

How does this tote compare to past QA tote bags?



Greensboro, NC
June 23-27, 2010

It is our prayer that you will enjoy this tote bag knowing that you are helping the women of the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Past Quadrennial Assembly tote bags have been vastly different in design, fabric, and features. When Quadrennial Assemblies began

in 1957, they used paper grocery sacks as their tote bags. Soon, canvas bags were used with the ICWF logo painted on them. In the late 1970s or early 1980s we began working with women overseas to produce the tote bags. Each year the tote bags have been different in many ways. We hope that you enjoy this next evolution in the Quadrennial Assembly tote bag.

DID YOU KNOW...

Approximately 1.6 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in this area of Africa, about two percent of the population. The world-wide average is .8 percent.



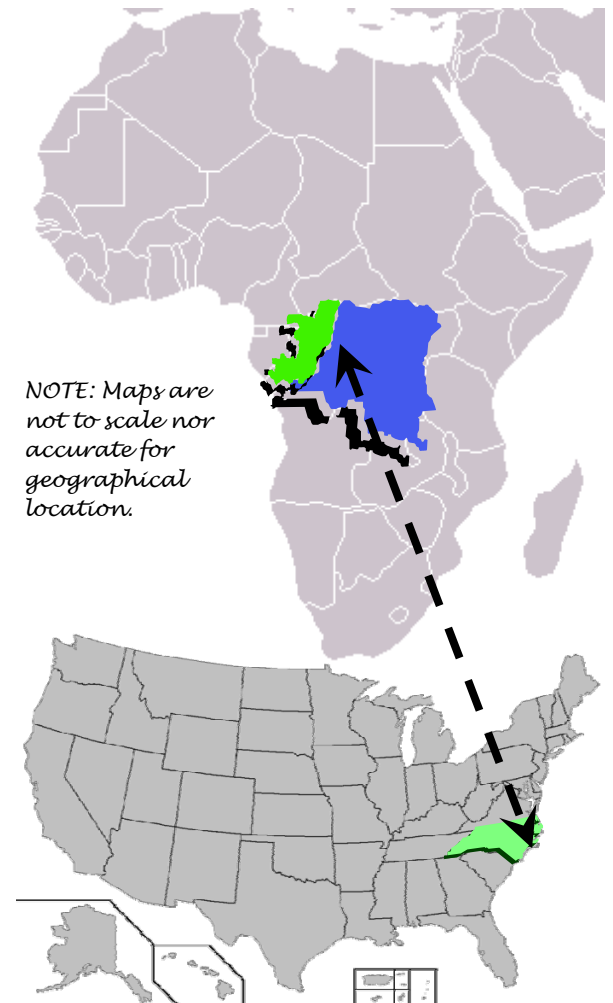
The Story of a Tote

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From Africa to North Carolina



Our Sisters of the Congo

For the past several Quadrennial Assemblies our tote bags have been made by women from developing countries who

often struggle to meet the basic needs of their families. The location the totes for the 2010 Quadrennial Assembly hail from is no



different. Both the Republic of the Congo (RC) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have experienced decades of conflict. Not only do the conflicting parties rape the land, they rape the women and children as well.

QUICK STATS:

- Over 71 million people live in the DRC and the RC —a land area roughly the size of Texas, California, and Alaska combined.
- Approximately 80 percent of the population lives on \$0.30 per day.
- About 60 percent of the population cannot afford healthcare.
- The DRC is the most mineral rich country in Africa.
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been in relationship with the people of the Congo since 1861.

Why the Congo?

Coltan is being mined in both the RC as well as the DRC. The raw coltan is then processed to produce titanium, which is used in many products common in the United States, such as cell phones, computers, and DVD players. The people of these countries see very little of the profits made by these mining operations.

Over 30,000 children, some as young as eight years old, have been kidnapped from their homes in order to work in the mines or trained as soldiers. Some estimates state that over 5.4 million people have died due to the negative effects of the mining operations.

Children often die of preventable diseases, such as diarrhea and malaria.

DID YOU KNOW...

There are more Disciples in the DRC and the RC than there are in the United States and Canada combined!

What's up with the fabric?

The fabric which these tote bags are made from is a fabric which is very common to this area of Africa. To those of us from “western” civilizations it may not look distinctly “African.” The pattern is one which is very prevalent in the RC as well as the DRC. The words are in the language of Lingala and translate into English as “Christians are the Light.” Lingala is a Bantu language which developed in the late 1800s due to the need for a common language in which to trade goods in the region.



“This yellow Protestant Women’s cloth from Congo has been the sign of Christian empowerment of women for more than thirty years. I remember when I was first in Congo as a young missionary in the late 70s. The women used sales of this cloth to raise money for projects of literacy and biblical training, for building a women’s retreat center. They all wore it – with pride and hope. I will carry my Quadrennial tote with pride and solidarity.” - Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in the United States and Canada.

How will this help them?

One skill that the women of the RC and the DRC have is sewing. The work of their hands in sewing these tote bags will help them provide for their families in a country and economy where that is not an easy accomplishment, especially for women. Their self-esteem will be boosted by being able to provide for the basic needs of their loved ones. They will have better access to basic health care for themselves as well as their children, potentially saving their lives and countless others.

