

Hello Everyone!

A new message from Charlotte Sinclair Barkley from the Congo, Part 2.

Please continue to keep Charlotte in your prayers as she continues the work the Lord has for her as well as all of the people and children whose lives Charlotte and the Team have touched in Jesus' name. Pray also for those Charlotte will come in contact with throughout this year's Africa journey. Pray especially for the starving people of Somalia and the refugee camps in Kenya as well as the people of South Sudan.

If you would like to send Charlotte a brief message, you may send it to me and I will be happy to forward your greetings and prayers to her. Computers are scarce in Africa and often her visits are far out into bush country with no, or very limited, electricity or modern conveniences. She may not be able to Reply until her return to USA but welcomes your notes of encouragement.

If you do not wish to receive these updates, please REPLY and note REMOVE in the Subject line.

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Isaiah 52:7) – Romans 10:14-15

In His Amazing Love,

Laura G.
(L_Grgic@cox.net) (L_Grgic...)

Dear Family & Friends of the Persecuted Church,

UPDATE ON BERNARD FROM KENYA.

You asked about Bernard, little orphan boy with spinal meningitis. Big- hearted **Cheryl** sponsored him so that he could come live at **Pastor Timothy's Children's Home** in Kitale, Kenya, and get proper care.

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"Dear Mama Charlotte,

"Here is the doctor's report on **Bernard**, the orphan boy with Spinal Meningitis. He was admitted to the hospital for treatment. The doctor said the spinal meningitis had affected the blood vessels to his heart. He also suffered from malnutrition. He is now home and improving. The bill was originally \$250 but they reduced it to \$200 because he was an orphan.

"The other children are doing well. All the people still talk about the Team's messages.

"Our church in Nuba Mountains in Sudan is undergoing great persecution. Our pastor was injured and hospitalized. The church is now going underground to 'house church' ... our members fellowship in secret."

"Many greetings to the churches you are visiting ... we love you so much."

Pastor Timothy Mundiaha

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CONGO - PART II

WE CONTINUE with the story of how the Word brought light to a very dark place; and hope and direction to the lives of those who heard them. We return to the Congo where God is at work. I pray this story encourages and inspires you to 'hold out the Word of Life' wherever you go, wherever you are.

Forgive this belated Report. For weeks I've struggled to prepare/send it. There were more computer challenges than 'Carter has Liver Pills' (a favorite old expression). Alas, it was impossible - until now.

During the last 10 years of civil conflict in DR Congo, more than 6 million people have been killed; and countless others

injured or forced to flee to refugee camps in neighboring countries. Today the situation is a bit more peaceful; however, bands of rebels still continue to oppress people in rural areas.

AT HOME WITH THE FAMILY.

It was morning at Pastor Christopher's home. Fanny brought me a beautiful Congolese blouse and skirt to try on. Mary, the interpreter, explained, "It's really for Sunday ... she wants to see if it fits." English is not commonly spoken here, as it is in most other African countries.



Photo: Mary and I sing and dance with the widows

In case you are wondering, the main languages of Congo are: Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili and French (the last two are the main ones).

Believe it or not, in my bedroom was a tiny shower/toilet stall, however, nothing worked. I took my 'shower' in the traditional way using a few inches of cold water in a plastic bucket. Actually it felt refreshing as the day was hot.

The six children: Guerschom (the eldest), Eliezer, Othniel, Mera, Chrifa and little two-year old Love (who took her sweet

time accepting me), were at their table eating breakfast. Mommy Fanny was expecting #7. Their names are a bit tricky to pronounce. As you may guess, 'family' is very important to the culture.

RUSH HOUR.

The adults ate breakfast in the sitting room. After a breakfast of mini loaves of white bread; 'Blue Band' marg; 'chi' (tea); and wedges of cheese (a rare treat); **Pastor Christopher** drove **Mary** and me to the Legislature, an impressive piece of architecture. In the car he put on a Christian CD - in English! My host was delighted as I sang along with the familiar tunes.

