

# Baliesima's Story



## Where you were born and who was in your family?

My name is Baliesima Kadukima Albert and I am married to Vira Martha. We have been blessed with 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. I was born at Nobili in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 2 October 1962 in a poor family of 20 children.

Both my father and mother are still alive and I praise God for them. My father had several wives. His main occupation was agriculture and hunting. He believed in the spirits of his ancestors and he usually offered sacrifices to them when he thought there was need for it (eg. successive deaths in the family). My father and elder brothers trained me in cultivation and hunting and I enjoyed these two activities until I had to leave my village to pursue the last three years of primary school. During that time I stayed with my grandmother.

After primary school I left to attend secondary school in the closest town, Beni (86 km from my village) where I was welcomed by people of different tribes from mine. This was the beginning of a very hard life for me as I had to struggle sponsoring my studies by myself from Secondary school up to University.

## How did you become a Christian?

A dream came to me in the form of my grandfather (who had died before I was born) who asked me to get baptised because there was a judgement waiting for any person who was not baptised. I was convinced it was God's call and I made the decision to be baptised in the Anglican Church in 1981 in my home parish.

But the baptism did not change much in my life. I was still attracted by evil things, so I decided to become a choir member thinking that this activity could help to make me holy, but in vain. I decided to stop because it did not help my behaviour to change, and also because I had to work hard to sponsor my studies.

When I joined the University in Kisangani (800 km from my home), I resumed choir activities because I had to stay with the Bishop's family, as I had no money to sponsor my stay on the campus. I had to work in the evening to get enough money for my school fees and all the other requirements. I thought for me to be part of the Bishop's family I had to join the choir where all the Bishop's children were singing. But still I could not feel the presence of Jesus in my life.

One day we were practicing a song that said: "It is up to you boy/girl to fight and defy the Evil Satan, and your victory is certain... God himself will take a towel and dry up your tears and sufferings... He will say: You are most welcome, my beloved children..."

I was convinced I was the one whom God was calling to declare a war against Satan and I said "Here I am God, use me for your purpose". The following day was a Sunday and I gave my testimony to the congregation. Since then, God started using me in different ministries including preaching, leading choir groups, leading young christian couples, lay leader, etc.

## What studies you have done?

I got my first degree in Business Administration and Economics in Kisangani (DRC) then a Masters degree in Public Health at Makerere University in Kampala (Uganda).

## What do you do in your job?

You have to understand that in DRC we have had a savage civil war for 8 years or more and there is no government-assisted health program. It has been left to the churches to care for people, both in health and education. My work has been in the Anglican Church's attempt to provide health care for the millions of suffering local people in the areas where we have churches and I am now the Provincial Coordinator for the Anglican Church. The Provincial Health and HIV/AIDS Department of the Anglican Church aims to coordinate, encourage and support the work done in all the dioceses round the whole country of the DRC.

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Dr. Brett Newell

From 1987-1994 I worked as Director of Medical Services for the Anglican Church Diocese of North Kivu in the east of (as it was then) Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo). During my last 3 years in that position, I was ably assisted on the administrative side by a Zairois colleague, Baliesima Kadukima.

Although Baliesima had had no formal medical training, he continued to work for the Anglican Medical Service following my departure from the country, and subsequently studied for and went on to obtain a Masters Degree in Public Health from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, graduating in November 2003. Following his graduation, he was appointed Director of Medical Services for the Anglican Church Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the position which he currently holds.

With the help of some overseas aid monies, including donations from the Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Relief and Aid Fund (ORAF) and Brass For Africa (an Australian charity set up initially to assist medical and dental work in the DRC), he has worked to help organise the provision of health care to a large population in an area ravaged by war and famine.

His work has included organising and holding AIDS education seminars and teaching sessions on a wide range of health topics, in villages and towns throughout the eastern Congo, as well as the administrative work involved in running a substantial network of health centres in the region, ministering in the name of Christ and His church - all of this in the context of poverty, disease, and a conflict which has claimed over the years, on conservative estimates, some three million lives.

Baliesima & Grodya ... **July 6 – August 12**

Ise-somo (to be confirmed) ... **October 20 – November 30**

## Baliesima's Story

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At the moment I am overseeing 1 hospital, the preparation of 2 referral hospitals at Kamango and Mabalako, and 51 Health Centres.

