

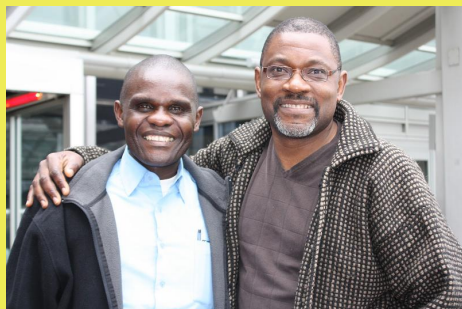


"But there are people there, too!"

Update on DRC Crisis (Dec. 7)

### CPC Hosts Learning Event

[Christ Presbyterian Church](#) (CPC) of Edina, Minnesota is one of our strongest church partners. On December 2, CPC hosted a gathering, together with the [American Refugee Committee](#) (ARC), to provide an update on recent events in eastern DRC. CPC has been deeply engaged in DRC with partners like Congo Initiative since 2005. Over 50 people from CPC have traveled to Goma and Beni through trips and service opportunities. ARC is a global humanitarian organization specializing in disaster relief and has been working with displaced Congolese people since 1997. They are currently exploring economic development initiatives in DRC and mobilization of the Congolese diaspora around the United States.



CPC Mission Pastor and CI Board member Paul Tshihamba (R) with UCBC Academic Dean Honoré Bunduki Kwany (L)

To learn more, go to CPC's [Restoring Hope: Congo](#) web page.

Dear Friends and Partners,

As many of you are probably aware, M23 withdrew its forces from Goma last weekend with the expectation of forthcoming negotiations with the Congolese government. Those negotiations are scheduled to begin today. We understand the situation in Goma at this point in time to be very fluid, at times chaotic, with a significant amount of uncertainty for the Congolese people. Bear in mind, also, that for a context such as DRC, food shortages and disease are very real outcomes of any sort of conflict, owing to the displacement of thousands of people. We encourage you to exercise continued vigilance in prayer for and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in DRC, particularly in Goma and the surrounding areas.

Some of you have had the unforgettable privilege of hearing our founder Dr. David Kasali speak in person. When narrating the story of God's call upon him and his wife Dr. Kaswera Kasali to return to DRC after years of living abroad in the US and then Kenya, David recounts an initial conversation between himself and Kaswera:



Mathy, Executive Assistant to Dr. Kasali

David: "I want to go home."

Kaswera: "Home where?"

David: "Home to Congo."

Kaswera: "But there is war there!"

David: "Yes, there is war. But there are people there, too."

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Our best attempts to understand and analyze the current crisis facing DRC fall short of satisfactory answers. We come face to face with a context that has so many layers and dimensions. Confusion can easily set in and overwhelm us, even paralyze us. Amidst our hand-wringing, how easy it is for us to forget about the daily lives and aspirations of the ordinary people who are caught up in the crisis, through no fault or desire of their own. DRC is a context that has been forgotten by much of the world, its history too painful to swallow. The spike in news reports owing to the latest crisis jolts awake our attention and concern. Now we are engaged. Now we are aware. But of what? The conflict? The political maneuvering? The statistics?

"But there are people there, too!" Our passion and work at CI is to engage in the long-term renewal of DRC, not because it is the latest report in the news cycle, nor because it was once described as the "heart of darkness." Instead, we know a different DRC. One that is filled with hope and potential for transformation. We know its people to be those who long for change. People like UCBC student Bekwenano, who shared the following just a few weeks ago:

*As I was fond of transforming spiritually, intellectually, and trying to find how others are learning to develop their communities, I found that CI-UCBC would be an ideal institution for my transformation. I could not afford the school fees, even though my father was alive, there was no way for me to study. But I eagerly kept asking God in my daily prayers to allow me to join this new way of life. One year after my father died, God opened the way for me to join UCBC, just as an answer to my prayers. How marvelous it is, being a student at UCBC for a special transformation!*



Movers and carpenters instrumental in setting up UCBC's current library space

*Thinking about UCBC's motto "Being transformed to transform:" when I am transformed I am going to transform my family, my community, and finally all my country. At UCBC, I really feel the transformation which exists in all levels. So, I am determined with God's help to bring my contribution for the progress of UCBC in different levels. CI-UCBC will be the brain and eyes of the development of the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

Thank you for standing with us, with Bekwenano, and with the people of DRC. You are a big part of this work. And you are part of what enables Bekwenano and the rest of our 500+ students to pursue their dreams for lasting change in DRC.



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