The TAMAR PROJECT

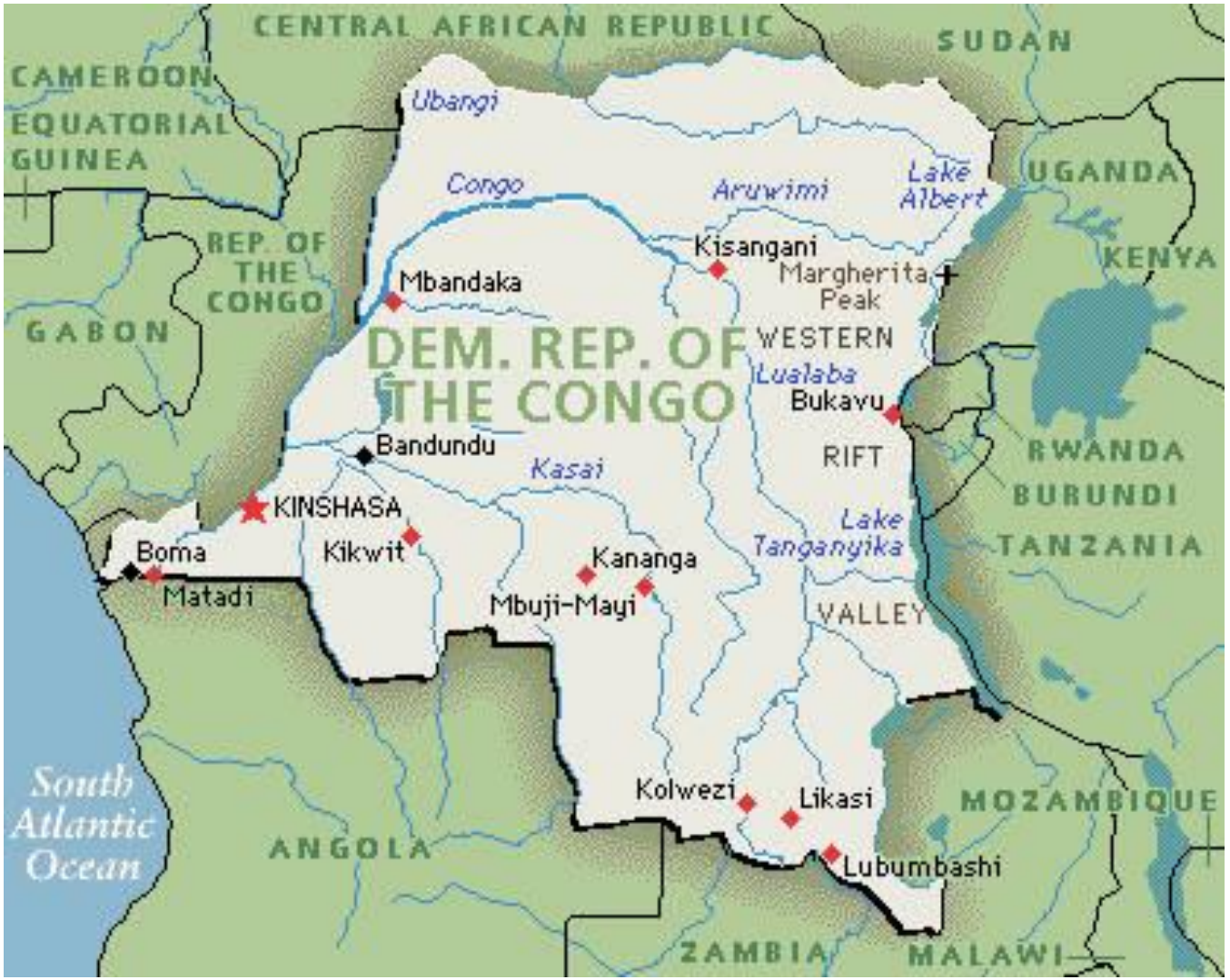
The Mothers' Union of the Diocese of BUKAVU, D. R. Congo

Supported by **Women-to-Women**
in the Diocese of Virginia and the
Diocese of Southern Virginia
& the **2013-14**
Special Outreach Project of the
ECW of the
Diocese of Southern Virginia

