

# God is in the Parting

June 2026

During our 34 years of missionary service, we have faced more evacuations than I care to remember. Some were carefully planned with ‘go bags’ and mapped routes; others were abrupt, leaving only with what fit in a backpack. Each departure was painful yet in every parting, God was present.

- **Haiti (1994):** With four young children, we planned a short visit home after our first year. That ‘orderly visit’ became an urgent evacuation as violence erupted and foreigners had to leave. Our vacation bags were packed, but the planes were full. We left with our memories, but our luggage, our home and pets remained. The children and I did not return for over 20 years. *God was with us.*
- **Zaire (1998):** We had settled into Dr. Fountain’s former home on the Kwilu River, raising four children ages 2–7 in 1995. When rebels advanced toward the capital 3 years later, Catholic sisters radioed that they were close by. With barely time to think, our family (minus Bill) and the MAF pilot’s family squeezed into a Cessna, nine people in all. We carried only underwear and toothbrushes. It would be two years before we returned. *God brought us back.*
- **South Sudan (2013):** Bill’s mom died suddenly and we were going home for the funeral. It happened to be the same time that a civil war erupted in this new country and all our plans were disrupted. *God surrounded us with love.*
- **Goma (2021):** When Mt. Nyiragongo erupted its lava destroyed homes and schools, displacing tens of thousands. We chose to stay and help, even as frequent earthquakes forced us to sleep outside. Days later the urgent 2 a.m. radio call came; lava was flowing beneath the city. Roads jammed, it took seven hours to cross the border with only what we could carry. *But God carried us.*
- **Goma (2025):** Rebels attacked the city, overwhelming UN forces. As casualties mounted, we sheltered in a small apartment on the border. We thought we’d be gone for a weekend, but it was six weeks before we could return. *He walked beside us.*
- **Goma (2026):** Ebola is back...more aggressive, resistant to drugs and vaccines, with cases rising faster than Bill has ever seen. Like Haiti decades ago, I had a ticket in May to visit our children and seven grandchildren in Maine, but the border shut down the night before the planned departure. *God ordains all our plans.*



The U.S. Embassy wrote this morning: they have arranged a departure tomorrow for all U.S. citizens to cross the border and onward to the United States. Screening procedures will be in place, followed by a period of self-monitoring. I am headed home, but, as with so many departures before, not in the way I had planned.

Bill will remain behind for several weeks as part of a team conducting Ebola surveillance and training health care workers along the Burundi border. He assures me he will be home before the end of the month. (I remember how that promise has not always held true.)

These experiences remind me that when it comes time to go Home at the end of life, departures vary. Some are sudden, others slow. We may have time to prepare—or not. But always, we have the assurance that “God has prepared a place” and that He holds our lives in His hands. Our destination is assured, no matter the detours along the way.

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.” Isaiah 55:8**

Ann and Bill  
Goma, Dem Rep of Congo