
Mamy & Ruth's CHAT

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from Sweden

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Dear friends,

I love to make plans and know where I'm heading, but Covid 19 makes that very difficult! The other day I found myself singing this song from my childhood:

*"I know who holds the future
And He'll guide me with His hand.
With God things don't 'just happen' –
Everything by Him is planned."*

How comforting to remember that God's got everything in hand, with so many unplanned things happening! Here's a summary of our lives since we last wrote:

- ❖ **April:** Working from home in Congo-Brazzaville, under lockdown. Mamy's mission decides to bring their missionaries home to Sweden – not because virus cases in Congo are rocketing (they still aren't), but because of poor medical facilities, should we get sick. But no flights. Trying to help friends who can no longer earn their living.
- ❖ **May:** We buy tickets for an Air France repatriation flight on 17th May.
- ❖ **16th May:** The French government tells Air France to reduce the number of passengers to respect social distancing, so we are no longer on the flight! But lockdown is now partially lifted, so we can meet up again with friends and colleagues after 6 weeks. The Bible translators can return to work in the office, once it's been well disinfected. Hand washing facilities are a typical sight outside shops and offices.
- ❖ **8th June:** We finally get on a flight to leave Brazzaville and make an epic masked journey (see photo) via Kinshasa, Paris, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, to Sweden.
- ❖ **Rest of June:** Our church family in Gislaved help us through our 2 weeks of quarantine (A big thanks to all of you!), and we are still healthy ☺, despite the spike of virus cases



hitting this part of Sweden. We are working remotely now, sharing Tomas' flat, and enjoying summer weather. Mamy does exegetical checking of Ecclesiastes & 2nd Kings via Skype with the Kituba translators in Congo.

- ❖ **July:** Back in Brazzaville, it's a big change for **Andrea Ebengue, my friend and colleague of 25 years in Congo (left)**, as she moves back to Germany with her kids, for their higher education and to look after elderly parents. We will miss you lots! This means that at SIL-Congo we are losing our language programmes coordinator and will need to find someone else for the job. Easier said than done...



❖ **July:** In Sweden, it turns out to be one of the coldest Julys on record (brrr!). I discover the data I have for doing linguistic write-ups is inadequate, and I need to spend hours on Skype also, working with colleagues in Congo to get better data. Progress is slow. We take breaks, helping to harvest blueberries, red currants and cloudberries.



❖ **August:** Summer temperatures return to Sweden! In Congo, now that religious meetings of up to 50 people are allowed, churches are starting to re-open, but sadly, the Evangelical Church of Congo (to which Mamy is seconded when in Congo) is going through turbulent times, with major conflicts at the leadership level.

❖ **On a more positive note,** our co-trainers for the marriage course in Brazzaville are relaunching this year's course which has one month left to run. The couples are happy to be back, and one couple already got married last month! We are sad not to be part of it, but can sometimes have Whatsapp contact with the couples we were mentoring.

❖ **24th August:** Brazzaville airport should re-open to international flights!

So what next? It seems we may need to be patient for a while longer before returning to Congo, and we will be discussing with our missions over coming weeks. With stage 2 of Brexit approaching, we also wonder how this will affect us – the local hospital here tried to charge me a much higher rate for a routine blood test – I had to insist that this only applies next year when the UK has fully left the EU. We would like to visit the UK before returning to Congo, to possibly get pre-settled status for Mamy, but there's quarantine... More questions than answers at the moment! ***I know who holds the future...***

We would appreciate your prayers for Congo, for those struggling with the economic consequences of Covid 19 restrictions, for the church, the marriage course, someone to replace Andrea at SIL-Congo, and for decisions regarding our return there. We are grateful for all God's provision for us here in Sweden. **Please keep in touch, so that we can**

better pray for you too! With our love,

Ruth & Mamy

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