



Martin Gordon

Update from the Edges no. 5 | July 2026



Location: DR Congo



What I do: Peacemaking, church planting and building up the body of Christ as part of my role as Bishop of Goma



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life to reach their God-given potential

Dear friends,

It uplifts and inspires me when I hear news from other people connected to CMS working with people pushed to the edges of life. Recently I read about Alison in Kyiv, Ukraine, who shared how answers to daily small prayers and witnessing incredible miracles keep her going as she serves God in a warzone. You can read her story using the link at the bottom of my update. You can also read about displaced disciples in Ethiopia – CMS partners are helping to design training for church leaders living in refugee camps who have never had access to theological teaching before.

The 17th Ebola outbreak in DRC in 50 years was officially declared by the Congolese government on 15 May. This epidemic is caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus for which there is no vaccine and no cure. The fatality rate is around 30 per cent. By the time the outbreak was declared, Ebola had already taken root in two remote mining communities and the world was playing catch-up. The World Health Organisation estimates it will take 18–24 months until it is over.

The epicentre is around 500 miles north of Goma, and as of July Goma had only had one case: that of a woman who had travelled from the north, fell ill when she arrived in the city, but who has since recovered. Travel to and from the affected area is severely restricted. Borders with Uganda have been largely closed, but Rwanda has reopened theirs.

Ebola is seen as a disease of compassion, transmitted by human touch, particularly to those caring for the sick and dying. There are strict protective measures put in place by health authorities to prevent transmission – around quarantine of suspected cases, isolation of confirmed cases and safe burials for those who have died from the disease. But these are often misunderstood and resisted by the population, as they challenge deeply help cultural practices around family responsibility, dignified death and burial.

As with the last outbreak in 2018–20, there is scepticism as to whether the disease is real, introduced by Western governments to control the population or introduced by Western and local NGOs as a way of making money. Last time there were nearly 500 attacks on health facilities. This time several health care centres have already been burned to the ground, health care workers attacked and coffins forced open to say goodbye to loved ones.

With previous outbreaks, when the churches acted quickly and together it had a major impact on preventing the spread of the disease and bringing it under control. In Goma, and with our sister dioceses closer to the epicentre, we are focused on awareness-raising, challenging complacency and providing reliable information to



Holding an initial press conference with health authorities to address the Ebola outbreak

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To the edges**



counter the fake news circulating about where the disease came from, how you can get it and the cures.

Working with the local health authorities, we held press conferences trained senior denominational leaders and made a joint public declaration. We hosted seminars on symptoms, transmission and protection for all diocesan clergy and headteachers, distributing handwashing kits, temperature guns and usage guidance.

A very public repentance

In June I finished my circuit of confirmations across the archdeaconry of Goma with a joint service at which the remote sub-parish of Mudja joined a city centre parish of Holy Trinity. The 25 candidates from Mudja walked almost 10 kilometres there and back, as it is currently too risky for me to travel there. They were joined in a five-hour service by the 45 candidates from Holy Trinity.

During the service Manasseh, one of the evangelists at Holy Trinity who had been suspended for drunkenness (alcohol is prohibited for Anglicans across the diocese), publicly repented and apologised. He spoke in an honest and moving testimony about how alcohol had almost cost him his wife and family, had broken relationships with people within the church and was leading him on a road to poverty.

He apologised to his family, the church and the clergy, was assured of God's forgiveness and restored back into relationship. The challenge is now to walk with him as he rebuilds his relationships and ministry. Much of the ungodly behaviour among church members is known but covered up. Our hope is that others will be inspired by his testimony to live lives of greater integrity and honesty.

Laying solid foundations

In the last few months, we have been encouraged by some major building projects across the diocese, both in Goma and in the archdeaconries. In Goma we laid the foundation stone for a new theological college, which has been many months in coming and fraught with challenges. It will mean students no longer have to sleep 10 to a dormitory, they will have their own classrooms and library, and we will have a campus dedicated to theological training.

In Walikale, we have finished our guesthouse, which will generate income for the continued support of evangelism, church-planting and development. Walikale is our remote archdeaconry in the forest, where we've grown from almost nothing to 14 churches in the last three years and it is the only part of the diocese at present which is still under control of the Kinshasa government.

In Rubaya, the city containing the coltan mines at the heart of the current conflict, we were "strongly encouraged" by the M23 authorities to replace our wooden shops with concrete shops, which we have done and increased the number from 8 to 14. Rubaya is the commercial centre of Masisi and we should recover all our building costs within three years, although there are always challenges managing income-generating projects at a distance.

Please pray with me for:

- ▶ the church to continue to take seriously its role at the forefront of the Ebola response
- ▶ the rapid development of a treatment and vaccine for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola
- ▶ the completion of the building projects in the diocese that have been started.

Every blessing, Martin



Photos from top to bottom: Anthea and I with evangelist Manasseh; laying the foundation stone for the new theological college; new guesthouse in Walikale (before painting) – now open for business; Venerable Sadiki blessing the new shops in Rubaya.



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

I hope that you're inspired as you read about Alison in Kyiv, Ukraine, who is seeing many answers to prayer as she faithfully serves God. And that you get a moment to read about displaced disciples in Ethiopia – church leaders taking part in bespoke training designed for people living in refugee camps. Read more stories about empowering people pushed to the edges at churchmissionsociety.org/empower

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