River of Life

It is a bright October morning as we climb aboard a bright blue boat with red trim for a journey down the Congo River. It looks like a small house set on four hollowed-out tree trunks. Written in red letters across her front is "Bateau Ambulance"—ambulance boat. The river is breathtaking, life-giving. At scheduled intervals, the river carries a medical team from the Bolenge Hospital, a Global Ministries partner, to villages along its shore that are otherwise cut off from health care. The entire village is at the river’s edge to greet us. Getting up the riverbank is tricky, but we manage, encouraged by the warmth and joy of the people.

Following the river for some yards are dwellings and a small chapel/school. The villagers have given up their homes for the hospital while the medical team is in town.

Next to the chapel is a tent, a surgical theatre tent where they have been operating since 3:00 AM with the most basic equipment and what sterilization they can manage. They will be there until they can see to the line of patients waiting most of the day under a large tree.

We are introduced to Dr. Yoursen Bosolo Ekula, the Congolese physician who coordinates medical services from the Bolenge Hospital, including the ambulance boat and other Bolenge clinics throughout region. Later, in a video interview, Dr. Bosolo Ekulaw offered these words of thanks:

“We are grateful and thankful to Global Ministries, and pray that our God will bless you. And that Global Ministries will continue to have the necessary funds/means to help us complete our dream that this hospital and health center become an important teaching resource in this region of the Congo. God bless you, Global Ministries, and thank God for your partnership in this dream.”

Rev. Elizabeth Clement recently traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for Global Ministries. She served as French translator and interpreter for seminary pastors from Haiti visiting the Congo who were there exploring a collaborative partnership.

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