



STEP INLAND FOR LENT

PRAYER JOURNEY



Take part in our virtual journey from Kenya to Chad and support us as we reach those who have yet to hear of Jesus.

 eu.aimint.org/stepinland

Introduction



The journey from Mombasa to Chad was the original vision of our founder. He wanted to reach the inlands of Africa with the gospel. To go where missionaries had never travelled and take the gospel to those with no opportunity to hear it. Our vision remains the same, so over this Lent period we'll travel that journey virtually.

As we progress, we'll share not only about the places and people groups we're passing through, but about today's unreached areas of Africa. Lent is a period of preparation, of waiting and reflection, so as well as sharing information along the journey, we'll also give some questions for reflection, giving you a chance to consider your personal journey and what the Lord might be saying to you individually.

We won't visit all of AIM's missionaries in each country and will mainly focus on missionaries sent by UK churches. If you want to find out more about any of our workers, you can visit:



The route: Mombasa, Kenya, to Ndjamena, Chad



2 MARCH

We start in Mombasa, Kenya's oldest and second-largest city. Situated in the southeast of the country with a large port on the Indian Ocean, it has been a trading centre since 900AD. AIM's founder, Peter Cameron Scott, landed here in 1895. He described seeing Arabs in white robes, Swahili people wearing red fez hats, and Indian women clad in brilliant saris. Today's Mombasa is still as cosmopolitan. As we start this journey, why not pause a moment and imagine the sights and smells. Pray for the Lord's leading and guiding as we begin.

3 MARCH

Because of its strategic location, Mombasa has historically been controlled by many countries. It was also a hub of the slave trade. Stop to pray, "Father, forgive the sins of past prejudice and slowness to recognise evil. Stir those in power today to work for the eradication of all forms of slavery. Sustain all trafficked and exploited peoples — those who are sold and abused as commodities for others' gratification. Give your church courage to stand for truth and justice."

4 MARCH

From Mombasa we travel between Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks, home to magnificent wildlife and life giving springs and lakes. If your miles take you outside today, why not slow down and observe the natural world around you. Stop and thank God for the beauty of his creation, and that the whole created world we live in celebrates how good and glorious he is.

Man-eating lions

In 1935 a pair of man-eating lions terrorised workers building the railway that runs alongside the road here. They are estimated to have killed 135 people in nine months before they were eventually shot. There's a film about them called 'Lions of the Tsavo'.

5 MARCH

As we reach Kenya's capital, let's pop in on some missionaries. Tony and Cath Swanson recently moved to Nairobi as Tony now leads our Eastern Region office, directing the work of AIM in Kenya and Tanzania and overseeing the ministry of around 130 missionaries. Pray for them as Tony adjusts to his new role and they get used to life in Nairobi.



8 MARCH

Missionary life can be lonely, difficult, and hold disappointment. Providing appropriate support and help for missionaries on the field is very important. Today we'll pass by AIM's counselling centre, Tumaini (a Swahili word meaning 'hope'). Pause to pray for both the missionaries serving as counsellors and for those who are using their services.



11 MARCH

Give thanks that the African church is strong across much of Kenya. Pray for African church leaders and mission leaders as they seek to inspire and encourage Kenyan Christians to reach out to the remaining unreached people in their country and beyond. That might even mean serving cross-culturally among the large Gujarati, Somali and Punjabi communities in Kenya.

Olympic gold medals

You might see some of the world's most famous long-distance runners pass you on this road. Eliud Kipchoge, the current Olympic marathon gold medal holder, was born and still lives near here.

6 MARCH

"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long."

Psalm 25:4-5

First world war

Intense fighting during the early months of the First World War happened on the fields between Mombasa and Nairobi as British troops defended the new railway from nearby German occupied lands.

9 MARCH

Heading north, we travel along an escarpment to Kijabe. AIM established a mission station here in 1903, which quickly became the hub of AIM's ministry. In 1915 Kijabe Hospital was established. Now run by the Africa Inland Church of Kenya, it is a centre of outreach to people groups who come from all over Kenya and beyond to access medical care. Pray for missionaries Pete Halestrap, Katy Linley, and Holly*, who serve there as doctors, as well as the rest of the medical team.

