History of the International Congo Partnership Ministry & Mission

PHASE ONE

1891:
The connection between Presbyterians in Eastern Virginia and the Congolese dates back to 1891 when William H. Sheppard from Hampton Institute, along with Samuel Lapsley, founded the American Presbyterian Congo Mission at Luebo in Belgian Congo.

1960's -1970's:
Special efforts by the Presbyterian Women, and particularly those in PEVA, raised funds to establish Good Shepherd Hospital in the Kasai region of Congo. Dr. Alice Welch, beloved PEVA member was present at the hospital dedication in 1975.

The hospital was dedicated in 1975. Today the hospital is the only active, full service medical facility within a 100,000 square mile area.

PHASE TWO

1984:
Bayside Presbyterian Church set a goal to raise $42,000 to build a healthcare clinic within the World Health Organization program to provide “Health Care for all Kinshasa.”

1989:

Two clergy and four laymen from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia embarked on a mission trip to the Congo CPK for the purpose of exploring a feasibility study for the establishment of an "International Christian Relationship and Partnership"
1990:
A delegation of three CPK members; The Rev. Tshimungu, General Secretary, clergy and two lay leaders Mr. Lumbaia and Tshibangu of the CPK (Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa) embarked on a mission trip to PEVA on the articles of agreement and guidelines for establishment of this partnership.

Later in that year, both CPK and PEVA took formal action to establish a partnership. Approval was given by Louisville. PC (U.S.A.)

By the end of 1990, The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia raised $239,984 for primary health clinics in the Congo.

1991:
A delegation of two PEVA members, The Rev. David Garth and Mrs. Marie Rattley traveled to the Congo to confirm the partnership and to participate in the dedication of the 5th primary health care clinic in Kinshasa.

The year of 1991 was the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of the Congo.

PHASE THREE
In late 1991, troops under Mr. Mubutu rioted, protesting for more than six months in the Congo. Property was destroyed. Violence was everywhere.

1993:
On faith, a Congolese origin missionary Etienne Bote-Tshiek was called to PEVA to serve as Mission Interpreter and facilitate the working mechanisms of the international partnership. God was giving the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia a challenge.

PHASE FOUR
1997:
A relationship between The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, International Cooperating Ministries (ICM) and Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (CPK) was formed and confirmed.

This relationship gave ICM the opportunity to build churches for CPK under the directions of CPK's General Secretary.
Three churches were built and dedicated in Kinshasa. The Presbyterian Women of The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia and Synod of the Mid-Atlantic also contributed $5,000 toward completion of the Women’s Center.

1998:
Eight CPK church buildings were dedicated. Sister Church Pairing between CPK and the PEVA churches began, grassroots pairing between congregations on both sides of the ocean. Sister Church Pairing between congregations has led to better communication between fellow Christians. Prayers are being lifted to God on behalf of people on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Problems with logistics and banking in the Congo essentially prohibit coordination from being handled within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore PEVA has the opportunity to provide facilitation and coordinate efforts from right here at home. In a sense, we can see what is happening in the Congo as it happens through our Mission Facilitator Etienne Bote-Tshiek.

2000:
Contact was made with the Booth Foundation about the construction of schoolrooms onto each of the new CPK church buildings.
Also, in 2000 there was a delegation from the Congo that came to visit The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. They preached and worshiped with their sister churches. It was a unique experience!

PHASE FIVE

2001:
A group of Presbyterian Women from CPK traveled to PEVA to visit with PEVA’s Presbyterian Women. PEVA’s Presbyterian Women hosted them in their homes. They had a unique experience of worship and fellowship with their sister churches. The Congolese Presbyterian Women also sold their handmade goods to raise money for the Presbyterian Women Center in the Kinshasa.

2002:
Because of the consequences of the continuing rebel fighting in the Congo, the absence of infrastructure in the government, and natural disasters, many Congolese children were starving. The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia’s Presbyterian Women worked with their sister Presbyterian Women in the Congo to start a feeding program for the children of the Congo.
The Presbyterian Women of PEVA applied for and received a Thank Offering grant totaling $12,905. Funds continue to be donated from individuals and churches to the Feeding program. The cost of feeding one child one nutritious meal a day is only $25 per month.

2003:
Strong communication and exchange of messages have been remarkable, resulting in a meaningful PEVA delegation that was planning to visit the Presbyterian Church of the Congo (CPK) in July. But due to worldly events the trip was rescheduled till 2004.

2004:
The Hospital called "Institute Medical Chrétien of Kasai IMCK" celebrated its fiftieth year in March.

Twenty-four delegates went to the Congo on a Congo Mission trip in July for a "Grass Roots" enriching experience. The majority of participants were from PEVA churches paired with CPK churches. PEVA' General Presbyter, Mission Facilitator and a representative from the Presbyterian Women of PEVA led the delegation.

