

## THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

CNN reported on December 9, 2004, that “Congo is the deadliest war the world has seen since the end of the Second World War; . . . these staggering figures have gone largely ignored by the media and world leaders” (Dr. Richard Brennan, International Rescue Committee). The report went on: “Six years of continuing conflict [in the civil war] in Congo have claimed 3.8 million lives, nearly half of them children. . . . Congo’s death toll remains a third higher than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa 18 months after major peace deals.”

CNN cited an IRC survey that found “2.7 deaths every month out of every 1,000 children under 5, a child mortality rate twice that even of sub-Saharan Africa.” Furthermore, “seventy percent of Congo’s estimated 60 million plus people still have no secure access to food.”



“The size of Congo—a nation as big as Western Europe—and the length of Congo’s conflict have helped heighten the death toll and limit outside awareness of civilian suffering.”

The Équateur province (Ubangi-Mongala region) in northwest Congo, home to nearly 5 million people, was devastated in the war. Homes, schools, and hospitals were looted and burned. Roads are badly damaged, bridges have been destroyed. There is only spotty access to electricity and clean water. Farmers cannot get to markets to sell their produce. Many children spend part of the school day rebuilding their own schools.



While fighting continues in parts of eastern Congo, the northwest area is stabilizing. It is time now to rebuild—and the Paul Carlson Partnership has developed a practical and comprehensive plan. Through the Congo Project, we are addressing needs under three broad, systemic headings: health, poverty, and education.

For nearly seven decades the Evangelical Covenant Church has been working in this area of Congo. In that time, the local church that was birthed by the earliest missionaries and nurtured by Dr. Paul Carlson and others has become a strong and independent church, known as the CEUM, with 178,000 members. The Paul Carlson Partnership works side by side with the CEUM, bringing resources and expertise as needs are identified by local leaders.

The CEUM operates 4 hospitals and 73 clinics, serving about one million people in the region. In 2003 there were 11 Congolese doctors and 173 nurses, plus 80 nursing students in training at the Karawa Medical Technical Institute, also operated by the church. The CEUM also has 180 elementary schools with over 41,000 students, and 84 secondary schools with 8,000 students. One out of every four persons in northwest Congo is dependent upon the CEUM for some type of service.