

NUNDU NEWS: CONGO CONNECTION 23

TRUSTING THE LORD OUR WAY MAKER

We are back “home” in Arizona after an almost three-month mission to the Congo. Connie and I arrived in Bujumbura August 2 and left October 25, extending almost one month to accommodate the delayed arrival of our container with its solar components and medical equipment.



Our goal for this mission was to connect with individuals and learn more about realities in the Congo. We made significant progress as we met with staff members at the hospital and leaders in the community. We also had three hands-on projects in mind, which consumed much of our energy.

1. Solar upgrades and installation of medical equipment, which included an X-ray, a surgery light, an autoclave, and operating table, all made possible by the safe arrival of a twenty-foot container.
2. Purchase of a hospital vehicle, which has been needed for a long time.
3. Renovation of the Haddock House with the immediate goal of its complete wiring.

In the Lord’s timing and providence, all three projects have been accomplished. He is the WAY MAKER. The container arrived in Dar Es Salaam August 28 after it had left Montoursville PA June 5. There had been several delays along the way, with an initial arrival date of August 7. Our in-country shipping agent, Dunia, was in Dar to arrange for transportation to the Congo, with the container then entering the Congo Sunday, September 10. On September 15, 2023, the container was loaded onto a truck, which as it turned out was the last option available. After many bumps in the road, the container arrived at Nundu Sunday afternoon September 17. The Lord is the WAY MAKER.

With the arrival of the container, we were ready for the I-TEC Team (International Technical and Electrical Construction) to be on site the first two weeks of October. I found myself being a mechanical engineer, out of my element, as I was responsible for overseeing the building of the truss system needed to support the expansion of the solar array.



The solar project is completed.



Our experience throughout this mission was one of trusting the Lord, THE WAY MAKER. In this journey we call LIFE, God’s ways are past finding out. It is my tendency to run ahead of God, trying to make a way on my own. Our experience at Nundu was that when we come to the end of what we can do, He is there making a way even as there does not seem to be a way. “Accept the way God does things, for who can straighten what he has made crooked?” (Ecclesiastes 7:13 NLT)

The purchase of the Land Cruiser for the hospital was also a matter of trusting the Lord to make the way. We had identified a Land Cruiser meeting our needs the first week of August after arriving in Bujumbura, but it took a month to build a consensus to purchase this vehicle. We then closed the deal September 1, but did not see the vehicle arrive on the station until the evening of October 13, with the I-TEC Team scheduled to leave Saturday the 14th. Why? I have no idea, but what I do know is that all our transportation needs were provided in accordance with his plan.



In the Lord’s time we had the vehicle when needed. The Lord provided for our transportation needs.

Concerning the house renovations, the Lord provided transportation into Bujumbura the last day of August allowing us to purchase the materials needed. We discovered Adams Trading Company in Bujumbura as a supplier of home goods with affordable prices. We identified an agent who assisted with transporting our purchases across the border. We then had on hand the electrical, plumbing, and paint supplies needed to move forward with the house renovation. Yes, we did all this

without having our own vehicle and with the Lord providing transportation. The Lord provided as two of the I-TEC team were not granted their Congo visas. To fill the gap, the Lord provided a young man, Paul Ekoca, a Congolese just out of university with an engineering degree as well as technical training as an electrician. It was he who partnered with Don Ames of the I-TEC Team to wire the Haddock house. The house renovations will continue because the Lord is the WAY MAKER.

Paul and his handywork, light in the darkness.



As we depended on the Lord for our transportation and many other needs, we made connections with so many people who otherwise would have gone unknown to us. There is Augustin Lizwa who makes his living transporting folks in his Toyota Prado wherever they need to go, even down the rough roads to Nundu. He is the one who provided the timely transportation into town the end of August and then back home to Nundu several days later. In just the right time we met Aubert Mwebakeca who was critically important in providing transportation for the I-TEC team from Bujumbura to Nundu on their return to Bujumbura.

Loading at the King's Conference Center in Bujumbura.



Aubert is a journalist and regional coordinator for a media group (Synergie des Medias Pour l'Unionj des Forces) based in Uvira. His generosity springs from having been assisted in his early days by missionaries Leonard and Karen Roller. We met as we both came together to remember the passing of a mutual friend. The Lord is the WAY MAKER building into our lives, relationships! Aubert with his driver Grace provided our transportation to the airport on our departure.



We connected with the hospital staff in ways that have been transforming. Drs Byamungu and Marx would stop by in the evenings (see below) just to see how we were doing. To be honest with you, at the end of the day after sweating through dust and heat, their concern and words of encouragement were just what we needed.



Connie organized an English conversation group composed of one doctor, two nurse supervisors, and two from the hospital administration. There were also two non-hospital people. All had studied English in school for several years but were hesitant to speak. At the end of our first meeting, Connie served banana bread, which Jerome (our cook) had just made that morning. They asked how to make it, and when she showed them his book with the recipe, out came the phones for a photo. Relationships!

We met and formed a close bond with a young couple, Dr. Baron and wife Anne with a daughter Emilie. Anne was our next-door neighbor and one of several who formed our Swahili conversation group. Anna is expecting their second child in late November. Dr. Baron is just completing the first year of an OB/GYN residency in Bujumbura. By the Lord's provision, Dr. Baron will receive a scholarship for the year coming up. The Lord is the WAY MAKER. The family will now be together in the city as Baron continues in his training. We are blessed to have these new friends.

Relationships, Dr Baron with Anne and Emilie.



There are so many others ... "little" Jerome helped us with Swahili and is thinking about going to university to become a dentist ... Elongo the hospital administrator with a family of nine ... Espoir a young man serving as chief of nursing ... Lotus overseeing the maternal-child health program reaching out to health centers. Doctors, nurses, maintenance staff ... all serving the Lord at Deaconess Nundu Hospital. The Lord was our WAY MAKER by providing meaningful relationships.

Habibu, the head of maintenance, was among those with whom we connected. Habibu and I are both considered Muzee, not only old but wise. What does the future hold for Nundu? There will be those who will follow Habibu and me in serving as we follow the WAY MAKER.

Habibu in his office with Tim, fellow Muzee.



Coming back home to Arizona was hard, not only because there is more work to be done but because we left behind relationships which have impacted how we see life and our world. In a way we had not expected, we found our heart in the Congo. We saw the WAY MAKER work in ways we could not have imagined.

A final good bye, prepared for our final the trip into Bujumbura October 21.



We have more stories to share, describing how the Lord has made the way, not only by completing projects but by making new and renewing old relationships. These relationships continue as we are connected by the internet and WhatsApp. Thank you for those who followed our WhatsApp Congo Connection 23 group and for those who have contributed generously throughout this year.

We're on the way to Bujumbura. Dr. Marx is happy to have a vehicle which serves the hospital.



You might want to be engaged in the life of our friends in the DR Congo. I would encourage you to go the www.congohealth.org to participate in what is happening in the Congo. Projects in urgent need of funding include hospital maintenance, assistance for those who are unable to cover the cost of inpatient care, and nutritional support for hospitalized patients. He is the WAY MAKER.

We have more reports from our time at Nundu coming soon.

Tim Kratzer

November 13, 2023