

PC(USA) AFRICA STRATEGY

CENTRAL AFRICA

Countries: **Cameroon**, Central Africa Republic, Chad, **Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa)**, **Equatorial Guinea**, Gabon and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Many countries in Central Africa have just celebrated fifty years of political independence. While colonial rule ended, shaking free of economic dependency has proven difficult. The region continues to export raw materials and agricultural produce and to import finished products.

Gold, diamonds, copper, coltan, oil and other minerals continue to be extracted with little benefit to the population of the region. Foreign financed companies and national governments use repressive measures designed to maximize profits, which benefit relatively few people while suffering is inflicted upon many. Given the volatile situation in the Middle East, the vast oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea are attracting much attention. Border skirmishes and civil wars plague the region. They are often fueled by expectations of control over mineral wealth, but they also reflect ethnic tensions. Allegiance to one's ethnic group is often greater than commitment to the unity of a nation drawn on the map by foreign powers a hundred years ago. Borders separated peoples long united by language and culture and joined others with a history of animosity.

In the last decade, a number of countries in the region have taken significant steps toward democratic governance, but such progress has been tempered by coups, civil conflict and manipulation of political processes. The region's governments exhibit varying levels of tolerance for opposition. Periodic efforts to promote better governance or to reduce corruption have not yet met the expectations of local people or the international community. The world-wide food crisis of 2008 was felt in very real ways in Central Africa. Compounded by frustrations with corruption and political maneuvering rioting is likely to happen again if significant measures are not taken to address the issues.

HIV/AIDS has had a grave impact on the region. The socio-economic fabric shows signs of wear as the pandemic continues to wipe out a significant portion of the economically productive generations. People flock to urban areas in the hope of finding better health, education, employment and services. Many unemployed and disillusioned youth resort to crime or prostitution to survive.

PC(USA) CONCERNS AND HISTORICAL PRESENCE

American Presbyterian missionaries first went to Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the last half of the 1800s. Today, the PC(USA) continues to work in partnership with local denominations that have been autonomous for half a century.

These churches strive to respond to the spiritual, mental, physical and social needs of their members and the communities in which they live. Evangelism is often integrated with ministries of education and health in multifunctional church-school-clinic compounds.

With collaboration, deliberation, and prayer we continue to participate in God's mission in Central Africa. While our involvement must be multifaceted, **capacity building** will be a fundamental element in all PC(USA) engagements in the region as we seek to enable people to provide services for themselves. **Evangelism, discipleship and church growth** are also priorities as we seek to learn from the witness and mission of our partners and to assist pastors and their spouses with vocational training that can help them to care for their families in an environment where few congregations can afford a full-time minister.

We will work to strengthen our partners' capacity to provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary **education** for the roughly 200,000 young people who study at Presbyterian institutions across the region. **Health**, long one of the central pillars of our ministry in the region, remains a continuing concern. While we remain committed to supporting institutional care, our priority is to reduce the demand on it by improving public health and combating the diseases of poverty – tuberculosis, malaria, HIV/AIDS, measles, pneumonia and diarrheal disease – even as we work to address the underlying causes of poverty.

In our efforts to promote **development and food security**, the PC(USA) looks for long term, sustainable solutions that address root causes of poverty and injustice, improve the lives of the people and allow citizens to be part of collaborative processes of transformation. We encourage communities' sincere effort to provide sufficient food for themselves and to even make available their produce to growing local urban markets. We aim to assist our partners to be better prepared for **disaster response**. We will engage in **advocacy** with our own government and international organizations to promote human rights, debt relief, fair trade, peace and self-determination; we will also support our partners as they advocate for the rights of the poor and marginalized domestically and internationally. In particular, we hope to ensure that **women** enjoy equal rights and opportunities throughout the region, and we seek to encourage and equip women to become leaders in church and society. We will encourage our partners who are striving to find sustainable, community focused ways to respond to the needs of the growing number of vulnerable children. Our efforts will be dedicated to building **peace, reconciliation and unity** not only within the countries in which we minister, but also within our partner churches and institutions. Finally, we value **mutuality in mission** and will facilitate partnership relationships that are marked by shared grace, transparency, respect and open dialogue.

EXTRA COMMITMENT OPPORTUNITY ACCOUNTS FOR THE REGION

The PC(USA)'s priorities are reflected in a number of general Extra Commitment Opportunity accounts established to underwrite activities with partners related to these concerns. These funds, which are available for work throughout Central Africa, include:

E051695	Central Africa Regional Liaison (travel, communications & equipment needs)
E051829	Scholarships for AIDS Orphans
E051835	Education in Central Africa

E200314 Regional Liaison for Central Africa/Companionship Facilitator-Joining Hands
E864100 Africa General Fund

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Context

Amidst the instability in Central and West Africa, Cameroon has remained relatively calm. Many international organizations and personnel who have fled unrest in nearby countries have begun working out of Cameroon. Called a “miniature of Africa”, Cameroon’s geography and peoples reflect much of the diversity of the continent. In the coastal, mountain, savanna, dessert and tropical rain forest regions of Cameroon over 200 distinct language and ethnic groups are found. Loyalties to clan and tribe often appear to outweigh allegiances to nation or church.



The languages inherited from the colonial powers that occupied this land both unite and divide the people of Cameroon. French is the primary language of administration and education in the eight regions that were under French colonial rule until independence in 1960. English is used in the remaining two western regions, which had been under British administration until 1961. Some in the English speaking provinces feel that they are underrepresented and marginalized in national decision-making processes.

For years Transparency International has listed Cameroon as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Public officials have made efforts to address this problem, but corruption remains a problem throughout society. There have been border incidents with both Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria in recent years. Episodes of civil unrest, leading to the loss of life, have resulted from spikes in food and fuel prices as well as political factors.

