

**Elim Evangelical Free Church**  
**Vision Trip to the Congo**  
***Summer 2007***



# Vision Trip to the Congo

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### ***Introduction***

Several members of our fellowship (Pastor Martin, Cal Kierum, Stacie Kierum, Larry Short, Debi Tonsager, and Cindy Waple among them) believe that the Lord is leading us to put together a vision trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo during the Summer of 2007 in cooperation with the



Evangelical Free Church International Mission (EFCA-IM), [TouchGlobal \(the EFCA ministries of compassion\)](#), and the Congolese Evangelical Free Church (CEFC). This belief is the result of much prayer and circumstantial evidence, and what we believe is the direct tug of the Holy Spirit on our hearts. We have felt this tug in a unique way and we are seeking to respond. This leading was further confirmed when members of this committee began to engage with the staff from the EFCA who have encouraged our vision for the Congo. It has been further strengthened by both the interest expressed by others at Elim in this trip and by the approval of the Missions Team for the trip.

### ***Guiding Scriptures***

**1 John 3: 16-18** By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's good and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

**James 2:14-17** What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to him, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled" but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

**Matthew 5:16** "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

## ***Background and Purpose***

After many years of EFCA work in the Congo during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the EFCA disengaged from the Congo in the late 1990's. In part, this was due to civil war there, but in part it was also due to the realization that the Lord had allowed the missionaries to plant a healthy church in the Congo; one which could better mature without relying on missionaries to be the administrators.

During the past decade, the CEFC has grown to over 800 congregations and is the second-largest Evangelical Free Church in the world (after the EFC in the USA). In the Ubangi region of northwestern Congo, there is hardly a village that does not have a Free Church congregation. As this church has matured, they have begun to send out missionaries to neighboring countries and to address the problems facing their society from a Christian perspective. They are now asking for those in the U.S. who feel called to join in what they are doing to come to the Congo to see how the Lord is working and to partner with them.



The purpose of this vision/mission trip would be to discover and get further vision for ways we could engage with our Christian brothers and sisters in the Congo to support them in their efforts to bring spiritual and physical healing to a country devastated by years of war and disease (including HIV). It is our understanding that the purpose of this initial trip is mainly to develop relationship – to go, see, and hear how God is moving among the CEFC as it seeks to address these issues and spread the Gospel.

As we visit with the Congolese leadership, it is our hope that there will be opportunities to serve or evangelize with our Congolese brethren. Our goal, should God continue to lead us in this direction, is to establish a long-term relationship with the CEFC. Thus we will go in a posture of listening and discovery.



The leadership of the CEFC has identified several areas of focus that the Lord has laid upon their hearts, including community health, response to HIV (including specific ministries to widows and orphans), and equipping through education the pastors and lay leaders who will work to fulfill the Great Commission.

We hope that our ultimate engagement will be some holistic combination of evangelism/equipping and compassion ministry.

The trip is tentatively scheduled for July 17 – July 31, 2007. This timeframe has been approved by both the Congolese church leadership and our EFCA leadership. The idea is to take between three and five representatives of Elim on the first trip. We will be accompanied by Rachel Martin, who works with TouchGlobal, and Kevin Kompelien, International Leader for Africa with the EFCA-IM. We will be joined by the Congolese Free Church president, Pastor Selenga, and other Congolese church leaders.

## ***What Is the Relationship of This Vision Trip To the HIV/AIDS Crisis in Africa?***

Subsaharan Africa (including the Congo) has by far the largest proportion of HIV/AIDS sufferers in the world. The impact of the disease on this continent is devastating beyond imagination, and the suffering unfathomable. God is calling churches throughout the world to action, not least of all here in the U.S. where the church is blessed with significant resources and therefore has both means and responsibility to help mitigate the crisis.



There may or may not be a medical aspect to our ultimate assistance. It is possible we might work with churches to provide health care or victim support or orphan support. What is exciting, even though we don't know yet if or how we might fit into this ministry, is that the Congolese Free Church has specific programs they are designing to minister to HIV-affected children and widows. We don't have to come up with the solutions; we only have to be willing to serve where the Lord calls us.

