

YWAM Pioneers Missions in Democratic Republic of Congo

No country in Africa captures the extremes of the continent like the Democratic Republic of Congo. A massive nation with vast natural resources, it ought be one of the wealthiest countries on earth, and yet today, it is ranked as one of the poorest. Stunningly beautiful, it has been scarred by ugly deeds—5 million people dead as a result of the years of simmering warfare over the last two decades.

The eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has been hit hard by the war. The region has thick, often impenetrable rainforest, with few tarred roads. Travel there is painfully slow. One Congolese family had a grueling struggle to attend a Discipleship Training School in Arua, in northern Uganda. Their 1,000km-journey (about 620 miles) from Isiro took an incredible 14 days. The couple traveled with their toddler by bicycle, motorbike, foot and car. On the way they got lost, were separated from each other for several days, were robbed and suffered severe exhaustion. They survived on a meager diet of rice alone. They arrived in Arua not knowing the local language, yet convinced that God wanted them there, and that they needed to do the DTS; what perseverance, tenacity and faith!

YWAM teams from Arua have made several outreaches into eastern Congo, and they tell similar stories of extreme isolation and extraordinary challenges.

“The 2,500km-round-trip (about 1,550 miles) took many days,” says Dorothy Bingi, who is a missionary pioneer to the country, along with her husband, Yolam. “Sometimes it took several hours to travel just a few kilometers. The forest roads were often impassable, with mud and deep potholes, so we had to create our own roads through the bush. We crossed many

wide rivers on decrepit bridges.

“Some were so bad, the truck tires fell between the rotten timbers and got stuck. Other times we had to drive through the river. When night came there was nowhere to sleep, except in the jungle by the truck. We got stuck in a muddy stretch for 18 hours. There was too much rain while we were stuck, and all of us were drenched in rain and mud.”

Bingi's team visited villages that had received no outside visitors since the 1950s. They saw people healed, counseled others and held seminars with hundreds in attendance. One pastor confessed, “I have heard new teachings from the Bible I have never heard before. It is amazing. And I saw miracles that have never happened before. God has been speaking through you.”

Rita, one of the DTS students, summarized, “There are no worse roads than those in Congo, yet at the same time, there is nowhere I have seen people so desperate and hungry for the Word of God. We saw at least 600 people come to the Lord. They are worth our suffering.”

The Democratic Republic of Congo is such a huge nation that YWAM can adopt a multi-pronged approach to pioneering work there. YWAM teams in Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia and Angola to send teams in from the eastern, southern and western sides.

This month, Yolam and Dorothy Bingi will make another exploratory trip to Isiro with a team of seven from Arua in Uganda. They have an open door to return and plan to relocate there next year. Pray for them as they face the huge challenge of pioneering YWAM work in one of the most difficult and dangerous nations on earth.□□□□

The Challenges Continue□

A raging fire on Feb. 6 swept through a small house in Soroti, Uganda. In an hour, YWAM staff, Yolam and Dorothy Bingi, lost all their possessions and their family home. As part of the

first generation of Ugandan missionaries, they had already faced the challenge of support raising in a nation where the idea of African missionaries was still new. Without personal or home insurance, the fire had devastating consequences.

For five years, the Bingis have rented out their house to support themselves in missions. They work with YWAM Arua, located in the north west of Uganda. Dorothy, a Muslim-background believer, and her husband, Yolam, are part of a small team from YWAM Arua (Ugandan, South Sudanese, Australian and Congolese) preparing to start a pioneering effort in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the loss of their house in February, the couple is determined to press ahead with pioneering a long-term YWAM ministry in neighboring DRC.

The couple writes, "Please pray with us that amidst all this, we and our children will remain faithful to God. ... With a house or without a house, we will fix our eyes on the Lord. ... Please pray that we will continue to look forward as we prepare to go to the Congo at the end of this month. ... We will trust God in these challenges, and trust Him to pick us up again, even in this storm. Please pray that we will not be consumed with deep worry, but that we will trust God for the next step."