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Great Lakes Peace campaign Goma - December, 2014

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The Anglican and Catholic Churches of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, faced with the problems of war and conflict that tear apart communities in these three countries, undertake to carry out a "Peace in the Great Lakes" campaign for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region. This one-year campaign was launched on 1 December 2013 in Goma, by the Anglican and Catholic churches, following three days devoted to ecumenical prayer, Christian songs, lectures, debates and cultural events (folk dances, popular music) in parishes. In all these activities, the theme of peace, justice and reconciliation was apparent.

Leaders of the Province of the Anglican Church of Congo (PEAC), headed by Archbishop Isingoma, have been heavily involved in the process. Bishops Bahati (Bukavu), Isesomo (North Kivu) and Funga (Kisangani), Ven. Anthonio Kibwela (PEAC Secretary), Rev. Dr Kahwa Njojo (UAC), Rev. Désiré (Head of Mission & Evangelism) and I were all present. Christians and pastors from Goma, Masisi and Rutshuru responded massively to the call. During the four days, two major activities were carried out:

28 - 30 Nov. 2013: Advent prayer, giving thanks for the peace efforts in the Great Lakes and praying for reconciliation and peace in the three countries. Catholic and Anglican parishes in the region also followed the programme of prayer; 1st Dec. 2013: Launch of the "Peace in the Great Lakes" Campaign itself, with a procession from the border between Rwanda and the DRC to the place of ecumenical worship (Jean Paul II public square, Goma).

The highlight of the campaign was reading the message of Catholic and Anglican Bishops of the Great Lakes Region to the Christian faithful, political authorities and people of goodwill. This message was entitled "Together for Justice, Reconciliation and Peace in the Great Lakes Region." We hope the message will be posted on the PEAC website (www.anglicancongo.org) in the coming days.

Following the launch of this campaign, many activities will be carried out over the next 12 months.



Archbishop Justin Welby visits Goma

Archbishop Isingoma and Revd. Désiré Mukaniirwa



such as the interfaith association, youth, women, laity associations and the Governor of North Kivu.

His last evening address at St Paul's Church in Goma was on forgiveness, justice and reconciliation. Hundreds of believers from the Roman Catholic, Anglican and other local churches and non-governmental organisations sat and listened carefully to the word of God from his servant.

After the severe trauma and fear caused by the M23 bombing of Goma last August, life has returned to normal. People can travel easily at any time and reach their destinations safely. It is the same in many places which the rebels occupied, especially around Rutshuru. The people living in those areas can now breathe and feel secure after the military failure of the M23. This is a result of the prayers and actions of many people all over the world.

The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his wife Caroline spent 3 days in Goma with the Christians, clergy and Archbishop of the Congo from 3rd to 5th February. His short stay in Goma was very busy: activities included visiting the displaced camp, the raped women's association, widows and orphans, praying with people and preaching. He also met groups

The church showed love and compassion to 766 needy people last year - widows, orphans, IDPs, pygmies, raped girls and women, etc. - while witnessing to them about the love of God. A good number of people under our care decided to come to Christ, and 93 people were led to confirmation after being baptised. The church schools project, gutters project, church life, seminars and conferences, etc. all continued and we remain thankful to the Holy Spirit.

News from Boga Diocese

Bishop William Bahemuka

2013 was both difficult and blessed! Security in the area was not good owing to the presence of the FRPI militia of Cobra Matata. People lived in fear of the militia and the forthcoming attack by the national army. When the fighting started, many were displaced and went through much suffering. The diocese was affected because all the churches, schools and health centres in Bukiringi and Isura archdeaconries were displaced and lost property. But gradually life is returning to normal. The Bunia-Boga road is open and we thank God that calm is returning.

The diocese too has been challenged by a conflict between the Bishop and some Christians from Bunia. The conflict escalated and in July a commission of inquiry of three bishops came to Bunia.