Partners

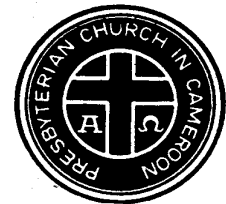
Seventy-five years of work by the American Presbyterian Mission in Cameroon came to fruition with establishment of an autonomous church, the **Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise** (EPC), in 1957. The extent of that fine work, and the collaboration that continued after independence, is only partially reflected in the numerous schools and hospitals run by the church today. While many of these institutions still provide services, they struggle in the face of deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate resources, and reduced support from foreign missions and the government of Cameroon. Often, the EPC’s educational and health ministries must rely on dedicated but under-qualified workers, and this can undermine the quality of the services offered. The EPC has also accumulated substantial debts that threaten the church’s assets. The EPC’s membership has the potential to help the church move forward, but church leaders have yet to tap into those resources in an effective and sustained manner.

The EPC is grappling to overcome a prolonged period of dissension. A two-year split of the EPC General Assembly halted a church wide process of self-examination, known as the *Etats Généraux*. The conflict compounded instability caused by the practice of forcing church leaders

out of office before the completion of their terms. Unable to continue fruitful collaboration with a divided leadership, the PC(USA) temporarily suspended its partnership with the EPC. Urging dialogue and transparency, the PC(USA) sought ways to facilitate reconciliation within the church.

Since the formal revival of our partnership with the EPC in 2004, we have progressed cautiously as we consider common mission and ministry. Previously, our collaboration focused on health and education. In light of the EPC's recent history, our priorities currently focus on supporting the EPC as it seeks to develop processes, tools, policies and skills to improve the management of church resources (human, material and financial) and the realization of effective ministries. The PC(USA) encourages the EPC to continue to reflect on its identity, vision and mission and, in particular, to implement the recommendations that emerged from the *Etats Généraux*. Financial and material support of institutions will be contingent upon a viable and feasible plan designed to move the institutions toward a greater level of sustainability or significantly improved quality of ministry. Our participation presupposes that relevant governing and administering bodies of the EPC will respect these plans.

Rooted in the mission efforts of the Basel Mission, the [Presbyterian Church in Cameroon](#) (PCC) has grown into a well-organized denomination with strong lay involvement since becoming autonomous in 1957. The PCC has undertaken to be self-sufficient in its own general budget. Relationships with American Presbyterians, which date to the mid-1970s, have become more active since 2000. PC(USA) mission personnel have served in the fields of theological education, teacher training and public health ministries, including HIV/AIDS. Numerous links have been forged between PCC and PC(USA) churches, often as a result of the involvement of Cameroonian immigrants in US congregations.



Formerly known as FEMEC, the [Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon \(CEPCA\)](#) faces many challenges in nurturing ecumenism and collaborative ministry. Like many of the Protestant sister churches, the Council struggles to define and live out its role in Cameroonian society. Consequently, it has been difficult for the PC(USA) to identify joint initiatives around which to build partnership with CEPCA. The PC(USA) remains open to explore avenues for fruitful engagement, particularly in areas of interfaith dialogue and reconciliation within churches and communities.

In 2006, the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Yaounde became the [Protestant University of Central Africa \(PUCA\)](#) with the addition of a faculty of Social Sciences International Relations and another for Communications and Information Technology. As one of the few Protestant universities in the region with a doctoral program, PUCA attracts students from about ten different countries. The PC(USA) has provided scholarships to several of its students over the years.

The PC(USA) worked with the Evangelical and Baptist churches to found the **College Evangelique de Libamba** (CEL, also known as Cameroon Christian College) in 1946. This ecumenical high school was once renowned for its high educational standards. For decades, three Cameroonian denominations were responsible for the operation and oversight of CEL. Given the

low level of commitment to ecumenical collaboration, CEL foundered. In 2006, the churches yielded control of CEL to an association comprised primarily of former students. With deteriorating infrastructure and enrollment of less than 200 students, considerable commitment, dedication and vision are needed to realize the potential of its ministry. The PC(USA) seeks to use its support to leverage greater commitment from the Cameroonian churches and alumni. The Protestant University of Central Africa, located in Yaounde, is in discussion with CEL and the three Cameroonian founding churches (EPC, EEC and UEBC) to base faculties of medicine and agriculture on the site of CEL. This is in line with the early vision for the school and the PC(USA) encourages these deliberations.

With the help of the [Joining Hands](#) initiative of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, twenty Cameroonian Non-Profit Organizations and church organizations have come together since 2001 to form a network to collaboratively address systemic problems of hunger, poverty and socio-economic injustice. Legally recognized as [RELUFA](#) (the French acronym for the **Network for the Fight Against Hunger**), this network partners with the PC(USA) on programs for food sovereignty, economic development, and economic justice.

Two PC(USA) presbyteries have formed links with Cameroon. Through the Joining Hands initiative churches in the Presbyteries of [Chicago](#) and of the [Twin Cities Area](#) accompany RELUFA through awareness building activities and solidarity actions. The **Presbytery of St. Andrew** long had a partnership with the Presbytery of Ntem (EPC). They continue in a less formal way now. Many PC(USA) congregations have developed relations with Presbyterian churches in Cameroon. Most relationships have developed in the English-speaking PCC churches, although EPC presbyteries and churches have also expressed interest in developing partnerships. PC(USA) presbyteries and congregations with an interest in Cameroon have formed the **Cameroon Mission Network** as a venue for sharing experiences and ideas. The Network is currently convened by Nancy Nunn Smith at Brentwood Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles.

The PC(USA) presently has four mission personnel based in Cameroon. [Christi Boyd](#) is the companionship facilitator for the Joining Hands initiative in Cameroon. She works with RELUFA on a range of programs, including fair trade export of dried fruit to the USA, cooperative grain banks, a microfinance program, and an anti-corruption campaign focusing on revenue management in oil, gas, and mining projects. Her husband, [Jeff Boyd](#), is the PC(USA) Central Africa Liaison. He facilitates the PC(USA)'s relationships with its partners in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea, with a special focus on education work. The [Rev. Shirley Hill](#) serves as a consultant to the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon on HIV/AIDS and public health ministries. [Leisa Wagstaff](#) ministers as a trainer of teachers at the PCC's Presbyterian Teacher Training College in Mbengwi, North West Province.