It seems that 'rush hour traffic' occurs 24 hours a day. The car came to a complete standstill so I rolled down the window to take a photo of a Kinshasa street scene. In the distance was a street boy hauling a wooden cart, though I hadn't noticed him at first. He abruptly stopped, ran over to the window and began shouting angrily.

I quickly raised my window. Pastor Christopher spoke sharply to him before driving on. He said (via Mary), "They don't like their pictures taken..." Lesson learned. I did not take any more photos without permission.

DEMI TO THE RESCUE.

We soon arrived at the church in the heart of Kinshasa and walked up the three flights of stairs to the apartment above. This was where **Pastor Guy and Pastor Fanchon** were staying. The security guard, Demi, screened all who entered. He recognized us and unlocked the door.

After traditional 'greetings' I explained what had happened. Demi, the security guard, offered to go take photos around town.

I hesitantly handed over my NEW red Kodak camera, silently praying, "Lord ... can I trust him? ... I'd hate to lose another one."

Three hours passed. I grew concerned when suddenly Demi appeared, smiling, (translated) "I took a friend ... we must have taken over 100 photos ... no one bothered me." Later when I checked, I had to chuckle as I saw his 'friends' in most of the photos.

THE PEOPLE.

During a lunch of fried bananas, ndunda (type of green veggie), kasava and whole fish (those huge unseeing fish eyes will haunt me forever), **Pastor Guy** pointed to the 'sellers' across the street: "That lady lives on the street and sleeps there every night ... The others leave each night but not her."

In the distance I could barely make out a scrap of cardboard propped up against the stone wall - her 'bedroom'.



Photo: View from the apartment window and 'widow who lives on the street'

Pastor Guy continued, "Here in Kinshasa (as in most of Congo), life was an almighty struggle to survive. People on the streets lived in the most basic shanty shelters: cardboard, corrugated metal, bits of wood, paper - even plastic bags tied together - anything to form a space."

"Every single day the street people scavenge on the city garbage like vultures, preying on anything they might use or eat - even rotten food. The result is appalling filth where people sleep, live, cook and eat."



Photo: What a heavy load of charcoal!

I prayed, "Lord ... imagine being a child 'down there' - the filth, the poverty, the hopelessness."

If the truth be known, my heart was 'down there', in the street. That's where I wanted to be. But for right now, I was part of the Conference and for security reasons I had to remain 'up here'; watching; looking on from a distance; praying. And as part of the Team, we were there to bring Good News in a town where hope has been buried like lost treasure.

Pastor Guy concluded, "I left Congo 25 years ago ... I was the sole survivor of 8 children ... my mother died when I was a child ... my father had 5 wives so I have many half-brothers and sisters ... I look forward to meeting them for the first time in Kinshasa ... I thank God for saving me...."

PASTOR FANCHON.

Pastor Fanchon, like Pastor Guy, had fled the Congo during the war. "On Monday, after the Conference, I'll fly to Goma to visit my relatives for the first time in 10 years ... I am now an American ... my wife and 10 children live in Ohio ... I completed university and now pastor a local church."

I asked him how many languages he spoke: "I speak 7 languages ... My eldest son is running in marathons in the USA ... raising money to build a Medical School in my village near Goma.... When he runs doesn't even take a bottle of water or any money with him ... relies totally on the kindness of strangers and trusts God for protection and provision ... to date he's raised \$5,000."

He showed me the newspaper article. I could see he was very proud of his son - and rightly so!

THE TIN CAN & TV.

"Mary, can you find me an old, dirty tin can ...? I need it for a visual aid during my presentation this afternoon." It took several attempts to explain. **Pastor Guy** ended up having to explain it to her over again.

Mary appointed Demi: "Demi, you will go find one..." The first time Demi returned with a new tin can. This would not do. I did my best to be grateful for his effort. His second attempt produced a can that would work.

About 3 pm we walked down the hall to **Pastor Christopher's** 'office'. There we had a TV interview with media reporting on the Conference. I must confess, this is a new experience to me, but **Pastor Fanchon** helped. He translated my comments so I was confident they were reported accurately.