Since then, much has been done to restore peace and reconciliation in the diocese. In September we held a pastors' retreat in Boga to redefine our vision, our mission,



our values and objectives. We examined the history of the diocese to identify our strengths and weaknesses. Participants committed themselves to work in conformity with our vision, mission, values and objectives. Further meetings will be organised to draw up a strategic plan. The second activity was a conference organised with Flame International. The theme was forgiveness and restoration from the bonds that keep us away from God, bring curses on our society and our land and affect the church. Many people asked for prayer for deliverance. The message was taken to the army barracks and many came to be prayed for!

In November, we hosted a conference by a SOMA team from England, Kenya and Uganda on the theme of making

the Kingdom visible. Many were touched, confessed and made a commitment to live as children of the Kingdom of God. At the closing service, someone brought witchcraft fetishes to be burnt. That has not happened in our church



for years. Some were shocked and threatened to leave the church. But they are still there and more people are coming! Towards the end of the year, we had two fruitful meetings in Bunia that brought reconciliation between those involved in the conflict in the diocese, a desire for mutual forgiveness and a commitment to build peace. This brought together the Archbishop, Bishop, clergy and laity. To God be the glory!

Kisangani in brief

Bishop Funga

Ven. Kithoko Kabange, who gave loyal service as director of ISTAS Mahagi, has returned to Kisangani. He has since had a stroke. Please pray for his recovery.

From mid-February I will spend a month travelling round the diocese, doing confirmation services and ordaining 23 deacons. I will also visit Ibole Health Centre, 200km from Kisangani, which was built with Spanish assistance, and has 17 rooms and a maternity ward.

The diocese has just bought a second-hand Jeep to enable the diocesan schools coordinator to visit our 137 primary and secondary schools.

Advance Notice

CCA AGM - 11th October, 2014

To be held in Cambridge (venue to be announced later)

Come and hear first-hand reports from across DR Congo

News from Kindu

Bishop Masimango Katanda

We express profound gratitude to all our friends, colleagues and partners whose faithful support and commitment helped us to overcome the odds we encountered in ministry last year. We are particularly grateful to God for the Congo Church Association's ministry.

On the 30th December, Kindu Airport was attacked by an armed group and five people were killed. The security situation is now improved and people are moving normally without fear. It was in this situation that the Diocese lost all the computers and printers provided for its Cyber café project during a well-planned armed robbery. We praise God who saved the life of the watchman.

Bishop Masimango Katanda was recognised as an Ambassador for Peace by the Universal Peace Federation during a ceremony led by its General Secretary, Mr. Michel Futila di Mayeko on 21st December. This is a great privilege for me for which I praise God. I will lead a conference debate in February on "Religion: source of conflict, resource for Peace," attended by politicians, civil society leaders and church leaders.



Busy, busy, busy in Bukavu Diocese

Revd Muhindo Matabaro

Youth

Rev Bisoke Balikenga, Provincial Youth Coordinator, visited Bukavu Diocese in September and discussed the priorities of the Youth Department with Bishop Bahati Bali-Busane Sylvestre, the Diocesan Youth staff members and Coordinator Rev Muhindo Matabaro Jean Paul. Together, they planned a possible youth leaders' training seminar in July 2014 in Bukavu.

Mothers' Union



To promote gender equality and to fight against poverty, the Mothers' Union of Bukavu, with support from the Provincial MU, organised a workshop for 18 people, training them to run adult literacy activities and fight poverty. Bp Bahati distributed the certificates.

The Mothers' Union also continues to work with rape victims, organising counselling, vocational training, microcredit etc. to enable them to recover their dignity in society and their families.



Evangelism

Before the end of 2013, Bishop Bahati visited parishes in Bukavu, Lac Kivu and Goma Archdeaconries to confirm new believers. Wherever he celebrated Holy Communion, he called on people to promote peace by prayer and loving each other.

In November, a Soma UK team led by Rev David McDougall held a conference on the theme "Ministering under the Holy Spirit". The participants were pastors, their wives, lay leaders and Diocesan Staff members from all over Bukavu Diocese.



Peace Lobbying programme

Bukavu Diocese is involved in the Peace Lobbying Programme described on page 1.