Partnership priorities

Evangelism, Discipleship and Church Growth: The PC(USA) seeks to encourage the EPC in developing a vision for the church and its witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We encourage training programs for chaplains and evangelists designed to strengthen the church's ministry in its education and health institutions as well as in state institutions, including universities, hospitals, prisons and the military.

The women's, men's and youth associations of the church play key roles in its ministry. While the women's associations are the most active, the youth and men are also involved in evangelism, discipleship and ministries of compassion. American Presbyterians have much to learn from the organization, commitment and activities of these associations. The PC(USA) will therefore endeavor to enable Cameroonians to participate in our national Presbyterian Women and Youth meetings. We will also explore ways of empowering these lay ministries by facilitating training opportunities and help them to share their faith, stories and expertise with others around the world.

Many Cameroonian Presbyterians from both the EPC and PCC have settled in the United States. The PC(USA) is committed to welcoming them into our congregations and using their gifts to enrich our faith, worship and church life. We will collaborate with the PCC to develop and implement a shared ministry of evangelism, church growth and ethnic ministries within the USA. This will include enabling a member of the PCC to serve as a mission worker to the United States.

Education: EPC education ministries were evaluated thrice during the 1990s, but none of the significant recommendations were implemented. Despite a General Assembly ban on hiring, adopted in the mid 90s, the EPC education board routinely hires new teachers, often against the advice of administrators. PC(USA) financial, material and personnel support of institutions will be contingent upon viable plans designed to move the institutions toward a greater level of sustainability or a significant improvement in the quality of services available to students. The relevant administrative and governing bodies are expected to demonstrate support the plan.

Renewed PC(USA) support for CEL should be predicated on significant commitment of human and material resources from within Cameroon. The PC(USA) will seek to use its available financial resources to leverage greater local commitment to the institution.

The large boarding high schools of the PCC are well respected and have proven financially viable, even to the point of assisting rural elementary schools that cannot cover their expenses. Church members and the population at large have supported the expansion of this ministry by helping to build new facilities. We seek to support teacher training and to help the PCC with viable projects focused on improving quality of instruction and financial viability of institutions. We encourage PC(USA) congregations and members to contribute to the two PCC-operated scholarship programs, for the children of church workers and for orphans and other vulnerable children.

Recognizing the limited opportunities for higher education, and being concerned about the levels of corruption and the low moral standards at the state universities, the PCC has embarked on the development of a [Christian university](#). The church seeks to provide quality higher education anchored on strong Christian moral values. Their vision is to produce leaders not only worthy in learning, but also in character. The church's success in fundraising is evidence of its members' strong commitment to this vision. The PC(USA) will support this new initiative through mission volunteer positions and funds given by presbyteries, congregations and members. We will also continue to support theological training through mission personnel, both co-workers and volunteers.

Health: As with their schools, the number of under-qualified personnel working in EPC health institutions threatens their viability. Enormous debt and excessive influence of personal interest and politics in decisions made by the health board have hindered these ministries from moving forward. PC(USA) financial, material and personnel support of institutions will be contingent upon viable plans designed to move the institutions toward a greater level of sustainability or a significant improvement in the quality of care. Priority will be for building the capacity to develop and implement feasible programs that move communities toward health and wholeness. All relevant administrative and governing bodies of the EPC are expected to support such a plan if PC(USA) support is to be provided.

The PCC and PC(USA) share a common priority: combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and addressing its impact on communities. The PC(USA) will support:

- Educational programs that lead to healthy life choices and combat the stigma associated with AIDS;
- Programs that encourage HIV testing and provide counseling;
- Programs that encourage and enable the church to provide care to those living with or otherwise affected by AIDS;
- The development of suitably staffed facilities capable of responsibly administering anti-retroviral medicines in a sustainable manner;
- Sustainable community-based programs to care for orphans.

We support the PCC's development of general public health work. Priority will be given to care for the most vulnerable in society. Support for initiatives will come through mission personnel serving in a consultancy role. We will advise PC(USA) congregations, presbyteries, validated mission support groups and the Presbyterian Women on ministries of health in Cameroon and facilitate assistance to such ministries. In conjunction with the PCC and the [Medical Benevolence Fund \(MBF\)](#) we will support a volunteer program for suitably qualified medical professionals.

Development and Food Security: In collaboration with our partners, the PC(USA) will promote the training of church and community members, equipping them to empower and transform communities in ways that respect life and creation so that they may experience fullness of life in Christ.

Throughout Cameroon, the lack of seed money is a huge obstacle to starting a new business, activity or program designed to improve people's income or living conditions. The banking industry does not provide loans to the poor. All of RELUFA's member organizations face this lack of seed money for projects in the communities where they work. The network has therefore designed and implemented a micro-finance program that provides small loans for poor but well organized grassroots affiliates. Network member organizations bought shares in the program to generate the initial seed capital, which was augmented by a grant from Self Development of People and gifts from churches and individuals in the accompanying Presbyteries of Chicago and the Twin Cities Area. PC(USA) churches and members are encouraged to help expand the program through further contributions.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) worked with RELUFA to establish a network of cooperative grain banks in the semi-Saharan region of Northern Cameroon. Every year, communities there face food shortages due to unfavorable climatic conditions and the speculative practices of merchants who buy much of the farmers' harvest. Farmers need cash at that time of the year in order to send their children to school or to obtain medical care. When families exhaust their household stocks, they have to sell their livestock to buy back their grain at vastly inflated prices. The grain banks ensure a community's food supply during the lean season so that families can use their livestock for the educational and health needs of their children. The PC(USA) seeks to harness the contributions of churches and members to expand the program so that more villages may enjoy food security. The positive results experienced suggest that a similar community-based model be considered for adoption throughout the region.

Relief and Disaster Preparedness: The food security program explained above was developed to meet an immediate need, but also to build the capacity of communities to avert disasters. We will encourage RELUFA, the EPC, the PCC and CEPCA to consider having several people trained to be able to plan and respond effectively in a crisis or disaster situation.

