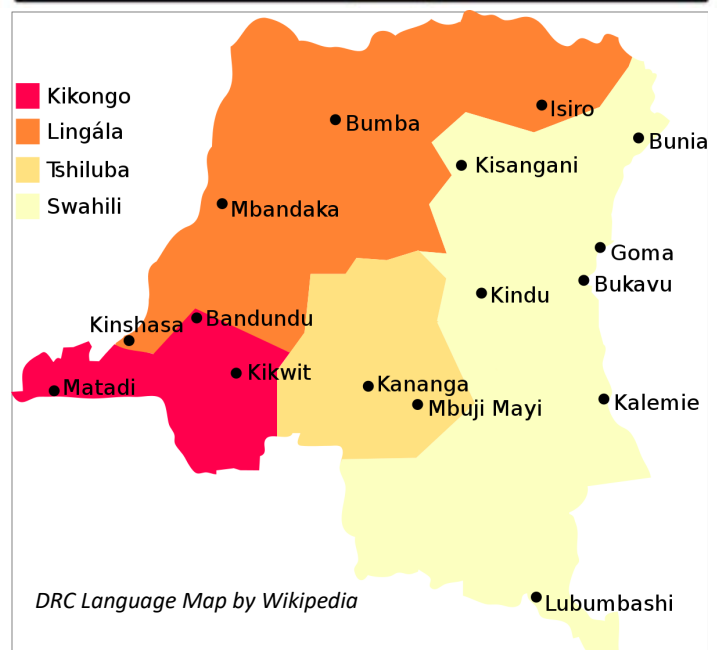
There is the Republic of the Congo (the RC) and its much larger neighbor to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the DRC).

According to Google, the oracle of all knowledge, and its contributors, the DRC is the eleventh-largest country in the world and the second-largest in Africa. Because it shares borders with nine other countries, which are not unfamiliar with political turmoil, nearly seven million displaced people live there. Currently, among its population of 112 million people, twenty-five million live from day to day, uncertain if they will have food to eat.

The DRC is also the fourth most populated country on the continent and the most prominent French-speaking country on the planet. Still, apart from French, the official language, there are other "national languages," Kituba, Lingala, Swahili and Tshiluba. But in total, there are 242 tribal languages spoken. French, however, is the most dominant language. While fifty-one percent can read or write French, seventy-four percent can speak it.

So why are there two?

The region derived its name from the Congo River, the second longest river in Africa (2,900 miles), yielding the top position to the Nile. Still, it is undisputably the deepest river in the world, at places be-



ing up to 720 feet deep. At this depth, even light does not penetrate.

Two competing countries claimed and colonized the region. Belgium, a French-speaking country, colonized what is now the DRC, whereas France colonized the RC. The Congo River separated the two colonies.

With both countries sharing the name "Congo," being so near, speaking the same language, and having multiple tribes that span the borders, the citizens came to describe their home not by the country's name but by the capital city of their country. Congo-Kinshasa (DRC) or Congo Brazzaville (RC).

We are focusing on the DRC.

Our National Director is Isaac Saidi Marcel. (Pictured at right with his beautiful family.

While Final Frontiers, *via* our Great Commission Fund, has long supported church planters in the DRC, those same men have developed other preachers in the RC to the north and Angola to the south. Several years ago, I had planned a trip to visit the preachers in the DRC, and they, in turn, made arrangements for me to visit the other two countries while in the region. Still, I was advised not to go due to the collage of militia and terrorist groups that garner funds by kidnapping for ransom. The US State Department advised that we should not go but that if we did, we should not venture outside the hotel, even in the daytime. Traveling for the preachers was also a significant risk at that time, so we canceled the trip. Our itinerary would have taken us deep into the jungles bordering Rwanda and Burundi, an area considered the mouth of the lion, so we followed their advice (which is uncommon for me) and canceled the trip. Recently, a group from Iowa visited and spent days with our director, Isaac Saidi Marcel.