THE CONFERENCE.

At 4:40 PM we walked down the stairs, around the back, and into the court yard. Young ladies, dressed alike, were assigned to carry each Conference speaker's items: notebooks, Bibles, bags. It was quite a procession!

Soon it was my turn. **Djecy**, a very nice young man, served as my interpreter. I mainly encouraged women (though there was

something for everyone). I told the true story of **Tererai**, a poor girl from Zimbabwe who wrote down her 'dreams' on a piece of paper; placed it inside an old rusty tin can; and buried it beneath a rock in the cow pasture. Eventually, with God's help, they all came true. (Hence the old tin can visual aid).

This was unlike the story of **Nyirandiku**, a Congolese woman, who knew the Lord but tragically died as a result of her abuses.

During my presentation, the unthinkable happened: the microphone died. Isn't that just like the devil? I dared not continue as my voice could not reach far in this vast space. I stood a few minutes feeling foolish before it came back.

Then, Djecy, my interpreter, began having difficulty translating, such as the word 'clinic' and 'hospital'. It didn't matter how slow I went; even when I repeated words in a slightly different context, he 'didn't get it'. I wasn't sure what to do except smile at the audience!

Suddenly a young man from the audience leaped up onto the platform and took over without being asked, which was great! It was **Mary's** older brother, **Michael**! He jumped in without missing a beat. All was well and I breathed a sigh of relief. "Lord ... your Son had the final victory ... not the evil one!

Later, Djecy admitted, "I've only translated for British people ... they have different accents from Americans ... I'm so sorry." We assured him that he was not to worry about it.

During the offering, Pastor Fanchon again came to my rescue by quietly handing me Congolese money, much to my embarrassment.

After the Conference, as folks were leaving, the electricity failed, however, fortunately there was a back-up generator which took over.

We then had a second TV interview. I could get used to this!

THE PEOPLE.

Night had fallen. Before ascending the darkened stairwell to the third floor apartment, we passed throngs of people in the streets. It was a sobering scene. It appeared that street peddlers occupied every square inch of available space: but when I looked closely, I saw scores of huddled human beings, young and old, laid out like an open-air dormitory. Poverty all around.

Some were busy making up a 'bed' of newspapers, a cardboard box, or old tattered blanket. So many people. Rats scurried around their feet, stealing scraps of food. Gaunt, worn faces, far older than their true years.

"Lord ... help us turn back the tide into the sea ... though there is always another wave ... we must 'work while it is day for night comes...' Your Love compels us."

MARY'S TESTIMONY.

Back at the house, over a late supper of whole fish, beans, fried bananas and ugali (corn meal), **Mary** shared her testimony. Here is an excerpt:

"I was born in Bukavu, the 7th of 9 children: Josie, Lydia, Lawrence, Michael, Sarah, Jeffrey, Magalie, Nina and Mama Mado. My father was a printer of signs ... I finished high school and am now a freshman at university studying teaching ... it's a five year program.

"In 2004, May, rebel soldiers entered our home ... we hid my father under the table. They were taking all men by force to join them.... Fortunately they did not find him.

"My whole family is Christian ... I was baptized March 23, 2003...

"We lived in our cousin's house ... they had four bedrooms and only three children ... finally we rented a house for \$80/mo which they paid as my father became ill from food poisoning and could no longer work to support the family. The children moved to Kinshasa but my parents remained behind as my father had lots of stomach problems ... They were on their way to join us when he died at the airport ... my mother buried him alone.

"Our family has sung together since I was five ... we sang in Sunday School and church choirs ... My father was the 'creator' and promoter of the family singing group ... he loved music: drums, guitars, etc. Today we sing in church."

I asked, "Where do you live now?"

"Two years ago our cousin stopped paying our rent due to financial problems ... we now live 'under' the church in a hollowed-out space of dirt ... rent free. The Lord is teaching us much through this experience ... we always pray together as a family at 8:30 pm ... my mother prays often from midnight until 6 am."