2005:
Congo Advocacy Days, during the week of February 14, 2005, some 24 representatives of various Presbyterian churches around the country met with members of Congress and staff to plead the case for U.S. support in the implementation of a free, fair, transparent and democratic election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

These Presbyterian advocates joined in this humanitarian appeal by more than eleven representatives from the non-violent movement of Congo, as well as The Congo Education Council and the U.S. Congolese community.
The proposed election called for in June 2005 lacked some $165 million required to fully fund the election process. Presbyterian advocates called upon the U.S. government to utilize its resources to support the first ever democratic election in the DRC since it first independence in 1960. *The democratic election was felt to be the first major step needed to restore stability and the people’s confidence in the government of this great African country. A government elected by the people can then start the long and difficult process of returning the DRC to the path of peace, unity, economic growth and wellbeing of the people.*

The Presbyterian advocates applaud President Bush's objective of helping all nations of the world to achieve freedom and democracy.

One long-range vision of the Congo Partnership is to utilize outside resources to generate funding for expansion of the physical presence of Presbyterian communities in the Congo.

**2006:**
The Congo Advocacy Committee worked with the Congo Mission Network with U.S. Senators Obama, Burbin, Brownback and Dewine on a proposed bill S.2125. This broad bill was designed to promote relief, security and democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Democratic elections had not taken place in the DRC yet.

The Year 2006 was critical for the DRC there was an opportunity for democratic elections as well as hope for peace and unity in the heart of Africa. Bill S.2125 passed the House, passed Congress in early December and became Public Law No: 109-456 December 22.

The Congo Mission Network along with PEVA’s Congo Choir Special Task Force planned the Congo Choir Tour.
"Chorale Presbyteriënne Du Congo" visited PEVA from JULY 21-27 2006!

PEVA and members of the Hampton Roads Community had the delightful opportunity to participate in workshops, concerts, worship services and fellowship that featured the Choir, throughout all areas of PEVA. Choir members for CPC and CPK also attended the 217th General Assembly of PCUSA. These choir members spent several days in each presbytery within PCUSA that was active in a partnership relationship with the Congo.

2007:
Twenty-five PEVA delegates and two delegates from the James Presbytery went to the Congo July 11 - July 25th.

This was a hands on mission trip. Some delegates helped to build the GA/CPK office and building that needed repair. There were several groups that worked together with CPK members on different projects, and visited with many CPK churches. The purpose of the trip was to continue to strengthen the partnership. Some key issues that were focused on: Youth, Women, Education, Political, Medical & Health Issues, Economical, and Social Development. God is Good! Jesus is always near constantly directing, protecting and guiding all things for His purpose and our good.

The IPC Committee grew to 14 Sub-Committees after this trip to carry out the work of the ministry more efficiently. Advocacy; Construction; Devotions, Worship & Music; Sister Church Pairing; Finance; Medical; Communications; PW Feeding & Women's Issues; Mission & Travel; Education; Youth, Presbyterian Men; and Female Pastors of CPK & PEVA.
2008:
The International Partnership Committee (IPC) & the Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa (CPK) devised a plan to establish a Cyber-Café in Kinshasa. As there is no mail service inside the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congolese have few ways to communicate and correspondence other than costly cell phone connections, or personal contacts.

Our Presbyterian community of believers is about prayer, communication, and fellowship, which can be possible through regular e-mail exchange. Our friends in the Congo need to hear from us and receive our encouragement. Personal communication is appreciated foremost even above monetary assistance for their many obvious needs. A message sends hope, inspiration and love through which they acquire emotional nourishment. Williamsburg Presbyterian Church gave $1,100 towards the required amount of $8,000 for this project, and initiated a challenge for PEVA sister churches to walk and work together.

Dr. Wilkinson and Dr. Matson of Eastern Virginia Medical School and the Medical IPC Sub-Committee conducted a mid-year review of the malaria treatment evaluation.

Over 1090 mothers have been enrolled into the treatment regimen and over 400 deliveries have occurred. Dr. Wilkinson reviewed blinded sets of smears at the two sites that read them and concluded that the technicians are skilled and accurate in performance of this assay. 31% of the mothers have been positive for malaria parasite in the blood at the first prenatal visit, 13% of the mothers have been positive at delivery, and 2.2% of the newborns have been positive.

A striking seasonal difference in blood smear positivity has been observed, namely, more than 60% of the mothers have been positive at the first prenatal visit at the end of the dry season (September), whereas only 7% were positive well into the wet season (first two weeks of February).

The evaluation was extended so it could be conducted for at least one calendar year, through the end of July 2008.
2009:
Congolese Presbyterian Church Medical Team visited PEVA March 28th-April 5th. Dr. Leon Mubikayi, Medical Director at Institute Medical Chretien du Kasai (IMCK) Good Shepherd Hospital, Bernard Kabibu Binulvu, IMCK Good Shepherd Hospital Administrator and Dr. Jacques Makambo Badibanga, Medical Director and Coordinator of Communauté Presbyterienne de Kinshasa (CPK) Health Centers and Maternities.

As of March of 2009 thirty-three PEVA churches have been paired with thirty-six CPK churches and are whole heartily participating in the sister church pairing program. PEVA’s Presbyterian Women also is paired with the Presbyterian Women in the Congo.

