

2 Cor. 5:14

*For Christ's love
compels us,*

On the way to Moroto with Margaret



A lot has happened since my last letter in August. That was written not as long ago as my other letters often are. But...it is time to write and explain a bit more how I have been doing and what my responsibilities are.

Time in Uganda

First a few lines about my time in Uganda. I spent there longer than intended. It started with AIM conference in Kampala, followed by a two-week visit to Moroto. On the way we stayed at a guesthouse with a swimming pool. My friend Margaret wanted to learn, and she did well. In Moroto we could follow the work of some AIM missionaries. High light were two visits to Karamojong villages. After a week in Kampala I could welcome Wiebe and Heleen, a couple from my home church who visited me in Africa. No, not in Adi unfortunately. At the last minute I received the discouraging news that because of the travel advice of the ministry of foreign affairs, the leadership of my home church didn't give them permission to visit Congo. The three of us decided that the time together should be a memorable time and it was. First we took some days to Murchison Falls National Park (photo above) following which I went back to Adi for a week (as I had been in Uganda already for five weeks). It was a busy week used to meet with people in meetings and personally and I did some filming as well for my home church. I met up with Wiebe and Heleen again in Jinja after which we went together to see the falls in Sipi and more wild life in Kidepo National Park. We saw a lot and had a great time together. And we got to know one another better these days!

Meeting at the border: Reverend Aduwe (left) and Dr. Claude.





Bethsaida, Church district Adi



God's richest blessings,

My ministry

I am involved in lots of things, from doing HIV counseling and testing at the hospital during antenatal clinics, to being involved in Bethsaida, a project of the AIDS Awareness Program to enable children, who lost their parents to AIDS, to go to school. My main ministry, however, is the organization of a workshop about HIV for church leaders. 'Channels of Hope' is the title of this workshop. I followed a training in 2013 in South Africa. I really liked the approach and the contents of the training, and I knew straight away that this was something I wanted to introduce in DR Congo. It took some time though, as the contents had to be translated into French and also I prepared it into a workshop that is taking two and a half days, instead of the week that it took in South Africa. It is a training for church leaders and its aim is to empower Christians with the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to assist faith communities in their journeys towards HIV competence. The material is based on 10 Biblical guiding principles (our motivation, identity, compassion, inspiration, commitment, task, attitude towards people, search for answers and solutions, responsibility and calling), and working towards 7 competencies (to understand our vulnerabilities, relevant and responsible use of the Bible, comprehensive prevention, compassionate care and support, transformative justice, meaningful community interaction, accountable leadership). All these will only be achieved with meaningful involvement of people living with HIV or AIDS. We always invite one of them to give a testimony of their life with HIV. We also have a very good video with the testimony of Canon Gideon Byamugisha of the Anglican Church in Uganda, who himself is living with HIV.

In Congo people living with HIV and willing to give a testimony are difficult to find, although at the hospital in Adi we already have more than 600 people who come for treatment with ARV. However, they want to keep their HIV status a secret and are not willing to open up. Even a good friend of me who is living with HIV, doesn't really want to talk openly about her HIV status in Adi. She, and with her many more men and women living with HIV, are afraid to be stigmatized, or worse, discriminated. To have pastors to speak up against this, is one of the aims of the workshop. In the end we like them to go home with tools that they can use to teach about HIV and AIDS in their churches and congregations, and to assist people living with HIV.

The end of the workshop is characterized by a commitment of the participants. As the first devotion is about being 'Salt and Light' (from Matthew 5:13-16) a candle (now a small light with a battery) is lighted and kept on during the whole workshop. At the end of the workshop all participants in the workshop receive a candle to light on another candle, now held by a person who is HIV positive.

I plan to organize this workshop in all 11 church districts of CECA and in several other places where CECA has an outreach ministry. There is still a lot to do.

I need you to minister with me through prayer.

- Pray for the organization of more workshops; one will take place in Aru on 11-14 November, another at the Bible Institute in Adi on 28-30 November. Pray for its financial support.
- Pray for speaking engagements, I am preaching on December 1 (World AIDS Day) in Adi.
- Pray for the children of Bethsaida and that funding will be found.

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