On March 18, Isaac wrote saying:

"Thank you so much for your prayers. I have been seriously sick (malaria and stomach problems), but after taking treatments, I am now feeling well. I think this was all due to my travels. The sleeping conditions were not good during last month's Mission trips to different villages. There were a lot of mosquitos and different foods, which were not properly cooked. But out of this, God did incredible

things in people's lives. Before our eyes, a new church was planted, souls were saved, and disciples began their training. We returned home with many marvelous testimonies about God."

As you can see, the American missionary is not alone in enduring the living conditions and diet in other lands. Even national pastors, born, raised, and serving in the capital city, can be overcome by the same hindrances as we are once they venture from what they know and are accustomed to -- into the unknown and unaccustomed.

Here, Isaac gives a brief day-by-day account of their trip:

"The year 2024 started with God leading us to cities and villages to win the lost to Christ through preach-



ing the Gospel, training new disciples, and planting churches. In February, I led a team of three men to the province of Bandundu in the Republic Democratic of the Congo (their way of saying the DRC). Bandundu is one of our largest cities, and people of

different tribes, cultures, and beliefs live there. Christianity is not accepted much in this area, but people are open and willing to listen. We had no church or family members there, just one person we met some years back in Kinshasa, the capital city. This man was willing and able to welcome us at his home. So we decided to go there last month and were amazed at what we saw God do in those six days, from Thursday, the 8th, to Wednesday, the 14th. It was incredible."

On the first day, Friday the 9th, we started evangelizing around the city. We were shocked to see how people were so open to Christ and wanted to hear more and more about God's saving grace and love. Eighty people got saved on that first day during our soul-winning and evangelism morning session. In the evening, we saw thirty people arrive at the door where we were staying. Some had converted that morning to Christ, and others, having heard their testimony, came with them. They said, "We want to hear more about Christ and His word." We were all astonished, so we stopped what we were doing and organized a Bible study with them.

On Saturday, the 10th, those who got saved and came for bible studies the evening before came again in the morning and asked, "What is next?" I told them we were about to evangelize again, and they asked if they

could come with us. They all joined us, and we evangelized together, the veteran preachers on our team and the new converts. (This is discipleship.) Though they had no Bibles and everyone asked if we could provide one for them, the result was a miracle. I saw people crying after realizing that they were lost without Christ in their lives. Learning this, they believed



in Christ and accepted Him as Lord and personal Savior. That morning, 135 more people were saved.



In the evening, while surrounded by some of the new converts, I talked with our team members and our host; we were all so excited to see what God was doing before our eyes, but we knew that once we have new believers, they need a church and a pastor. So, I asked my team what we were waiting for. Why not start a church now? I told my team that we would start a church even though we didn't have a place to bring and orient these people for spiritual growth and follow-up. Though they were all in agreement, one question arose. "If we start a church, who will remain here as the pastor?" Our host had no spiritual training, and we all had families back home and ministry responsibilities; even so, I answered, "God will provide." So, we prayed and organized a church that evening in the home of our host, and it was awesome. The church started. People heard what we were doing and came to that dark house for our first church service. (I'm sorry, the photos are not clear it was dark)



Isaac preaches at the first Sunday morning service of the new church.

On Sunday, the 11th, we had our first-morning church service with 124 newly saved church mem-



bers. With such a crowd, the house we chose was packed, and new converts with their friends flowed outside, peering through windows and straining to learn the songs we taught them and to hear the Word being preached. I could not have imagined what I saw that morning. God challenged our faith and our hesitant mindset towards missions and the reaching of entire villages, tribes, and cities. So before leaving, one of us, Pastor DEJA PULULU, was chosen to remain there as the church pastor with a heavy responsibility for this city. Please pray for him. The need for Bibles in this region is great.

We stayed with them for three more days, preaching and teaching, and on the 14th of February, we returned home to Kinshasa. PRAISE GOD.

What an incredible report!