Advocacy and Solidarity: With the sustained tensions and instability in the Middle East, the vast oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea are attracting considerable attention from foreign governments and oil companies. The exploitation of cobalt reserves in the East Region is expected to make Cameroon a leading cobalt exporter.

The extractive industries sector is designed to maximize profits for a few; more often than not it imposes heavy burdens on neighboring communities and the environment. Research indicates that there is a negative correlation between a country's dependence on extractive industries and the living standards of its population. Transactions between multinational companies and Central African governments are rarely transparent, and civil society has insufficient means of monitoring its government's spending of revenue from this industry. We deplore oppressive measures used to keep the control of resources in the hands of a powerful minority.

RELUFA has called on churches to support and join the worldwide Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition. PWYP calls for mandatory disclosure by multinational companies of all financial transactions made to host governments. This enables members of civil society to hold leaders accountable and to fight corruption. The PC(USA) supports RELUFA as it spearheads this transparency campaign in Cameroon and in nine other countries in the region.

RELUFA also advocates for individuals and communities who have been negatively affected by the Chad-Cameroon Oil and Pipeline Project. Network representatives negotiate fair compensation with representatives of oil companies, the government and the World Bank. Following the Biblical call to defend the poor and the oppressed in the face of the powerful, the PC(USA), and the Presbyteries of Chicago and Twin Cities Area accompany RELUFA in this courageous and long overdue effort.

Peace, Reconciliation and Unity: Conflict and tension are evident in varying degrees in all church communities. We will encourage the training of conflict mediators within our partner

churches and will respond to requests for conflict mediation involving our partners as we are able. We particularly encourage factions within the EPC to commit to conflict mediation.

Like many other West African nations, Cameroon has a predominantly Christian population in the south and a Muslim population in the north. In contrast to neighboring Nigeria, there is relatively little religious conflict; however, there is the potential for religious extremists to incite animosity. Similarly, insensitive proselytization could also raise tensions. We encourage inter-faith dialogue to promote harmony and religious tolerance.

Women: The EPC is one of only two PC(USA) church partners in the region that does not ordain women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. While support for the ordination of women seems to be growing, opposition remains. The PCC, on the other hand, has long accepted the ordination of women. By numbers and by involvement women are a great force with the church life although they continue to be underrepresented in the denomination's decision making structures. We support the building of capacity of women, to give them the courage and self-confidence to take up opportunities to guide the church now and in the future.

We will assist the empowerment of the women's ministries by supporting training and facilitating communication among Christian women around the continent and the world so that they may encourage and challenge one another.

We commend RELUFA's commitment to address the legal and cultural roots of the inequalities and injustices that confront the women of Cameroon. We encourage our partners to champion justice for all – including women and girls – and to give particular attention to ensuring that girls do not face discrimination in education.

Mutuality in Mission: On several occasions, Cameroonians invited to ecclesiastic conferences outside Cameroon have been unable to obtain travel visas. We will work with our partner churches and relevant embassies to address these obstacles.

There is strong interest within the EPC for the formation of new presbytery and congregation partnerships. At the same time, new relationships are emerging with PCC congregations as a result of Cameroonians settling in the US and attending PC(USA) congregations. We will capitalize on the potential for mutually enriching relationships and encourage the development of ties that do not hinge upon personalities. We will facilitate relationships that embody the principles of partnership as outlined in the PC(USA) policy statement "Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership." Additionally, we seek an opportunity for a PCC pastor to serve in mission to US, contributing to evangelism, church growth and ethnic ministries within the USA.

The Cameroon Mission Network can enable presbyteries, churches and individuals to learn from each other, to explore opportunities for collaboration and to challenge each other to adhere to healthy practices in partnership. Without directing or controlling the network the PC(USA) provides limited logistical support to help the network function.

We will explore with our partners suitable hosting sites and work assignments for short and long-term volunteers. Mission co-workers will be appointed based on the stated needs and

commitments of our partner, the mission priorities of the PC(USA), the suitability of a mission worker for the position described and the availability of funding. Potential fields for short- and long-term positions include health care, chaplaincy training, theological education, conflict resolution, teacher training, general education, information technology, and management systems.

Salary Support for Mission Personnel in Cameroon

“D” accounts signify Directed Mission Support (for use by churches)

“E” accounts signify Extra Commitment Opportunities (for individual donors)

“MI” accounts signify Mission Initiative (Joining Hearts and Hands)

Boyd, Christi and Jeff	D506075	E200314
Hill, Shirley	MI910056	
Wagstaff, Leisa	D504924	E200419

Extra Commitment Opportunity Accounts for Cameroon

E040720	Metet, Medicine	MBF
E041169	Djoungolo Hospital, Vehicle	MBF
E041170	Metet Hospital, Laboratory Equipment	MBF
E041171	Metet Hospital, Renovation of Wards	MBF
E048547	Presbyterian Theological College, Kumba	
E051695	Central Africa Regional Liaison	
E051805	PCC Education Projects - Cameroon	
E052063	Cameroon Christian University, PCC	
E053502	Cameroon Health and HIV/AIDS	
E862103	Cameroon Christian College	
E862760	Faculty of Protestant Theology and Science of Religion, Yaounde	
E864103	Presbyterian Church in Cameroun (PCC) – General Support	
E864825	Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise (EPC) – General Support	

Hunger Accounts for Cameroon

H051608	Joining Hands
H000125	Cameroon Micro Credit Program
H000128	Cameroon Food Sovereignty Program
H000108	RELUFA

Democratic Republic of Congo

Context

American Presbyterian mission involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo, formerly Zaire) dates back to 1891 and has been a catalyst for the formation of numerous thriving ministries, including two autonomous, vibrant churches: the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (CPK) in 1955 and the Presbyterian Community of Congo in 1961. All of the PC(USA)'s partnerships in Congo are rooted in our relations with these two denominations.