D. R. Congo

is the 2nd largest country in Africa

The Eastern border is in the Great Lakes Region of Africa



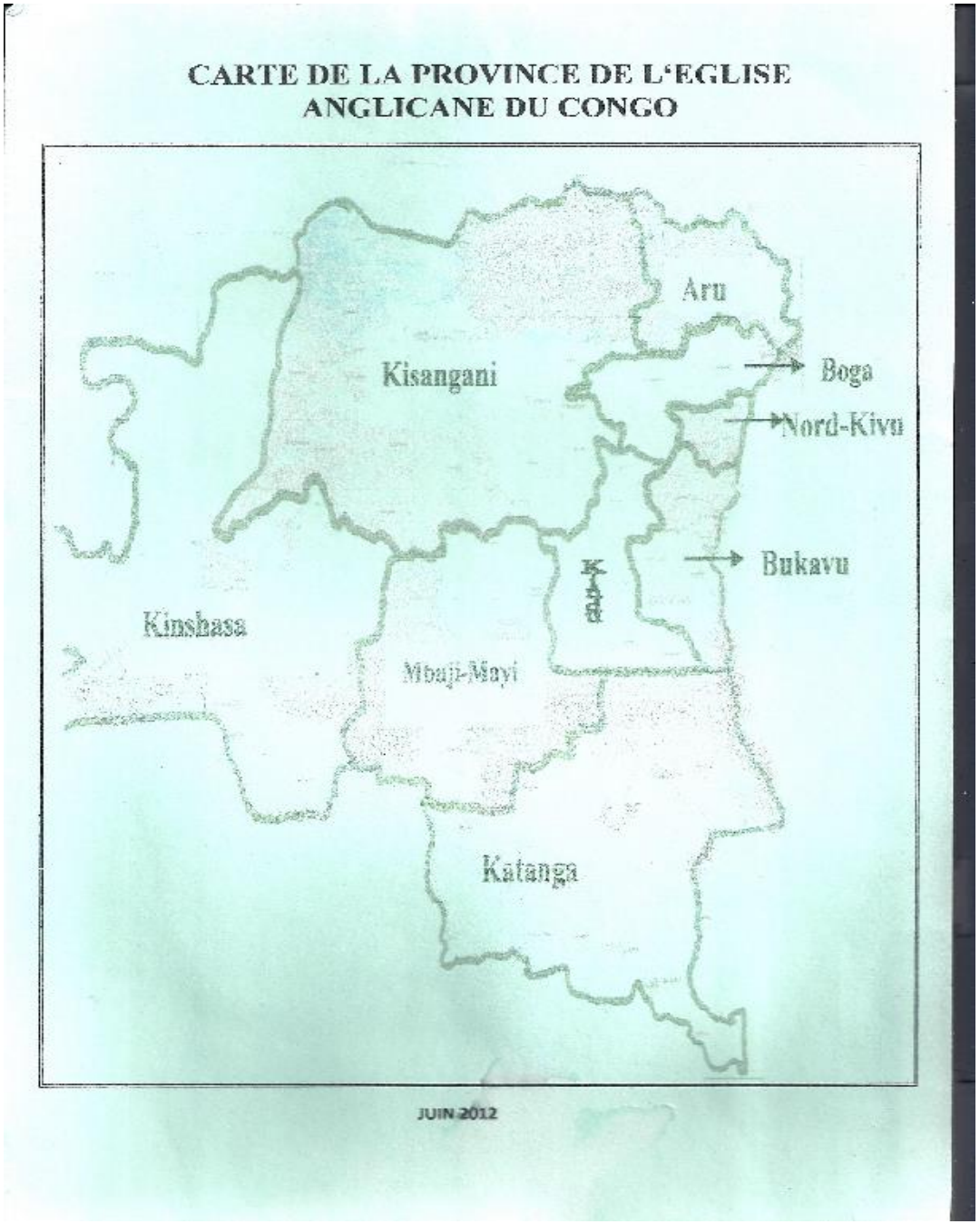
Apolo Kivebulaya
First Anglican missionary to Congo, 1896

Archbishop ISINGOMA Kahwa

An indigenous Anglican Church!