Photo: Mary and her family who live 'under the church'

PASTOR CHRISTOPHER'S TESTIMONY.

During breakfast one morning, Pastor Christopher shared his testimony. Here is an excerpt:

"I was converted in 1991 ... I met Fanny, my wife, in Bukavu. I was 27 and she was 24 ... A week after my conversion I went to a place between Burundi and Congo and planted a church ... I became the pastor there.

"Two years later I moved to Goma and preached in the bush as an evangelist ... I went many places for two years.

"In '95 I became a pastor in Goma and that's where I met Pastor Guy. He was an elder in the church. I became Pastor Guy's 'mentor' and saw great potential in him.

"After the first war in '97 I received a message from the Lord that there was to be a second war beginning in Goma. I planted and built a church there ... this is when Fanny and I were married.

"When baby Guershom was three months old, we boarded the last military flight out of Goma. As I was seated, a rebel

soldier entered the plane and took me off at gunpoint as well as the baby.

"The rebel soldier took me into the bush and pointed a gun at my head. He said, "Your wife can leave ... but I will kill you."

"Unknown to me, a member of our church had followed us. He was a boxing champion of Congo; a powerfully built young man. He said to the rebel soldier, 'Stop!'

"The rebel feared the boxer and let me go. I boarded the plane and as the door was closing, a soldier handed us the baby through a hole in the door... We left our suitcases behind ... all we had was the clothes on our backs."

"The day we landed in Kinshasa was the day the war started in Goma. God spared our lives in a miraculous way ... we stayed with my sister for a while. Then I felt led to study theology and entered Bible College for the next three years... during that time we lived 'underground', beneath a church, in a hollow space. It was very small and we could not stand up in it...

THE MESSAGE.

"From '06 to '08 I became Bishop over 250 churches - including house churches - in our denomination ... but in 2000 I had received a message from the Lord, 'I chose you and I want to do work through you to deliver My people'. Then in '04 I received the same message only more precise ... the message had to do with evangelism - to redeem the people as in Galatians 4:5 - that we are saved from the Law...

"At that time, Fanny was expecting baby #4 whom we named '**Mera**', the name of our church today... In '09 the Lord told me to start the vision NOW ... At that time I was in Kasi

Province ... I returned to Kinshasa in '10 and handed in my Reports for the churches I had been Bishop over ...

"I went to South Africa to attend an International Conference ... when I returned I fasted for 40 days to prepare for the new church ... we began MERA church with 12 people in November 15, 2010..."

As Pastor Christopher concluded his testimony, I was deeply moved by the tremendous faith and courage that had driven him to follow God's will for his life and family and ministry at all costs.

THE BANK.

Later that morning we drove to the **RAW** bank (what a strange name). "This is the only ATM machine in town..." **Pastor Christopher** explained.

I was thankful to see it as when I was last here, there were no ATM's in the country which caused a hardship.

When US\$ came out, I was even more surprised. I needed \$325 to purchase my ticket for Goma which had to be done well in advance.

"We use American dollars here as well as Congolese money..." said Pastor Christopher. I got a little extra and asked Mary to change it so I'd have local currency.

I prayed, "Lord ... won't **Pastor Fanchon** be surprised tonight when I put my OWN money in the offering basket?"

SUNDAY - CLOSING NIGHT.

Sunday was the last day of the Conference. During the morning, the Team attended **Pastor Matthew's** church in Eastern Kinshasa. **Pastor Fanchon** preached a stirring message, however,

the rest of the Team was invited to bring 'greetings' which can last as long as a sermon!

The final Conference services began at 4:30 pm in the afternoon. We all took turns behind the pulpit. At the close of the meeting, **Pastor Christopher** gave an invitation for all those who were sick. Over 100 came forward. The Team walked around to pray over the people.



Photo: The people praying

Then Pastor Christopher issued a second invitation: this one for 'everything else'. Over half the congregation came forward for a variety of needs: salvation, rededication, and 'everything else'. The Team was busy for quite some time! One could see the pain and suffering in the faces of the people as they brought their heavy burdens and petitions before the Throne of Grace.