We are involved in the following activities:

- Rehabilitation of war-affected Health Centres
- The provision of drugs and medical supplies
- Training of HIV/AIDS trainers and activists
- AIDS and War Orphans support
- Psycho-social support to PLWHA (Persons living with HIV/AIDS)
- HIV voluntary testing and counselling
- HIV/AIDS school youth sensitisation

### What are the joys and difficulties in trying to do your job?

**Joys:** I feel joyful to contribute in alleviating people's pains and suffering, and in contributing to finding solutions to people's health problems. I feel good when I help people who suffer, and restore their hope for the future.

**Difficulties:** I feel very bad and frustrated coming across orphans and other vulnerable children when I am not in the position to help solve some of their basic needs eg inaccessibility to medical care like Anti-Retro Viral medication for AIDS patients has been one of the biggest challenges making me feel I am doing nothing. I feel sad to see thousands of people dying from easily preventable illnesses.

### What projects you would like help with?

The main ones I would really like some help with are

- Orphans and other vulnerable children Care and Support.
- Nutritional and medical support of PLWHA.
- Rehabilitation of war-affected Health centres.
- Providing clean water and sanitation.

### Who has helped you in your work?

• A major supporter has been The Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Relief & Aid Fund (ORAF). Both ORAF & BFA have provided us with funding to assist thousands of IDPs (Internally Displaced People) in Kanyabayongo and Kirumba in 2004.

- In 2005 BFA provided us with funding to help buy medicines for treatment of cholera cases in Kamango.
- BFA is supporting my visit to Australia.

Individuals in BFA and CMSA (the Church Missionary Society of Australia) are old friends of the Anglican Church of Congo in general and ourselves in particular. Dr Brett Newell, Dr Graham Toulmin



and Miss Maggie Crewes have played an important role in the genesis of the Medical and Dental work of the Anglican Church in Congo. Some of the members have supported us on an individual basis during the hardest time of this work in 2003. Spiritual support from BFA is contributing in blessing our work.

### What do you hope to gain by visiting Australia for this Congress?

I am looking forward to the exchange of experience with other people involved in Health and HIV/AIDS work across the world. It is really important in developing ideas for the work we do and it also encourages us knowing we are not alone – that there are other Christians around the world who are interested in supporting us in this strategic work to which God has called us. I look forward to making new friends and partners, and strengthening partnership with our already-existing partners like BFA, ORAF and the Rotary Club. Finally I am hoping to make our work known to others who might stand with us in this difficult work of bringing health and hope to the suffering nation of DR Congo.

## Grodya's Story

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As I heard testimonies of people repenting and being reconciled, and saw how happy they were, the Holy Spirit convinced me that if I also would repent, I would be forgiven and be freed from the bondage of my unrepented sin. I did that and re-dedicated my life to Jesus Christ.

Since that time I have had peace in Him. It does not spare me from difficulties, but still I have peace which does not depend on my circumstances. My advice to whoever might be reading this testimony is that if you are in a situation like the one I was in, please free yourself by repenting of your sins.

Read Roman 10:8-13 and may God bless you!

### About my studies:

From primary to senior school, I studied in Bunia, in the north-eastern part of Congo. After that I went to the Medical School run by the Anglican Church in Boga for 2 years and received my first Certificate of Public Health (Nurse).

I was chosen to go to Butembo to learn and work in the Dental Clinic there with Dr Graham Toulmin. After 2 years I was sponsored by C.M.S Australia to study for 4 years in the Dental school of the Nyankunde Evangelical Medical Centre, where I got my Diploma of Dental Assistant.

I am trusting God to open new doors for me to further my studies in the future so that I might be fully qualified to practice and teach dentistry in DR Congo.



**Brass For Africa** is a Ministry of Springwood Winmalee Anglican Church and is administered by a voluntary committee made up of the Senior Pastor Rev. Graham Crew, Ross Hall (Chairman & Congo Support Director), Graham Toulmin (Music Projects Director), Neville Thomas (Honorary Treasurer) and other committed members associated with the church.



Some of the  
2006 Committee

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