Theological Training

The Diocese continues to train priests and evangelists at Bukavu, Rutshuru and Bangwe Bible schools. In November, 45 students successfully completed the 7th module. The 8th module will start in February 2014. 8 other students continue their theological training, 3 at UAC in Bunia, the others at local universities.

News from UAC

Revd Canon Sabiti Tibafa

Praise God for this new academic year that started in October 2013. We started wondering whether we would have enough students as the State exams did not produce a good number of candidates to enter colleges and universities in the North-East of Congo. We thank God that we have in total 300 students and numbers keep growing. To keep this pace, we have opted to invest in bringing to the university more specialised professors to teach, something that gives us some reputation and the students some good quality teaching. E.g. in November 2013 Dr Kapajika Badibanga, from Lubumbashi

University, taught Mining and Geology; Dr Tshimombo Mwenda from Kinshasa University teaches Civil Engineering; Bishop Titre Ande teaches Theology; Rt Revd Dr Marini Bodho, President of the Church of Christ in Congo, teaches Old Testament Exegesis in the Theology post-graduate degree programme. This is expensive, but necessary. With the two blocks of lecture rooms, the first with 4 lecture rooms and the second with 2 lecture rooms, we are now able to house at least 80% of our students for lectures.

Please pray for us because the problem of finances still haunts and bogs us down in spite of the fees we get from students and the bursaries we get from donors: the financial aid we get from outside has gone down by 35%.

Katanga Diocese

Bishop Kasima Munu Corneille

Kalemie episcopal area consists of six archdeaconries in the north of Katanga Diocese, under Asst. Bishop Elisha Tendwa. By the grace of God much has been achieved in Kalemie:



(a) Bishop, pastors, evangelists, and Christians have worked hard to evangelise people. Many have received Jesus as their saviour. 25 were baptised and 31 confirmed; (b) in July 2013, 6 new deacons from 3 different archdeaconries were ordained (see left);

(c) Christian marriage teaching is needed in Kalemie. We thank God that last year we held 25 marriages services.

We expect to build offices for the diocesan development officer, evangelism coordinator, MU, youth, finance officer and the Bishop.

Kalemie MU is organising advocacy training for 150 women and girls in Kalemie and Manono. They are victims raped by the Mai Mai rebels who also killed some of their parents. The women must provide for themselves and their children, so to help them we need funds to buy sewing machines and start training in sewing.

Aru Diocese

Bishop Titre Ande

In 2013 we increased our teaching for social transformation; used our Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission to speak up for the voiceless in our society, who had often been badly treated by certain state organisations; organised a conference for young people to motivate them in Christ's service; established churches in Watsa and Faradje and started evangelism in Dungu.



As the church spreads, so we need more leaders. Last year we ordained 5 priests and 12 deacons, and we are training more in order to open 8 new parishes in 2014.

The Diocesan Council encouraged the Diocese to set up small practical schemes to improve pastors' living conditions, such as solar panels for lighting and water tanks, to save their families long journeys to fetch water.

20 heads of schools and diocesan departments received leadership training, producing a three-year strategic plan. This training will continue over four years.

Insecurity caused by militias restricted our work in Kumuru Archdeaconry, especially in three parishes. The Christians and their pastors have had to flee their homes several times, but are now starting to return.

Diocese of North Kivu

Bishop Isesomo

We thank Almighty God for his protection during the year and for the following activities completed in January:

a capacity building workshop for dentists from different denominations and from S. Kivu, N. Kivu, Ituri & Uganda, led by Australian dentist Graham Toulmin and his team;

the Bishop visited Rwenzori & Muramba archdeaconries in the Rwenzori Mountains. 171 people were confirmed, 86 received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and 52 women were enrolled in the Mothers' Union;

the Bishop met military commanders to plan a training course for military chaplains, hopefully in February;

the Mothers' Union completed the training of 21 women in tailoring and recruited more beginners for the course. They have also started the following activities in Butembo Central Prison which holds more than 400 prisoners: tailoring, knitting, literacy, making soap, baking bread and weaving baskets as well as sharing the word of God.

we organised an ecumenical service in our cathedral for Anglicans and Catholics. It was attended by 60 catholic priests, 24 nuns and 293 lay Catholics, as well as the Mayor of Butembo;

We encouraged people to pray for unity and peace, both in our churches and in our country.

