

DEAR FRIENDS

By now, you are likely aware of the situation that has caused us to bring an end to several years of meaningful work and to shift our sights to new ways of serving God's purposes in the world. We are speaking of bandage rolling and the wonderful work you have done—whether you have been involved for decades or for just a few months or years. This is a change—a big one, for sure.

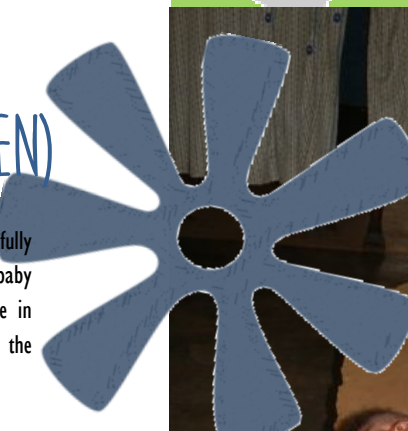
We are asking you to embrace this change enthusiastically! As women of the Covenant, we have dealt with change often—in fact, we've often been the instigators of change. So this is familiar ground! But for now, I have two things to communicate in this letter: **Thank you** and **Don't Stop!** Let me explain...



THANK YOU! (AWESOME WOMEN)

Deepest thanks and gratitude for the ways in which you have given so lovingly and faithfully by re-purposing bed sheets and making them into medical supplies. The bandages, baby layettes, and midwife kits have helped thousands of babies get off to a better start in life in a country that has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Thank you for the countless hours you have dedicated to bless our sisters in Christ and their children.

Thank you for the faithful financial gifts you have given to help get the bandages and baby goods from the warehouse in Maryland, across the Atlantic, to Karawa, Congo where the CEUM medical work is based. It's a long, arduous, and expensive journey. Your generous gifts have made the journey possible, several times in the last few decades, and we are grateful. But! While we've stopped rolling bandages, we can't stop helping women in Congo!



Even though the bandage rolling stops, we must not stop helping Congo! Read on...

DON'T STOP! (HELPING)

Yes, we've stopped rolling bandages and making baby goods. But as women who care deeply about people in Congo, **we can't stop helping!** We can continue in ways that might be even better.

The women in this picture are widows who live in Karawa, Congo. They are making items that they sell to support further ministry. They are one of the groups with skills to make baby layettes and medical bandages for the hospitals and clinics. If we work together to raise funds to pay them a reasonable wage, they will have money for food, for their children's school fees, and for electricity—resulting in a better quality of life. When they spend that money, the whole community benefits. We envision groups of women like these widows coming together, receiving training, and industriously serving as our 'hands' in Congo.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

GET CREATIVE!

So here's how it's changing: Since it is no longer practical to roll bandages and send them, we can instead provide the funds to pay Congolese women—our sisters in Christ in the CEUM—to make these things on our behalf. Women in the U.S. and Canada still want to work together doing good for women in Congo. We know that's what you want too.

So we invite you to continue to gather, enjoy conversation and productive work for God's kingdom, and to generate funds to pay women in Congo. This will give them the means by which to improve their own lives. We know, fund raising sounds challenging, but not when you think about some of the new opportunities out there! **Here are a few ideas:**

Capitalize on the current interest in hand-made items on Pinterest and Etsy. Visit our board at www.pinterest.com/WomenMinistries for inspiration. Identify items you can create, and come together regularly—just as you did in the past—to make fun and beautiful things. Enjoy the same connections you made while rolling bandages. But instead, make items and sell them to one another, to your church family, and your broader community. Or you can bring them to your conference Women Ministries Spring Celebration or fall retreat! There are all kinds of ways to make this work. This is a win!

GET ICONIC!

As a group you may not want to make a variety of things, so make just one thing that becomes a symbol of the help we provide in Congo—a necklace, pin, bracelet, t-shirt, sticker, or something else. When you identify one thing that becomes a symbol of the work, and you create those, you are helping educate and inform others. When you sell this iconic item (at an intentionally inflated, fundraising price), everyone can show their support for this effort. You'll still be coming together to connect over a shared vision for ministry, enjoying time together and building relationships.



CREATE



SIMPLY GIVE

GET RESOURCEFUL!

Perhaps your group isn't big on making items, but you can do something else. So look to your assets and do that—perhaps a rummage sale, a bake sale, a gift basket raffle, or something else that is good for your group. Set a financial goal and let everyone know how you are doing with it. When you hit the goal, celebrate, and send the funds into Women Ministries and know that your work continues to help women in Congo. **We promise to let you know how it's going.**

SIMPLY GIVE!

Your group has given generously to the Congo bandage fund in the past—that is how we have been able to send the containers. There is no need to stop this faithful support. When you give this way, rather than sending a container, your gifts will help us bring the needed changes to empower women in Congo to do this work. Truthfully, we need your continued gifts to make this all work.

FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE. --MATTHEW 10:8

So now, we hope you are ready to **EMBRACE THE CHANGE!** When I went to Congo in May, I met hundreds of women, most of them living in difficult conditions. Yet they are eager for opportunity, eager for a chance to work hard and better their lives. Please, don't stop your efforts to help in Congo. Embrace the Change, and get started on a new direction!

Meagan Gillan
Women Ministries

EMBRACE THE CHANGE



PRAY



Check out our Pinterest board at www.pinterest.com/WomenMinistries



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An initiative of Make and Deepen Disciples of the Evangelical Covenant Church