

Dr Eraston's trip to Kisangani 2021 and the Call to action to Care for Creation through a holistic Gospel



The rafia sandals gift to Eraston in Kisangani, dec 2021

Introduction

"We loved you so much that we shared with you not only the Good News but our own lives, too," 2 Thes 2:8 b (ASB)

Dear praying friends and partners,

This verse motivated us to travel to Kisangani last month and speak to Christian union leaders. As I wrote in my latest prayer letter, the IFES /student's movement organized the mission conference for Eastern Congo in Kisangani from Dec 26-to 30, 2021. I was invited as the guest speaker for this so-called CMCE 3rd edition. Kisangani (in north eastern Congo) has one of the three largest oldest universities with over 8,000 students (half) of them living on campus. Because of the need for the Congolese mission force to be prepared from campuses and CU I traveled to Kisangani and enjoyed

spend four days and night with around 80 Christian Unions' leaders in a camp speaking and challenging them for the urgency of winning the Congolese campuses (which are unreached) with the gospel. In the following few lines, I describe the Kisangani trip and events.

Mission camp at plateau Boyoma

It's been 15 years since I first run a mission training camp at the University of Kisangani which launched the first IFES Christian Union in 2004. The week between Xmass and New year 2022 I joined the student movement which had organized a Mission camp at St Joseph at Plateau Boyoma in Kisangani. As the speaker for the mission conference, not only I gave three lectures addressing topics such as (1) the Challenges of God's mission in the context of crisis, (2) Holistic mission in times of crisis, and (3) The Church and Mission: Obstacles and Ways out for a qualitative growth of the Christian missions in the university setting, but also, in a workshop, I engaged participants in interacting with the university. Then the last night, I shared with these Christian union leaders my journey into missions in DRD and some insights from my family commitment to God's missions in the DRC context as we equip and prepare a new generation of mission-minded believers for cross-cultural ministries, 24 of them came forward and responded to the call to missions. They decided to go back to their university and reach out to their colleagues as they will be utilizing their time as students as a training opportunity to discipling the nations before embarking into a mission-minded ministry through their future ventures.

It is good to note that Bible expositions on the book of Joel were led by our brother Nesmy Mve Nguema from Gabon through the IFES francophone online platform. Nesmy identified the biblical response to the Crisis in the time of prophet Joel, thus called participants to action in DRC.

Sarah, a newly appointed deputy secretary for the Tshopo province student movement wrote the following: *Thank you for these moments that you spent with us. Your teachings and all that you have shared with us have left a deep impression on me and have helped me to develop this thirst to serve God, to love Him and to give myself to Him. Please, if possible, I would like you to come back and continue to teach us because I know that you did not finish sharing your testimony. I am available for God to use me for revival (among students) for His glory. We hope to see you again by the grace of God.*

Another student enjoyed the camp and wrote me this: *"I noticed in you one thing that touched me enormously, the fact that you evangelize time and time again, even in the smallest details, in everything you do, at every opportunity you think to place the word of God to win souls, this struck me, touched me, and I would really like you to share these experiences with me please really."* As we aim at involving Christian leaders to engage the universities with the Gospel, we desire to engage both the students and scholars in a dynamic that pragmatically engage the university for the Gospel.



Opening session by Aristide



Eraston leading a workshop on Engaging the university at St Joseph



With students in front of the Admin bloc of the University of Kisangani



Wagenia students' hostel-Eraston was hosted here 14years ago

Care of creation and field visit

As the second day, Dr Eraston Kighoma dealing with integral mission focused his teaching on the urgency to serve and join God in the restoration of the relationship of the congolese people with God, with self, with others in a conflict community, and with creation. In light of 2 Thessalonians 2:8, he called Christian student to a ministry of service and love in a broken world in which, even the creation is "awaiting the manifestation of the sons and daughters of God" (the Bible) who need to act for its restoration.