To keep us informed of their continuing progress of evangelizing their country, Isaac wrote again saying:



Isaac at right, Deju at left

"Please, keep praying for us, and with us, the next step of faith and missions orientation will take us to the city and region of Goma, in the eastern part of the DRC, along the border of Rwanda (see map). This is the area where there have been wars for years up to the present. We plan to reach outside the city of Goma into the surrounding villages with the Gospel, winning the lost to Christ, establishing new churches, and using them as discipleship and training posts. We also hope to go into different refugee camps. These people need God, the Gospel, love, and compassion. So, help us to reach them and give them Bibles."

For this trip, Isaac's team is asking for \$7000 to help with the team's transportation, 250 Bibles, and items to give away, such as soap, clothes, cooking oil, sandals, and mosquito nets. Thousand of families live in the refugee camps. So, we hope to reach this city and the surrounding villages with the same vision and mission (winning the lost to Christ, discipleship multiplication training, and church planting). During these moments, we would love to visit some of these refugee camps, bring the Gospel of Christ to them, and share compassion. We plan to do this during the second week of April next month. Yes, these people need God, your help and compassion, and God's Word and the Holy Book for their spiritual and physical hope in life. So, help us reach out, and let's GO TOGETHER for Christ and plant churches among these people. The schedule for this trip is the second week of April. You receive this report because you have joined us by participating in the Great Commission Fund. We rely on your scheduled gift to fund our preachers and their teams. However, if you would like to give extra for the DRC April Mission, please mark your gift accordingly.

By the way:

Lest you think Isaac's report is unusual, let me share his December 28, 2023 report. We get frequent reports from Isaac and all our directors around the world. That's the basis of our accountability to ensure you are getting what you pay for and that the Gospel is advancing where it has never been preached before.

Isaac wrote: "A lot has happened here with God, as you will see in our attached newsletter. We had no time to rest. We had our Annual International Con-



ference, Bible College students' graduations, and then the ordinations of Pastors and servants ready to go to Mission fields for church planting. After that, we took a different Mission Trip to 12 villages where God's grace was manifested.

"Everywhere we went, we noticed believers not having Bibles to read or for their personal studies. They were crying to us, saying, 'HELP US WITH BIBLES, GOD'S WORD THAT IS SUFFICIENT FOR US.' Can we pray together and think of ways to help these precious people with Bibles, God's Word? 500 Bibles can help and give access to many souls to draw near to God and fellowship."

He continued: "Pray also for our country. General elections are going on and politicians are manipulating people, and now village is against village, tribe against tribe, etc. Insecurity is so high these days. You can be killed for doing nothing. Other people are blocked; they can't move from one place to another (this is one of the reasons you will see for the delay of some of the reports I filed for our preachers after talking to them on the phones)."

We thank God for these preachers and their teams, the families who stand behind them, and you who give to fund their mighty efforts for Christ.

Pray for their needs:

\$7000 for their upcoming April Missions Trip to the eastern border region. This includes Bibles, transportation, and relief packages for the refugees.

\$7,500 Bibles for the new converts you read about in Isaac's report.

Note: One Bible costs about \$15, including delivery. Funds given to Smugglers is for Arabic and Farsi Bibles for the Middle East. All other Bible funds are raised independently with appeals such as this.

This regular report demonstrates the value of your support for the Great Commission Fund. Articles are provided in each quarterly issue of the Progress Report and periodic reports throughout the year.

With your funding, we subsidize the ministries of church planters worldwide. This includes the preachers, their Timothies, and their Bible Women who minister to the ladies and children. We also purchase ministry tools like Bibles, motorcycles, bicycles, institute curriculum, Gospel films, etc.

There is a strategic value to helping these workers reach their own people instead of only sending them foreign missionaries. As a result, their accomplishments are dramatically evident.

Currently, the conversion cost in our ministry is a mere 11¢, most of which are adult conversions. The cost of planting a new house-church, which is statistically composed of 37 new believers, primarily adults, is only \$4 per new church. You read that right — "Little is much when God is in it!"

Please continue or increase your support of the Great Commission Fund and share this ministry opportunity with others.
