



I praise the Lord for he is so good! I am beyond grateful for each of you, who have prayed for me, the team, and those who attended the By His Wounds Conference in Uganda, Africa! As you know, the week before was the busiest for Indian Bible College with student showcase and graduation, then the following Monday I was on my flight to Entebbe, Uganda. During our second flight to Amsterdam, reality hit. I started to think, "Wow! I am really going to Africa and for the first time overseas! I will be without my husband and family to knowing no one!" Panicked, I began to feel my anxious thoughts take over. I reached out to my husband and my co-worker, Coreen, explaining what I was feeling and my need for comfort and reassurance. I began praying and reminding myself that God is with me like he promised. His sense of peace and comfort calmed my anxious thoughts and feelings. When we landed in Amsterdam, I had some time to talk with Luke and Coreen, and one simple reminder struck my heart that Coreen said: **"God is the only one that can comfort you, not your husband, not me, not anyone, only God."** I share this experience with you because as someone who is not adventurous and loves her safety bubble, it took a huge leap of faith in truly trusting the Lord. The rest of the flight was smooth, and I had no issues!



Dr. Kelsey, Dr. Ethie, and I landed in Entebbe, and met Stephen - the MTS Director of Uganda - and Tim, our driver. We stayed at Banana Village Guesthouse as we waited for Steve and Celestia Tracy to arrive. Their flight was delayed, so we had a day to rest and shop for what we needed. While driving through town, I remember thinking, **"Wow the land is beautiful, the people are beautiful!"** It felt like I was back on the Navajo reservation with everyone selling their goods on the side of the road, flea market style. We drove by Queen Victoria Lake, shopped at their local market, and learned how to use Ugandan shillings. We headed back to the guesthouse to rest and watched the little monkeys casually running around the property! I can't believe real monkeys were just outside my room, jumping from roof to roof, and climbing trees!



Steve and Celestia arrived that night, and in the morning, we had breakfast together. Surprisingly, it felt like home, meaning **I felt the Lord's peace, and a sense that this was where I was supposed to be.** I had the opportunity to share with the Uganda team what the Native staff at IBC have been working on, the Native version of Mending the Soul, and the artwork I created for it. They were blessed by the work the team is doing for the Indigenous people to receive healing through a material made specifically for them. The drive to Kibale was about 7 hours, then we stopped in Ft. Portal for dinner, and finally to Kibale Forest Lodges. The drive was beautiful because of the land, which was so green, filled with banana trees, fields of corn and tea! Homes made from red bricks and clay, men and women walking alongside the road, some carrying containers of water or food on their heads, and men using hand saws to cut trees down! I kept thinking, "Wow, these people are strong, and are very hard workers!"



The 10 of us fit perfectly in the van. As we were on our way to the camp, we had devo and prayer time together, and our two Congolese brothers would end with a song in their language. It was so beautiful! After driving on dirt roads for an hour and a half, we arrived at the Congolese church. At first only a few men were seated, but as worship began, chairs began to fill with more men and fewer women. It was very interesting to see that the women with their children sat in the back right corner. **The worship was different, I learned that Congolese people love to dance and sing and are known for their music.** It wasn't just standing there and clapping your hands, they were jumping, moving their feet, waving their hands, and some even picked up their chair and put it over their heads! The music was upbeat and fast! It was so beautiful to witness them have this joy and love to sing and dance for the Lord. It took me awhile to join in the dance but when I did it was fun!



Left to Right: Dr. Kelsey, Tina, Fred, Stephen, David, Moses, Dr. Ethie, Steve, and Justine



Pastor Uzima's church in the camp.

The first session began, and Steve Tracy introduced the team and the By His Wounds materials and lessons that would be taught during the week. Dr. Ethie, a physician from Phoenix, taught about group guidelines and ways we could be respectful in listening in the group. Then tea break catered by a local restaurant served tea, eggs, and pastry/bread.



During session 2, Stephen taught about how God created us in our original design, meaning who we are before trauma or abuse destroyed or tainted our identity. Justine, Uganda MTS staff, taught about the types of abuse and had the attendees do individual workbook exercises. Lunch was served- rice, spaghetti noodles, cooked spinach, beans, and bottle of soda. Everyone ate and mingled while local children peeked in from the doors and windows asking for some food.