Democratic Rep. of Congo

The history of the Congo, during and after the colonial period, has been marked by the suffering of its people, who say: "Our riches have made us poor." From generation to generation, foreign powers and national leaders have plundered the Congo's wealth for personal gain at great expense to the Congolese people. In the last decade, riches promised by diamonds, gold and coltan have fueled wars in the DR Congo, leading to the death of more than five million people and the rape, mutilation and torture of still more. It is out of this background that the Congolese expressed cautious hope for their country following the 2007 presidential elections, the first in over 40 years. Our partners have therefore specifically challenged us to advocate on their behalf for peace, democracy, human rights, and general development before the United States government and the United Nations. Decades of neglect have left the nation's infrastructure in ruins. The new government has a daunting task of fostering unity and improving the lives of the population.

Given the economic impoverishment of their membership, our church partners struggle both with deteriorating facilities (schools, hospitals and other institutions) and with a lack of material resources to invest in rebuilding those ministries. There is an unhealthy dependency upon the PC(USA) for funding to carry out ministries or improvement of facilities. We seek to more deeply understand and appreciate our interdependence as members of the body of Christ.

Partners

The **Presbyterian Community of Congo (CPC)** grew out of the work of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission (1891-1970) and became a fully autonomous church in 1961. It ministers throughout the West and East Kasais and to a lesser extent in the Provinces of Katanga, Kinshasa and Bandundu. The PC(USA) partners with the CPC through the sharing of mission personnel and other available resources.



As an offshoot of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, the Presbyterian Mission of Leopoldville (1955-1959) initiated the development of a Presbyterian Church in the national capital, Kinshasa. Since 1960 the **Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (CPK)** has ministered as an autonomous partner church of the PC(USA) in the metropolitan area of



Kinshasa and the western provinces of Lower-Congo and Bandundu. Through new evangelism efforts the church is reaching out to indigenous people groups in the Equateur Province.

The CPC and the CPK maintain good working relations with each other. They collaborate most notably on the governance of the Sheppard and Lapsley Presbyterian University of Congo, which serves both communities.

Protestant missionaries took a co-operative approach to ministry from an early stage. The Congo Protestant Council was founded in 1924 and evolved into a union of Congolese Protestant Churches, which was officially established in 1970 as the **Church of Christ in the Congo** (ECC). Member communities of the ECC have made substantial contributions to health, educational and other social ministries. Both the CPC and the CPK are members of the ECC.

In 1954, the American Presbyterian Congo Mission founded the **Christian Medical Institute of the Kasai** (IMCK) in Lubondaie (later moved to Tshikaji near Kananga). IMCK was established to train qualified medical and dental personnel, to provide a higher level of medical care, and to witness to the healing ministry of the Church. The Institute consists of the Good Shepherd Hospital and clinics, rural primary health care centers, schools for nurse practitioners and medical laboratory technicians, a large urban ambulatory health center, a nutrition center for malnourished children and a dental clinic. Health programs include child preventive medicine outreach, nutritional rehabilitation, and family planning.

Beginning in 1913 as a Bible school in Luebo, the **Sheppard and Lapsley Presbyterian University of Congo** (UPRECO) went through several transitions before becoming a full university in 2001 with the addition of a School of Law. Located five kilometers from Kananga, the capital of West Kasai Province, UPRECO is jointly governed by the CPC and CPK through the Presbyterian Committee of Ministry (CPM). Additional schools are envisioned, including Education, Economics and Management, Science and Technology of Development, Agronomy, Medicine and Engineering.

Originating from efforts of Presbyterians, Methodists and Disciples of Christ the **Protestant University of the Congo** (UPC) was developed in order to equip the DR Congo's future leaders with a university education steeped in the Christian faith. Its three Colleges are Theology, Business, and Law and it is located in Kinshasa.

Currently, the [Presbytery of Eastern Virginia](#) is partnered with the CPK. [Whitewater Valley Presbytery](#) has a partnership with the **Northern Kasai Synod** of the CPC, while [New Castle Presbytery](#) (Delaware) maintains a partnership with the **Kananga Presbytery** of the CPC. [Sheppards & Lapsley Presbytery](#) (Alabama) partners with two CPC presbyteries, **Tshibashi** and **Nganza**, and [Mission Presbytery](#) (Texas) enjoys a partnership relationship with **Luebo** hospital and churches. A number of PC(USA) congregations also relate to counterparts in the DR Congo.

A vibrant [Congo Mission Network](#) has been established to bring together the PC(USA) presbyteries and congregations that have partnerships in the DR Congo to enhance learning,

communication and coordination of their respective activities. Sub-groups have formed to focus on particular interests: advocacy, communication and education.

The PC(USA) currently has three couples under mission appointment in the DR Congo. [Dr. Michael and Nancy Haininger](#) are assigned to work with the IMCK and Good Shepherd Hospital. Mike is a physician and educator; Nancy, a Registered Nurse, does direct patient care, educates health workers and helps to resource a variety of community health and development programs. [Dr. Larry and Inge Sthreshley](#) work with Project AXxes, a large rural health organization that builds and maintains health infrastructure to fight malaria, tuberculosis, malnutrition and childhood illnesses in rural DR Congo. Inge provides oversight on the governance and operations of the Methodist-Presbyterian Hostel which plays an essential role as a guest facility and conference center. [Dr. John and Gwenda Fletcher](#) are assigned to work with the CPC health and education ministries. John, a surgeon, is based at Good Shepherd Hospital in Tshikaji supporting a unified network of CPC hospitals. Gwenda serves as an education consultant with the CPC, helping the church with teacher training, administration, and community involvement.

Partnership priorities

Evangelism, Discipleship and Church Growth: The PC(USA)'s partners in the DR Congo share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture church members in many ways: through school and hospital chaplain programs; religious lessons in schools; the rallies, conferences and Bible studies of the youth and women's associations, to name a few. Members of the PC(USA) have much to learn from the openness of the Congolese to expressing their faith and to their commitment to the life of the church. Congolese Presbyterians understand that fullness of life entails a strong spiritual component, which is something to be shared, not kept inside. In addition to supporting existing evangelism ministries, the PC(USA) will help our partners to reach out to new areas and to reinforce pastoral ministry in small villages and other economically depressed areas. Our efforts will focus on supporting:

- The exploration and development of models designed to improve the local community's capacity to support their pastor or catechist and to implement ministries and programs;
- The training of pastors and/or their spouses for suitable vocations that will enable them better to meet the needs of their family as they live and serve in impoverished places.

