



The Central African Sentinel

The Mighty Congo!

Witness Mercy Life Together Witness Mercy Life Together Witness Mercy Life Together
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Hitting the Ground Running...

Dear Christian friends and ministry partners,

Steph and I arrived back in Brazzaville late Friday evening, February 26, and we haven't stopped moving since. The first week was mostly given to running around town getting life set back up. The biggest obstacle was getting our internet up and going again. When Congo Telecom installed our fiber optic connection in December 2019 (a few months before we were repatriated), they had to run a cable about 500 yards to a telephone pole across the street. This time it took a bunch of pestering and finally, one week after submitting the initial request, a tech team finally showed up. It turns out they had to replace the 500 yards of cable they had just put in last year, but the good news is it's a lot faster and more reliable than before - by far the best we have ever had in Africa. They have only had two ½ day outages so far apart from the 72 hours it was shut down for the election. Speaking of the presidential election, we are pleased to announce it transpired peacefully, if not perhaps very transparently or fairly. Oh well, probably better the devil you know...

Thank God that the election in the Republic of Congo transpired peacefully!

Pray that the Lord would bless the pericope sessions, the Luke seminar, and the preparations for TEE.

Pray that Steph would have great success in her CHE work and that we would be able to host Mercy Medical Teams again soon.

Pray for newly elected Church President Albert Koutia and his Council.

Thank God for the monumental life and work of Rev. Dr. Wilbert Kreiss, who also made as many as 48 two-week teaching visits to the Congo basin.

Early in week two I accompanied three of the Brazzaville pastors on a tour of the other two major church plants in town. I met the three other gentlemen assigned to those places and visited most of their homes. At each place, I dropped a Google Maps pin so that I can remember how to find it again. Google Maps works amazingly well here. Apple Maps not so much. While we were all together, I invited all these men to start meeting every Wednesday to go over the pericopes (appointed readings) for the coming Sunday and they eagerly accepted. In the picture, we are finishing off the homiletical discussion, which takes about an hour. We spend the first hour or so going through the Hebrew and Greek. The CLET trained guys had classes in those languages and remember them surprisingly well, but currently have no resources to continue studying the languages in preparation for their sermons.



In the middle of week three, Church President Albert Koutia came up from Pointe Noire with the two members of his council and I met with them for several hours during one of the days they were in town. They were elected last year, but COVID prevented them from being formally installed into their positions. After a lengthy welcome back to the missionary and discussion of my expected role, most of the

discussion surrounded planning for the May 15th through the 17th installations and churchwide meetings. I agreed to teach a seminar on the Gospel of Luke in the days following. It is the perfect opportunity with church members attending from all over the country. Steph will also plan upcoming CHE training seminars with the leaders of the women.

| Kreiss | |
|---|-------------|
| Name | Date Mod |
| > Ainsi Parle Le Seigneur | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Celebrez Dieu Dans Son Saint Temple | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Comment Interpreter La Bible | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Commentaire Sur L'Apocalypse de Jean | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Commentaire Sur Michée | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Commentaire Sur Philippiens | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Juste et Pecheurs - Commentaire Sur Romains | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > La Doctrine Chretienne WPD | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Le Monde de l'Ancien Testament | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Le Monde du Nouveau Testament | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Les Miracles de Christ | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Les Moyens de Grâce | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Les Paraboles du Seigneur | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Petite Dogmatique Luthérienne | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Quand Dieu Parle Aux Hommes | Apr 5, 2021 |
| > Ta Parole Est La Vérité | Apr 5, 2021 |

A huge goal I have is to reignite (Togo) or initiate (everywhere else) TEE or Theological Education by Extension in all 8 of the francophone countries where we are collaborating. I oversaw the TEE program for 5 years in Togo back in the day. I had 6 groups of 8 to 16 men spread all over the map of northern half of the country. Each group participant would study for 6 days individually at home

and the seventh day was a 2-hour group wrap-up and testing session led by me. I had those meetings sequenced so that I could get to all 6 during each week. The entire curriculum was written by the former President of the Lutheran Church of France – Pastor Wilbert Kreiss, who passed away in 2007. The TEE instruction greatly strengthened the laity of the church and provided a wonderful feeder system of candidates for residential pastoral formation at the newly established CLET.

When I left Africa to return to the States in 2003, I had all of Pastor Kreiss's TEE material on my laptop. Unfortunately, about a year into my Stateside call, I had a catastrophic failure of my hard drive, which was not adequately backed up, and lost everything. So, for the last year or so, I've been trying to track down someone who still has all those TEE files. Finally, Pastor David Somers in Quebec and retired former TEE supervisor for the LCMS, Rev. Dan Mattson, have been able to supply the electronic files that I need. I've been working hard getting that all together and plan to talk about starting the training and resourcing of a few CLET-trained pastors as TEE circuit riders at the May meeting. I will do likewise in the other countries over time. The curriculum needs some updating, but I am so thankful we were able to recover what will remain the core of it, which was written by the rarest of all creatures – a Frenchman who was also an amazingly solid confessional Lutheran Christian.

We've been worshipping at the flagship congregation, St. Augustin. They had a lovely, but grueling 5 1/2 hour Easter celebration service. They also had Holy Communion, but Steph and I abstained. While the theology of the two CLET-trained pastors is surely at one with ours, our two church bodies are not yet in full Altar and Pulpit fellowship. Often the heart needs to be constrained by the head for the good of God's Church.

Thank you so much for your ongoing prayers and support! A blessed Easter season to you and yours! He is risen!

Your Joyful Response?

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