Session 3 began- I introduced myself, but my translator did not know how to translate the words Native American or Navajo. Another translator stepped up, but he couldn't either. Finally, one of our team members told me that many don't know about the Natives in America and believe there are only rich white people in America. Despite that, I introduced my background, and how God created me in his original design. Dr. Kelsey, a professional counselor from Washington, taught about the Biological and Emotional impact from trauma, and David, Congo MTS director from Bunia, ended the teaching session with the Father's love letter and a Q&A session. Then back into the van, and back on the dirt road for an hour and a half to our lodge for dinner and debrief. This was the schedule for the next 6 days.

Each team member taught during the week on subjects like the role of Satan in trauma, shame, the spiritual and relational impact of trauma, lamenting, rebuilding intimacy with God, and the value of women. It was incredible to see how eager they were to learn and to share painful experiences. They were an amazing group of people, and I enjoyed every minute of it.





I've learned that the people of Congo come from many years of trauma and abuse from terrible leaders because of the richness of the land. In their soil, they have valuable minerals such as cobalt, lithium, diamonds, etc. and tree saps used to make rubber. Today, they experience great atrocity while their country is at war and the people are affected greatly by militias. Thousands have fled to neighboring countries, such as Uganda, to survive, leaving behind family, friends, and homes. Congo currently has some of the highest global rates of violence against women, with the entire younger generation knowing nothing in their lifetime but violence and atrocities. The UN has labelled Congo the "rape epicenter of the world." **The people of Congo live in such beautiful land, and are very creative, beautiful, and resilient people!** God sees them and hears them, and I am so grateful that Steve and Celestia listened to His heart to bring healing through Jesus to His people. I can't imagine what they are going through, but the way they hold onto their faith in God is amazing and so encouraging.



Similarly, the Navajo 'Diné' People were forced by the U.S military to leave our land during the Navajo Long Walk in 1864. The Diné people were forced to walk 300 miles and imprisoned in Bosque Redondo, NM with little food during the winter season causing over 2,000 people to die. It wasn't until 1868 that the treaty between the Navajo People and the U.S Government allowed our ancestors to return to the land. Although it was 140 years ago, today many Navajo families are still affected by this trauma, creating generational abuse and neglect. The loss of families, and homes, and men stripped of their roles as protector and provider led to today's fathers' absence and dependency on alcohol, and left mothers to lead and provide for the family alone. I had the opportunity during the conference to share the similar trauma my people experienced. They were surprised this happened in the U.S and were able to relate and connect.

I used the **Five Heart model** to share my story and made a booklet of the five stages our hearts experiences during the process of healing. We begin with **Heart One**, a whole heart representing our original design being made in God's image. **Heart Two** is a broken heart representing the trauma or abuse that hurt us. Next is **Heart Three**, everything is black representing the effects of abuse or trauma and how our hearts become cold, numb, and dark. **Heart Four**, the heart is broken and bruised representing the beginning of the healing process, turning the lights on, and allowing ourselves to feel again with the help of a safe community and bringing all that was done in the darkness into the light. Lastly, after allowing Jesus to heal the broken and wounded part of us, he redeems what was lost and that is **Heart Five**, a broken heart mended together by the cross. Then, we are back to our original design, a new creation and redeemed. Each day of the week, I shared my story using this model, and it was so encouraging to hear that many related to the neglect and abandonment I experienced. A few shared that the trauma they experienced was when the militia had invaded their homes, forcing them to run for their life. A young man shared how he lost his mom at a young age, and he had to take care of his six siblings.



The Lord had moved many of our Congolese brothers and sisters' hearts as they learned about what trauma and abuse is, its effects, and how to experience Jesus' healing. They had opened up their hearts to us as they shared their traumatic experiences, and realized why they had been depressed or experiencing anxieties, nightmares, or distance from God. ***We pray that these teachings will continue to be used and taught among their villages so that they can live life abundantly and share the love of Christ to the next generations to come.*** The next step in the process of this training is that each group reads and works through the By His Wounds workbook, and meet together once a week to share their experience and pain, and allow the healing to take place together. Then the the Ugandan staff will check-in with them once a month for any assistance and encouragement. Will you join me in continuing to pray for our brothers and sister in Congo and Uganda as they continue in their healing journey? Thank you so much for giving towards God's work in Uganda, Africa. Praise the Lord for His love, promises, and healing to his people!



Chimpanzee Tracking day: after the conference the team went hiking in the Kabale National Forest to see chimpanzees! We hiked about half a mile into the forest with our guide, and found a family relaxing on the ground as we stood 5 ft. away. On the way back, we spotted forest elephant tracks, sadly no elephants though.