In the area of Christian education and discipleship, we will help our church partners make available Christian literature, including Bibles in local languages, at affordable prices. We will also support efforts to train Sunday School and high school religion teachers as well as chaplains.

Education: Recognizing the benefits of education and literacy for national development and the sharing of the Gospel, we give priority to expanding access to quality education, including both formal and informal educational opportunities. In the past decade, the PC(USA), UNICEF, the World Bank and several embassies have supported the formal education ministries of the CPC and CPK through the construction and repair of buildings, the provision of books and teaching materials and the training of teachers and administrators. From the reports of our partners there is not evidence of an analysis of the impact of these investments on the schools and communities.

Site visits by PC(USA) visitors have, at times, raised questions about the effectiveness of this assistance.

Given the magnitude of our partners' educational programs (120,000+ students, 600+ schools), the minimal state assistance they receive, and the limited capacity for parents to increase support, the PC(USA) has an important role to play in helping our partners to develop and implement model programs, which can be used to leverage greater funding from large donors. To help our partners foster donor confidence, our efforts will focus on trying to build our partners' abilities to:

- Develop visions, mission statements and strategic plans for their ministries;
- Share their experiences and learn from those of others working in similar fields across the continent and around the world;
- Collect and analyze data in order to facilitate development, presentation and evaluation of projects;
- Develop sound project proposals that respond to identified needs and priorities and which are of a caliber expected by donor organizations; and
- Implement and evaluate projects and report on their progress and impact.

A group of volunteers interested in the Presbyterian educational ministries in the Congo has formed in the United States. We collaborate with this group to invite congregations, individuals and organizations to support educational ministries of both the CPC and the CPK.

We commit to work with the CPC and the CPK as they strive to achieve four priorities that came out of strategic planning processes: improving infrastructure; providing in-service training for teachers and administrators; ensuring transportation for supervisors of schools; and providing each teacher with the textbooks that he or she needs to prepare lessons for teaching.

We will also continue to support pastoral and theological training as well as further development of university education. In this we will continue to collaborate with The Outreach Foundation and the [Friends of UPRECO](#). Within our limited means we'll continue to provide scholarships, upon the request of church leaders, with a focus on building the capacity of church to carry out its various ministries.

Health: HIV/AIDS ministries of the CPC and CPK have grown in recent years. The PC(USA) will support:

- Educational programs that promote healthy life choices and combat the stigma associated with AIDS;
- HIV testing and counseling programs;
- Programs that enable the church to provide care to those living with or otherwise affected by AIDS;
- The development of the capacity of medical facilities to administer anti-retroviral medicines responsibly; and
- Community-based programs to care for orphans.

In general, we seek to:

- Support the training of medical professionals and administrators to serve through the health ministries of our partners;
- Support the development and implementation of cost-effective preventive care programs capable of reaching remote villages;
- Explore with our partners suitable hosting sites and work assignments for volunteers.

Development and Food Security: The PC(USA) seeks to empower and transform communities in ways that respect life and creation and enable all to experience fuller life in Christ. Our partners must be able to conceive and implement activities appropriate to the mission to which they feel Christ calls them. We aim to enhance their independent capacity to follow God's leading by:

- Supporting the development of income generating projects, the training of project designers and implementers and the provision of a portion of the seed money to start projects. Where appropriate, we will encourage collaboration with other groups to assist this process. Strong local commitment to the success of a project will be a condition for PC(USA) support.
- Supporting the development of income generating projects, the training of project designers and implementers and the provision of a portion of the seed money to start projects. Where appropriate, we will encourage collaboration with other groups to assist this process. Strong local commitment to the success of a project will be a condition for PC(USA) support.

Communities or partner institutions are expected to assume part of the risk of a project, but realistically we acknowledge some communities may not be able to afford much risk. We encourage our partners to consider what they can do in light of the threat of a growing food crisis in the communities they serve.

The PC(USA) will prioritize the appointment of qualified, experienced, full-time mission co-workers to partner with the health and development ministries of the CPC and the CPK.

Relief and Disaster Preparedness: Our partners in the DR Congo have limited experience in coordinating and managing disaster and relief responses involving significant human and material resources. We will support the training of our partners to build their capacities to manage responses to future crisis. Through development related programs, we will work with our partners to strengthen communities so that they may become less susceptible to disasters. As appropriate we will collaborate with compatible organizations – such as [Action by Churches Together \(ACT\)](#) , [Church World Service \(CWS\)](#) and national councils of churches – in both training and relief responses.

Advocacy and Solidarity: Our ecclesiastic partners in the DR Congo have specifically asked that we advocate for peaceful, democratic changes in their country and for stability and development. We will continue to encourage individual Presbyterians, congregations and presbyteries to collaborate to make effective representations to US political leaders. The Congo Mission Network can be a conduit for appeals to advocacy and demonstration of solidarity. These efforts will complement the advocacy work of the World Mission Africa and Advocacy offices, the Washington and United Nations offices, as well as that of our General Assembly leaders. Special articles and publications will be prepared as resources permit and urgency requires in order to increase awareness of the issues facing our partners.

Peace, Reconciliation and Unity: The wars and continuing instability in the Great Lakes Region demand that the Church be alert to opportunities to mediate crises at the local, national and regional levels. The PC(USA) can support this by helping church workers acquire skills in conflict resolution, counseling and support for survivors of violence and reintegration and healing of communities affected by conflict. We will aim to link our partners with other communities and organizations that have relevant experience, to identify ways of dealing with conflict issues in local traditions and cultures, and to facilitate training at all levels of the community. We support efforts of regional ecumenical bodies, like the All-Africa Conference of Churches and the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa, as they strive to be peacemakers in the Congo and elsewhere.