## ***Why Not Pour Our Resources Into Compassion or Evangelistic Ministry Here at Home?***



Our team believes wholeheartedly that this effort should not be a substitute for our church investing resources in compassion and evangelistic ministry here at home, and elsewhere. If God is truly calling us to this trip, and we believe that He is, then He will see that the resources are provided. We can trust our Lord in this! He has blessed us with much, and part of our responsibility is to be wise stewards of His resources that He has allowed us to control.

While the purpose of this trip is to see if or how the Lord is leading us to join the Congolese in ministry, we also believe it will have a positive impact on the regional and local efforts of our church to reach out. We have much to learn from the Congolese church about becoming salt and light in a decaying world. The barriers they face in the Congo are surmountable only through God's power, and not through the works of men. This crisis is an opportunity for God's people to "let their light shine," which ultimately brings glory to Him.



We hope to learn from seeing and hearing the faith of our brothers and sisters in the Congo, and pray that this experience will provide fire, zeal, and perspective for ministries at Elim. It is not merely an issue of us sending money to the Congolese or of us assuming we have all

the answers to the problems they face. There is much value in the relationships that will be formed and the Lord's work in those who go that is not accomplished by merely sending of our excess funds. We do believe this trip is also an expression of the fact that God calls us to provide Christian love, in truth and in deed, to our brothers and sisters in the Congo. Between poverty, civil strife, HIV, and spiritual warfare, the

needs in the Congo are great. The leaders of the Congolese Free Church have asked that we would come, not to do for them the work that the Lord has given them to do, but to join with them.

## ***Is It Safe To Send Members of Our Church To Such a Place?***

Despite its recent history of violence, there is much hope for stability in the DRC due to July 30 democratic elections, the first free elections there in more than 40 years. The DRC is an enormous country (the size of the U.S. east of the Mississippi River) and stability is far greater in some places than in others. That said, it is our faith in a righteous and good God that says we can be nowhere safer than in His will. Our contacts in the U.S. Evangelical Free Church have assured us of two things; that they have felt in good hands when hosted by our Congolese brothers and sisters, and that the Congolese are very careful to look out for our safety before inviting us. We will continue to work with our Congolese brethren on this issue, leading up to the trip itself.



*Kevin Kompelien, Africa Director for EFCA-IM, and Pastor Deolo Marc, who heads up the HIV/AIDS ministry of the Congolese Free Church, will be hosting our trip.*

## ***How You Can Be Involved ...***

1. **Prayer** – unlike much of what we do in the American church, this effort is beyond our abilities and resources. We have to come to the point where we realize that only through God can we do this and then give Him the glory. We will need prayer before and during the trip. Family members at home will need prayer. **We also need prayer for those God will send, and for their finances.**



*Rachel Martin and friends in the Congo.*

2. **White Cross** – Chris Bailey is working with Rachel Martin from TouchGlobal to see what White Cross projects might be useful to carry with us. The Free Church supports the hospital and nursing school in Tandala, as well as 35 health centers, and they can always use medical supplies, infant supplies, etc. These would be gifts from our congregation to those in need in the Congo.
3. **Finances** – the per-person cost will be about \$2800 for a two-week trip. We will be seeking to raise funds both inside and outside of the Elim body. Each person going will probably be called on to contribute a substantial portion of the cost themselves.
4. **Ask questions** – Iron sharpens iron. Please feel free to discuss questions or concerns with any of the team members listed above. As we form the group that actually will go over, we'd encourage you to do the same with each of them. We are getting more and more information all the time.
5. **Sponsor an AIDS orphan** – Rachel Martin is heading up TouchGlobal's HIV orphan sponsorship program, which is called "GlobalFingerprints" ... she says: "As we touch a child with Christ's compassion, we leave His fingerprints on that child's life." The CEFC, under the leadership of Pastor Deolo, will be administering this program through the local congregations of the CEFC. You can get on the e-mail distribution list at [www.globalfingerprints.org](http://www.globalfingerprints.org).