"Lord ... transform a little bit of their reality through Your Word and Your Power and Your Peace ... give them Hope, a Future filled with potential ... through Your Spirit and Truth and Grace."

After everyone was seated, Pastor Christopher did something most unusual. He asked the congregation to 'bless their

American guests..." A slow but steady stream of people from the audience began to move forward to place their 'gifts' in the giant offering baskets (wastebaskets covered with bright material).

Following the service, we had our third TV media interview (all were from different stations). This time I was ready!

A 'SILENT PRAYER' ANSWERED!

Let me tell you about my 'silent prayer': "Lord ... I want to 'bless' a few folks here ... but our mission budget for Congo is all used up in airfare here plus airfare to Goma."

On Monday morning the Team gathered in **Pastor Christopher's** cozy sitting room. Through translation, Pastor said, "We divided up the offering for our three American Team ... each one of you will receive \$250 US\$."

I couldn't believe it! This was a totally unexpected answer to prayer! I'd told no one else. In all the countries I've traveled, Congo is the only one where a church took up an offering for the missionary!

THE MAMAS.

That night, the Church Mamas paid me a visit at the Pastor's home: **Mama Bijoux** (who had welcomed me at the airport), **Mama Fanny**, **Mama Beatrice**, **Mama Kiriza**, **Mama Thethe**, and others.



Photo: The MERA Church Mamas

Through Mary they explained, "We want to tell you about our new project ... to help the widows, orphans and those without jobs in our church ... we want to buy land and farm machinery ... can you help?"

I spent the next hour or so outlining how they could help themselves and become independent. They appeared to be happy with the proposal and at the end of the meeting I presented them with a gift of money: "Here is 'seed money' to begin your project..." They were so grateful.

Thanks to that unexpected offering, I was able to bless even more special friends, including **Pastor Christopher** - until the money (\$250 US\$) was all gone!

FAREWELL.

Monday morning, about 5 am, Pastor Christopher took **Pastor Fanchon** to the airport. The rest of the week I taught in local churches of poor people, mostly widows. What a privilege to witness first-hand the power of the Bible's Words at work and the faithful people who commit to be Jesus' hands and feet in difficult places!

That week, Pastor Christopher planned a few special treats such as lunch at Kinhole, a place on the river. There we ate fish baked in banana leaves and 'ugali'. **Pastor Guy** and Tutu, our driver (and church member), ordered 'roasted caterpillars', a delicacy. I couldn't bear to watch them chewing away which delighted them as they relished my facial reactions!

There was no end to my hosts' kindness and the unknown heroes, silent warriors and gentle giants I met. They were all warm, loving and hospitable. The last day I had such fun handing out the gifts I'd brought - the homemade wooden cars were a big hit with the children and the Mamas loved those 'David's Pouches'!



Photo: Mama Fanny and children receive gifts from America

On Friday I was to fly Goma. There I would again see **Pastor Fanchon** and my host, **Pastor Delphin**. Many adventures for the Lord lay ahead.

Dear Lord,

"Make me ready for what lies ahead ... You are the one true and living God ... across Congo I see the Church growing. May Your hand of protection uphold these precious people until we meet again ..."

"May Your Spirit wash the Peace of Christ over them. Grant them wisdom to meet their hardships, suffering and poverty with courage, but also with discernment knowing You are working even in the hearts and minds of corrupt government officials and rebel soldiers and evil doers ...

"Draw a multitude to Your Son, Jesus Christ, through the testimonies of Your faithful children here in the Congo."

Amen

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Thank you dear family and friends for your love and prayer support. Please keep them coming! Until next time,

Charlotte Sinclair Barkley

PS. To my dear 'Facebook' friends who have sent messages, thank you all so very much! I regret I am unable to access my account from this distance - only a minute here, a minute there. Please be patient, I'll write as soon as I can and God Bless you all!