Participants decided to visit the biological zoo located at the exit of the city. Since the start of the university of Kisangani this natural forest accommodated wild protected spices of animals among which baboons, monkeys, a lion, tortoises, crocodiles, and snakes. During wars the Ugandan troops killed the lion and this park remained with few animals which are to date not well protected. It was a shock for students to realize that DRC has such great sites that fit to educate the next generation on the need to care for creation. Most students had never had the experience of seeing a live wild animal but always eat wild meet as it is sold publicly on the market. As I travelled back from Kisangani I almost cried as I saw ladies selling wild meet in the airport ground to travellers.

Another practice affecting the creation is that, because of the heat in Kisangani which is around 40 degree Celsius, water is sold in paper bags which are always thrown on the ground. The city looks almost as a dustbin to the expense of dear lives of common citizens who are bitten by mosquitos which overcrowd rooms.



In a natural forest, Kisangani natural zoo with students , Dec 2021



A baboon called Carol



Praying for care of creation in DRC and thanking God for the lady (in blue clothes) who works wholeheartedly to care for the race species here.

A call to action

A call to continue mentoring the university Christian world to carry on the urgent missions to disciple this cross-cultural university world was made by the IFS/DRC general secretary, Aristide, to Dr Eraston Kighoma. A raffia pair of sandals was offered to him in remembrance of this call. “ You have been a pioneer of missions in our region, especially in the IFES movement. We know , when you served with IFES you bore liking shoes due to the pain and suffering you joyfully accepted. In our nation, it is a King who wear raffia sandals. By offering you these sandals as our humble gift we want to tell you that we do need your leading and mentorship of a pioneer like you. It is our prayer that you open new doors and field for missions and continue pointing us to the direction.”, said Aristide.

As I came back I was sick with a bit of malaria but my heart was full of the conviction that our ministry need to something in equipping Christian unions’ leaders on integral mission and care of creation. The students huge population of this city (most of them accommodated in hostels on campuses) is such a wonderful opportunity to invest in the next generation and gain the university world in Congo for Christ through a holistic and transformational work in Kisangani. Furthermore, Kisangani is a gateway city for Isiro, Bumba, Lubutu, Nyanya, and other provinces of Nothern and Northeastern DRC. Therefore, investing in the equipment of the mission force from Kisangani is worth preparing a cross-cultural missionary endeavors that will reach the unreached areas of DRC surch as Niangara where the Mbororo have established their homes. In that vein need we need to organize the following mission work in Kisangani:

1. Organize a training on Evangelism, Discipleship and holistic Ministry (EDM) for the 25 Christian unions’ leaders and IFES leadership targeting the campuses of Kisangani
2. Organizing a mobilization conference on Care for creation in Kisangani with Christian leaders (university, church, and the National institute of conservation). This one will aim at calling these groups to team up for care of creation and encourage livelihoods activities (livestocking, farming God’s way, etc.) and thus, reduce the destruction of creation and protected species.
3. Organize a summer camp for Christian unions and youth leaders in Kisangani on the approach of *Oasis of hope for holistic and transformational ministries* in the context of that region.

The flights to Kisangani from Goma are not expensive. This will allow the CIMR team to effectively launch this work in Kisangani and involved the body of Christ into a holistic and transformational work with a minimum of \$13,450 to reach the above objectives. Please partner with us in starting this new adventure to save the creation and work for the restoration of the SHALOM in the Tshopo province and the surroundings.

We so so grateful that some of you contributed to our trip to Kisangani and that we were able to be a channel of blessing to the next generation.

Every blessing



Dr Eraston Kighoma, PhD

Centre for Intercultural Missions and Research

Few Other photos



Students ,tired and sweting , drinking water from paperbags made in Kisangani @ UNIKIS campus



Few students admiring the baboon



On the Tshopo river bridge with two Christian union's leaders(Dec 2021)



Participants crossing the Rice farm to the students hostels.