- 9 dioceses
- Vibrant work within the dioceses…
- and on the Provincial level, such as the Anglican University of Congo (UAC) with five departments including the original theological college

9 Dioceses in the Congo Church



War since 1997

- Congo has known war since the overthrow of President Mobutu in 1997.
- The Rwandan holocaust in 1994 caused huge problems with hundreds of thousands of displaced persons living in Congo, many the perpetrators of the holocaust!
- Tribal wars were exacerbated by these displaced persons and many formed militias.

The eastern region is beautiful and rich in minerals and agriculture.

20 - 30 militias have occupied eastern Congo for about 17 years.

Some of these militias or “negative forces” are sponsored by the Rwandan government

- Some are used to deflect attention from the cruel conditions in the mines and the theft of the minerals by other countries.

- **Gold, cassiterite, tungsten, and tantalum** are smuggled out of Congo through Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi which have few natural resources and whose GNPs have soared in the last decades.

Our participation because of the use of these essential minerals . . .

- Laptops, i-pads, video game consoles, video and digital cameras, mobile phones
- Airbags, ignition systems, GPS systems, anti-lock braking systems
- Hearing aids, pacemakers
- Jet engine/turbine blades, drill bits, end mills and other tools.

Hopeful news

- The most known militia, the M23, has been defeated by UN forces under the Brazilian General Alberto Dos Santos Cruz.
- This defeat has prompted other groups to begin to lay down their arms but not all have signed peace treaties.
- Much work remains in establishing a legal peace with justice and then, in rebuilding the country.

The Rape Capital of the World

- Yet, Congo still has the notoriety of being the “rape capital of the world”.
- Militias are generally blamed for using rape as a weapon of war to demoralize the population and destabilize society.
- According to professors at our University in Bunia, about 60% of rapes are due to militias and the rest by civilians in a dismembered society.
- This was unheard of in the 80’s and early 90’s.

Women and girls are raped; husbands and sons are often killed or kidnapped to work in the mines or become soldiers.

Some women are abandoned by their own families.

The Mothers' Union

Like our ECW, the Mothers' Union in Congo are women of the church who organize to enrich their lives and those of the Church.

Mme Veneranda Nyota BAHATI

Mme Bahati, the wife of Bishop Bahati of the Diocese of Bukavu, saw the need to help her wounded sisters in Christ and founded the TAMAR PROJECT in parishes in Bukavu city and in the village of Katana.

Women in Congo are strong!

The women of the church welcome their abused sisters with love and prayer,

medical assistance,

aid in finding lodging and food,

vocational training in tailoring, literacy and catering.

These tailoring and catering skills require reading and simple arithmetic, so women who are usually under-educated are learning skills to help them create new lives.

Children of these impoverished women are helped with school fees, uniforms, & supplies where possible.

Agro-pastoral training

Women at Katana parish receive training in agriculture and small animal husbandry.

(This picture was taken after harvest!)

Micro-credit loans

The Tamar Project in Bukavu offers micro-credit loans for the women after several months of belonging to the program.

How can we help?

Women to Women

Begun in the Diocese of Virginia after a 2012 trip to Congo, the Rev. Deacon Carey Chirico organized a group involving parishes throughout the diocese to support the work of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Bukavu.

The partnership Women-2-Women and the Tamar Project

The Mothers' Union establishes a budget to support the involved parishes and it is sent to Virginia.

Money is transferred from Richmond to Bukavu

Accounts are kept and the Mothers' Union reports annually on how the funds were used.

Funds raised by the Southern Virginia ECW and other groups . . .

are sent through the established channel in Richmond.

More sewing machines can be purchased.

Child care can be provided to free up these mothers.

Enough food and anti-malarials can be provided to those women in class and to their children.

What can we do?

- PRAY daily for these, the ‘poorest of the poor’
- Give through the ECW of Southern Virginia
- Join in the W2W work
- Encourage our Diocese to get involved further
- Learn more from the “Enough Project” and “Friends of the Congo” websites
- Although peace has begun, continue to advocate for peace with justice by contacting your representatives in Washington and the State Department

Aksante sana wakristo!

Thank you very much, Christians!