Women: In both the CPC and CPK, the Department of Women and Families is actively addressing many of the challenges facing church and society in the DR Congo: HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction, care of vulnerable children, evangelism, and literacy. The women often demonstrate their commitment by undertaking efforts with their own limited resources. The PC(USA) hopes to enhance further the empowerment of women by:

- Facilitating training opportunities;
- Making occasional grants to encourage promising activities;
- Helping to improve the quality and marketability of products from income generating projects; and
- Facilitating opportunities for the women to share their faith, stories and expertise with others around the world.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children: There are many factors that cause vulnerability for children: the death of a parent; divorce and the subsequent rejection by a step-parent; poor economic situation of a family; being blamed by family or the community of being involved in witchcraft. The CPC and the CPK each have programs responding to the biblical mandate to care for the orphans and the vulnerable in society. The CPK Departments of Health and Women & Families join forces with feeding programs, scholarships and other essential care for children. The CPC operates several programs: nutrition centers, a multifaceted program to support the educational, health, nutritional and social needs some vulnerable children, and a center that receives abandoned children and tries to reintegrate them into their home communities. The PC(USA) seeks to facilitate financial support to these ministries while also helping them consider potential benefits of coordinating with other organizations operating in the same geographic area. We will call upon suitably experienced mission personnel to share models of best practice with our partners and to help us maintain a healthy approach to supporting local initiatives. A focus will be on helping communities realize their responsibility to care for their children.

Mutuality in mission: Our relationships with our sisters and brothers in Africa make us aware that we have as much to learn and receive as we have to offer. Through congregational and presbytery partnerships, International Peacemakers, Mission to the USA, Presbyterian Women's gatherings, Presbyterian Youth Triennium, mission conferences and meetings we invite the Congolese to teach us about hospitality, evangelism, lay ministry, advocacy, faithful witnessing, joyful worship, racial/ethnic ministries, sharing with neighbors and those in need, the way groups and associations carry out work in congregations, faith perspectives, and interpretation of

scriptures and God's will in one's life. We will seek opportunities for our partners to help us in ministries that reach out to immigrant communities from Africa and the rest of the world.

We will urge our partners and our own offices to improve reporting on resources received and projects supported as a demonstration of good stewardship and transparency in our relationship. We believe that confidence in use of resources will strengthen relations and will encourage further support.

The Africa office staff, regional liaison and other mission personnel will support the development of healthy partnerships. The [Congo Mission Network](#) will be a forum for PC(USA) presbyteries, churches and individuals to learn from each other, to explore opportunities for collaboration and to hold each other accountable to healthy practices in partnership.

Salary Support for Mission Personnel in Democratic Republic of Congo

“D” accounts signify Directed Mission Support (for use by churches)

“DR” accounts signify Disaster Response

“E” accounts signify Extra Commitment Opportunities (for individual donors)

“MI” accounts signify Mission Initiative (Joining Hearts and Hands)

Fletcher, Gwenda and John	MI910005	
Haninger, Michael and Nancy	D506414	E200354
Sthresley, Inge and Larry	D505045	E200412

Extra Commitment Opportunity Accounts for Democratic Republic of Congo

E041039	Good Shepherd Hospital (IMCK), Operations - MBF
E041129	Fuel and Vehicle Maintenance, Bibanga Hospital
E041131	Physicians Salary Support, CPK & CPC, Congo MBF
E041175	Christian Health Center, Mbujimayi, Operational Support - MBF
E047897	Education for Kinshasa, CPK
E051625	Ministry to Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children
E051693	Christian Education, Presbyterian Community of Congo (CPC)
E051695	Central Africa Regional Liaison
E051741	Luebo Church Renovation, CPC
E051843	Congo Presbyterian Church Educational Ministries
E052031	Project for Development in the East Kasai (PRODEK)
E052046	CPC Congo Communication Project
E052050	Empowering Congolese Women
E318702	CPC Department of Evangelism
E319602	Women's Work, CPC
E319702	Bibanga Hospital, Congo
E319802	Bibanga Secondary School
E319902	Bulape Hospital and Community Health, Congo
E320202	IMCK Good Shepherd Hospital
E320402	IMCK Community Health

E320902 IMCK Nursing and Laboratory Technician Schools
E322902 Protestant Faculty of Theology, Protestant University of Congo
E323002 CPK Women and Families Ministries
E423102 Christian Medical Center, Mubji Mayi
E520002 Health for All, Kinshasa
E581002 PEVKO: Project of Evangelism in the East Kasai
E581502 Luebo Hospital
E581602 IMPROKA (Kasai Literature)
E583002 Faculty of Reformed Theology of Kasai, Ndesha (FRTK)
E862762 Lubondaie Hospital
E864116 Presbyterian Community of Congo – General Support
E864118 Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa – General Support
E864826 Kitchen Gardens, Kinshasa

Disaster Response for Democratic Republic of Congo

DR000088 Disaster Response - Democratic Republic of Congo
DR000171 Democratic Republic of Congo, Children

Equatorial Guinea

Context

The only Spanish-speaking country in sub-Saharan Africa, Equatorial Guinea is also one of the smallest on the continent. With a population of 540,000 and vast oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea, this country has a per capita Gross Domestic Product of more than \$20,000 – nearly 10 times that of neighboring Cameroon and among the world's top 30. Unfortunately, the country's status as the third largest exporter of oil in Africa has produced relatively few benefits for the majority of the population. The country remains 109th out of the 173 countries listed on the Human Development Index. The country's poor infrastructure and the living conditions of its people give credibility to allegations that most of the wealth is siphoned off by the ruling elite. The lack of financial transparency in the public and private sectors and the government's reputation for responding to challenges with repression conspire to inhibit change.



Partner

American Presbyterians began participating in God's work in Africa when they first sent missionaries to the island of Corisco (part of Equatorial Guinea) in 1850. Their work helped to stimulate the formation of the PC(USA)'s current partner, the **Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea** (IRPGE). For many years, even after independence, the Protestant Churches in Equatorial Guinea were not given the same rights as the Roman Catholic Church. That began to change after the current President took power. Given the history and its relative small size, the IRPGE struggles with its self-image.