**SISTER CHURCH PAIRING CHART - Updated March 13, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEVA Church</th>
<th>CPK Church</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayside Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Lemba/CPK-Limete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethany Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Bandial I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calvin Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Bongolo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Kingasani II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Portsmouth Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Gombe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Masina III</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Presbyterian Church, Gloucester</td>
<td>CPK - Marais II/CPK-Kisenso I</td>
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<td>First Presbyterian Church, Hampton</td>
<td>CPK - Ngaba</td>
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<td>First Presbyterian Church, Portsmouth</td>
<td>CPK - Bumbu</td>
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<td>First Presbyterian Church, Virginia Beach</td>
<td>CPK - Makala I</td>
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<td>First United Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Muanda/CPK-Kapela</td>
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<td>Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Barumbu/CPK-Kingabua</td>
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<td>Hilton Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Brinkin</td>
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<td>Jamestown Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Ndjilii II</td>
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<td>Kirkwood Presbyterian Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providence Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Masina I</td>
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<td>Royster Memorial Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>Simonsdale Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Ntumuo-Nketo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Presbyterian Church, Norfolk</td>
<td>CPK - Ndjilii III</td>
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<td>CPK - Mont Ngafula</td>
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<td>Yorkminster Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>CPK - Kindele</td>
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</tbody>
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To continue our spiritual and cultural partnership of walking and working together, The 61 Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (PEVA) churches of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America (PCUSA) were happy and full of joy to invite 20 CPK delegates and 1 CPC delegate to come to the United States for a Christian mission trip to PEVA from July 15-31, 2009.
During this mission trip, the following programs were shared: Exchange Culture, Spirituality Exchange, Evangelism, Church Budgets, Women’s Ministry, Youth Ministry, Worship Participation, Strengthening Sister Church Relationships, Construction Projects, and Medical Partnerships. There was also several joint worship services and fellowship time.

During the mission trip PEVA was responsible for local transportation within the bounds of PEVA, meals, fellowship, laundry and other local expenses. CNU graciously housed our Congolese guests in the Dorms.

**2010:**
Nineteen IPC delegates and five EVMS Medical delegates went to the Democratic Republic on a mission trip July 16 - August 1, 2010. This was the third PEVA wide visit to Kinshasa. “Walk, Work and Grow together in Faith for Jesus Christ.” The Majority of this trip was spent on Evangelism Events, Medical Projects, Women, Education, Health Issues, Meetings and Worship with Sister churches.

**2011:**
EVMS Medical Mission Trip, took place in February. Dr. David Matson and three EVMS students traveled to Kinshasa in the DRC. They worked on three medical projects with Dr. Leon Mubikayi at Marie Biamba Mutombo Hospital in the Masina area of Kinshasa and also worked with Dr. Jacques Makambo at the CPK Health Centers and Maternities.
Mission Facilitator Mission Trip March - April, after the unfinished business of the 2010 Mission Trip, the Mission Facilitator traveled to Kinshasa to follow up. He worked with CPK in the areas of CPK-PEVA Sister Church Relationships, especially their mutual communications and financial assistance. The majority of time he spent with CPK churches that have received financial assistance for Feeding, Women ministries and other activities, the CPK PW Center worked with the mechanism and fund transfers from PEVA to CPK. To oversee how those procedures were working. He stressed the concept of transparency, accountability, trust, and good stewardship matters in the handling of funds with the Congolese leadership.

PEVA’s International Congo Partnership Committee hosted the 2011 Congo Mission Network (CMN) conference October 6 -8, 2011 at Bayside Presbyterian Church where more than 114 in attendance. Keynote speakers included Debbie Braaksma, PCUSA Africa office; Jeff Boyd, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker; Dr. Jacques Makambo, CPK Medical Director, Ryan Smith, Presbyterian Representative to the United Nations; Maurice Carney, Friends for Congo; Jayme Cloninger, Enough Project; and the Rev. Kande, Congolese Diaspora.

The Congo Mission Network is among more than 25 PCUSA networks that connect Presbyterians who share a common mission interest. Most participants are involved in mission partnerships through congregations, presbyteries or synods. Network members gather together to coordinate efforts, share best practices and develop strategies.

2012:
Elder Etienne Kasonga Bote-Tshiek retired as PEVA’s Mission Facilitator on March 31, 2012. The International Congo Partnership Committee along with PEVA’s leadership held a retirement ceremony at the April 24, 2012 Presbytery meeting, at Bayside Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach. It was fitting that his retirement ceremony took place at Bayside Presbyterian Church; it is because of Bayside’s initial outreach to the Congo that started a chain of events that brought Bote-Tshiek into the midsts of PEVA.

The International Congo Partnership could not predict what our loving God or has in store for the future of the Congo Ministry. The Ministry mission before and after the Mission Facilitator’s retirement has not changed.

August 26, 2012 the committee voted to change the name to International Partnership Ministries (IPM).

The International Partnership Ministries (IPM) mission is to Sustain, Cultivate and Support International Christian Partnership Relations with Churches and Congregations from Congolese Presbyterian Churches and Congregations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Walking, Working and Growing Together with them in Faith for Jesus Christ.

IPM has been active in DRC advocacy with the US Government and Legislators directly or through PCUSA CMN.