Diocese of Kasai

Bishop Marcel Kapinga

Leadership course in Nairobi: In October Bishop Marcel Kapinga travelled to Nairobi to participate in the course in Leadership in the African Church, organised by the All Africa Council of Churches. This was his first training since he became Bishop of the Diocese of Kasai and Bishop Marcel would value more opportunities to travel abroad to broaden his knowledge.

Training Women as Literacy Teachers: In every Diocese the Provincial MU offers training for women as literacy teachers. In Kasai, 8 women were trained in November by Provincial MU Secretary Josephine Masuka. Each of them is expected to train another 25, giving us 200 women who will be able to offer literacy courses at any church.

Diocesan Synod: Kasai Diocese has been in existence for 3 years. According to the Diocesan Constitution, a Synod should therefore have been held in 2013, but we lacked the funds. So we want instead to meet in July 2014, though the little money we have will be used to travel to the Archdeaconries of Muene-Ditu, Lupata and Kabinda to ordain priests and deacons, as we have already done in the other 6 archdeaconries.

St Marcel Hospital:

The Diocese has set up a hospital at Mbujimayi in a rented building and run by well qualified personnel. CCA helped the Centre with £1,500 to purchase equipment and medicines, but more is needed to cover the rent of the building, payment of staff and



The hospital team

purchase of other materials before it can produce a surplus. The Diocese of Kasai offers its sincere thanks to the CCA for its help, which demonstrates its concern for growth of our Diocese in particular and of the Anglican Church in general.

Training of youth trainers: In December Jean Bosco Tshiswaka from Lubumbashi, Provincial Youth Assistant Co-ordinator, came and ran a training course for young people. The course brought together 20 young people from all over the Diocese, who in turn can train more young people in their own regions.

Finally, we thank everyone who has sustained us in prayer, particularly the CCA for its praiseworthy gift to us.

Praise and prayer

Aru: Pray for displaced people from Kumuru as they return home and re-start their lives. Pray too for the planned celebrations of the diocese's 10th anniversary, giving thanks for all God has done.

Bukavu: Pray for the Flame International Conference in March and the synod in July. Give thanks for the church's ministry among those displaced by war and for the growing calm in the region.

Province: Give thanks for the spread of ENP and for all those who have been empowered by it. Pray that the Great Lakes Peace Campaign by the Anglican and RC Churches will have real effect

Kasai: Thanks for the training courses held for young people and for women literacy teachers. Pray for the new church hospital in Mbujimayi as it serves the community with limited resources.

Kisangani: Ask God to heal Ven. Kithoko, ex-director of the youth training centre in Mahagi, who is seriously ill and partly paralysed. Pray for Bp Funga as he travels round the diocese in Feb/March.

Boga: Praise God for reconciliation in the conflict in the diocese and pray that the church may now be able to move forward. Pray too for a growth in peace in the region.

Kindu: Give thanks for the opening up of trade links with the rest of the country and the consequent improvement in the local economy and people's lives. Pray for the church's new 5-year plan.

UAC: Pray for Canon Sabiti and his staff as they battle with limited finances and the need to grow the university. Give thanks for the gifts that have allowed them to build more lecture rooms.

North Kivu: Praise God for Bp Isesomo's work training army chaplains; pray for their ministry among the soldiers. Pray for peace in Kamango and for the many who have had to flee their homes.

Katanga: Pray for Bishop Elisha as he establishes the work of the church around Kalemie; for the newly ordained deacons beginning their ministry and the work of the Kalemie MU among victims of rape.

Kinshasa and Brazzaville: Pray for the continuing work of evangelism in Kinshasa Diocese and that the church in Congo Brazzaville may grow in strength.

Agape: Pray for the youth training centre at Mahagi. Pray for Revd. Bisoke and for his plans to visit the young people in other dioceses, including the planned seminar in Bukavu.