The PCUSA currently has no congregation or presbytery partnerships with the IRPGE. We will encourage the leaders of the church to develop ideas of partnership that promise mutuality and accountability. PC(USA) personnel will advise PC(USA) congregations on opportunities for the development of such partnerships.

[Andres and Gloria Garcia](#) serve as PC(USA) co-workers in Equatorial Guinea. They support the IRPGE's ministries in fields of evangelism, church growth, education and church administration.

Partnership priorities

Evangelism, Christian Education and Church Growth: The IRPGE has an estimated membership of 5000, shepherded by less than two dozen pastors, most of whom studied theology in Cameroon with French as the language of instruction. Few pastors have theological education beyond a bachelor's degree level.

The PC(USA) supports the efforts of church leaders to expand pastoral and theological education opportunities in ways appropriate to the size of the denomination. We will seek ways to support higher level theological training for several pastors of IRPGE, including collaborating with our partners in Latin America. We support the training of lay evangelists who will carry the Gospel to unreached villages, and regional coordinators and pastors who will supervise and follow up that work. Our common goals are to expand the church into new areas of the country and to reinvigorate the church leaders throughout the country.

Education: The Resurrection School – which offers nursery, elementary and high school education – is a key ministry of the IRPGE. The church also operates three other schools. Administrators face a number of challenges, including the transparent and efficient management of resources in this school of 1500 students. Here, as elsewhere on the continent, those responsible with resource management must contend with high expectations by family and clan and unhealthy rivalries among staff. We will continue to support the IRPGE's education ministry with a focus on improving services without creating dependency. Our mission personnel may help part time with this ministry, but in roles that build the capacities of personnel, establish practical safeguards to help the schools to manage their resources responsibly and encourage personal integrity and trustworthiness.

Health: The IRPGE leadership has not identified its health ministry as a high priority. The church's clinic in the village of Bolondo (the only one visited to date by PC(USA) personnel) lacks trained personnel, equipment and materials. A new government hospital/clinic was constructed nearby. The PC(USA)'s involvement in IRPGE health ministries will be contingent upon the development of a clear vision and plan for public health and HIV/AIDS education.

Development and Food Security: Despite the high rate of GNP per capita in Equatorial Guinea, the typical villager is a subsistence farmer struggling to provide for his or her family. The terrain appears as fertile as the ground in southern Cameroon, yet there is a strong net flow of produce from Cameroon into Equatorial Guinea. The PC(USA) will encourage and support training of church and community members in processes designed to empower and motivate people to participate in the transformation of their communities. We believe that such communities will be better able to care for the marginalized.

Advocacy and Solidarity: If the IRPGE clergy or lay leaders pursue non-violent strategies to hold the Guinean government accountable for its actions and its use of resources, we must be prepared to stand beside them. In the present environment, such actions can be dangerous and costly for Guineans. While we believe that government repression impedes Guineans from realizing the fullness of life Christ desires for each, we must respect our partners' discernment of God's calling and timing and ensure that our actions and statements do not endanger others.

Peacemaking, Reconciliation and Unity: Tensions between pastors, including jealousies and rivalries for positions of power, provoke periodic conflict within the IRPGE. Such conflicts tarnish the church's witness and undermine its evangelism initiatives. The PC(USA) will encourage and support efforts to promote reconciliation within church communities. Furthermore, we will support the training of Guinean Presbyterians in conflict transformation themselves so that they can better respond in situations of disagreement or conflict.

Women: The Women’s Association of the IRPGE does not appear as vibrant or well-organized as its counterparts in our other ecclesiastic partners in the region. Communication and visa problems have stymied PC(USA) efforts to involve women of the IRPGE in several international women’s gatherings. We will continue to encourage women of the IRPGE to connect with others on the continent to share experiences and ideas. We will support them as opportunities arise and resources permit. We will encourage a process of consciousness building among the women with the hope that they will be agents of positive change within their communities.

Mutuality in Mission: The IRPGE and the PC(USA) share the view that presence of PC(USA) mission personnel in Equatorial Guinea is important for our relationship. PC(USA) mission co-workers Andres and Gloria Garcia give expression to our commitment to walk with the IRPGE in ministries of evangelism, church growth, education and church administration. Where living conditions and assignments are suitable we’ll also welcome opportunities for volunteer service in education, information technology, and development (training seminars).

Salary Support for Mission Personnel in Equatorial Guinea

“D” accounts signify Directed Mission Support (for use by churches)

“E” accounts signify Extra Commitment Opportunities (for individual donors)

Garcia, Andrés and Gloria D501720 E200344

Extra Commitment Opportunity Account for Equatorial Guinea

E051748 Reformed Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea (IRPGE) – General Support
E051695 Central Africa Regional Liaison

OTHER NATIONS

The PC(USA) does not currently have direct relations with churches in the other countries of this region: **Chad**, the **Central African Republic**, **Gabon** and the **Republic of Congo**. The Dager Presbyterian Church in Gabon has invited the PC(USA) to be in partnership. This and other possible new partners should be considered very carefully and deliberately, openly expressing Christian love and concern whilst taking into account the broader connections which we can have through ecumenical bodies such as the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA), the [All Africa Conference of Churches \(AACC\)](#), the [World Alliance of Reformed Churches \(WARC\)](#), and the [World Council of Churches \(WCC\)](#).

Our limited personnel resources pose a serious obstacle to begin relationships in countries where we’re not currently involved. At this time, it is not a strategic priority to develop new partnerships in these other countries.

Chad, Gabon and Republic of Congo are all producers of petroleum. The sale of oil contributes significantly to the income of these nations. The leading export of the Central African Republic is diamonds, but other minerals and agricultural products are also exported. This needs to be kept in

mind as we promote transparency in the extractive industries through the Publish What You Pay campaign of which the PCUSA is a member.

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