

Re-Building a Village Church

Re-building a village church begins with financing the project. Depending on the size of the church needed, the cost will vary from \$4000 to \$5000. This purchases the galvanized roofing, the nails, cement, gravel, sand and the fuel necessary; a barrel of diesel for the vehicles and a barrel of gasoline for the sawmill and power tools.

The next step is identifying the church to be rebuilt. In consultation with the local and conference leadership, a church is chosen based on the location and condition of a local church as well as the vitality and potential of the existing congregation. A decision will be made to build a place of worship that will seat from 250 to 400 people. The members of the church will be consulted regarding their willingness to partner with the project. They will complete the building once the basic structure has been put up and the roof has been put on.



The Old Esense Village Church

The third phase is purchasing and shipping the materials that have to be bought in Kinshasa and sent up the river to Kela, the river port near Lodja where we live. This can take a long time depending on what riverboats are loading and when they actually leave the port of Kinshasa for the interior. Once the boat is on its way it can take 4 to 8 weeks before it arrives at Kela if there are no major breakdowns or it doesn't run out of fuel on the sandbars that are everywhere on the river, especially in the dry season.



A Magnificent Ukulungu Tree

In the meantime, if fuel is available before the boat arrives, the work of finding, felling, hauling and/or sawing the lumber can begin. The type of tree is critical as only one is termite proof for the columns, door and window frames and few others will resist the termites and wood bores in the roof structure and benches.



A Log becomes a Cant and then Boards



Columns being set

Ukulungu is a very hard, dense and bitter tasting wood that termites will not ever attack. It can only be produced by a sawmill and it is ideal for any structure that has to be near the ground. Other woods can be used for the higher structures, but they still must be chosen carefully if they are to last for a long time.

Once the lumber and the materials are available, the actual construction can begin. Local church members help with the clearing and preparations for the new building.

The posts are set, leveled and aligned and then a concrete footer is poured beneath them. Once the concrete has partially set the dirt is put back in the holes and compacted for support. These need to set for several days which allows the builders time to assemble the trusses and get ready to “raise the roof”.

The roof structure is assembled and mounted on the Ukulungu columns. Then the metal roofing is carefully nailed on. Benches are built from the lumber that has been sawed and the place of worship is ready to be used. Doors and windows will be added as the local members fill in the walls with either sun dried or kilned bricks.



Trusses in place and braced

There are few places in the world where so little investment can make so much difference in the life and vitality of a local Church. These simple structures will serve remote villages as places of worship for 50 to 75 years, or even longer. A recent building has resulted in a doubled attendance



A place of Worship takes shape