**Name changed for security*

Mount Longonot

Our route takes us past Mount Longonot, one of Kenya's 31 volcanoes. It last erupted in the 1860s.

12 MARCH

Fortunately, our virtual travel isn't affected by Covid-19, but in reality, crossing the border from Kenya to Uganda would mean showing a negative test result as well as our passports. Please continue to pray against another wave of Covid-19 across African countries, where many still don't have access to tests, and where hospital treatment can often be unaffordable. Pray for greater availability of vaccines.

7 MARCH

AIM's Southern Region office is also based in Nairobi. It's the administrative hub for work in Namibia, Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Madagascar and other Indian Ocean islands. Pray for Chris Power and Mat Linley, UK missionaries, who work as part of the office team here. As they serve the whole team in their care, pray that they would partner well with churches in southern Africa to see unreached people groups reached with the good news of the gospel.



Chris



Mat

10 MARCH

Kijabe is also home to Rift Valley Academy (RVA), AIM's boarding school. As well as Kenyan students, RVA serves about 500 missionary children, representing 30 nationalities and 80 mission organisations and churches. Give thanks that RVA supports current mission work whilst investing in young people and supporting them through their education. Pray for Peter Wilson (RVA's superintendent), his wife Katy (principal of the primary school), Sarah Power (a teacher), and a number of short term missionaries who are serving there. Pray too for the children of AIM Europe missionaries who are studying there.

13 MARCH

"We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you."

Psalm 33:20-22

14 MARCH



AIM began working in Uganda in 1918, in partnership with the Anglican church. Give thanks for this partnership and for the many churches planted throughout Uganda as Ugandans and expat missionaries work together to share Christ. Today, Seb Allwright's role is to work with increasing numbers of Ugandan church leaders to help them create a vision for mission among their congregations. Pray for him and that many others would catch that vision.

Lake Victoria

20 miles to our left is Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake by area and the world's second-largest fresh water lake.

17 MARCH



Uganda's schools reopened in January following the longest school lockdown (of nearly two years) in the world. Pray for these young people as they readjust to school and give thanks for not only the increased levels of education they will now receive, but that schools are also often a place of sanctuary from what can be a tough outside world. Pray too for teachers who had to find new sources of income during the lockdown, that they would return and be passionate about teaching those in their care.

20 MARCH



"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing."

Zephaniah 3:17

15 MARCH



We are now entering the Karamoja region, home to the Karimojong people, who historically have been marginalised and ignored due to their reputed fierceness and cattle raiding, which has contributed to a lack of development. More recently Karamoja has been considered a safe area – we can travel on! Pray that more Karimojong people will come to know God in all his fullness.



16 MARCH



Caroline Bell lives in Karamoja. She seeks opportunities to share the gospel and to encourage and equip local believers to do the same, through friendships, Bible study or discipleship groups, and in partnership with the local church. Please pray for Caroline today, and why not also reflect on how, in your friendships and through your church, you are reaching people with the gospel?

Crossing the equator

We have crossed the equator! It's been said that water spirals down plug holes in different directions in each hemisphere. This is a myth; the truth is that water tends to flow down the plug hole in the direction it is introduced into a sink!

18 MARCH



In November last year, Uganda was subject to terrorist attacks killing four and injuring at least 30 people. Pray for victims of terrorism around the world: "Welcome into your arms the victims of violence and terrorism. Comfort their families and all who grieve for them. Help us in our fear and uncertainty and bless us with the knowledge that we are secure in your love."



19 MARCH



As we prepare to leave Uganda, we will travel through lands belonging to the Ik people. An Ik legend tells how God created herders by letting cattle down to them from heaven by a rope and giving them spears. To the Ik, he gave only the digging stick, with the order never to kill. As such, they are very proud of their peace-loving culture. Most Ik people have yet to hear of Jesus. There are only a few churches in their lands, and even fewer using the Ik language (Icetod) to share the gospel. Pray for Ugandan missionaries learning Icetod so they can share more effectively, and for more missionaries to go to the Ik.

21 MARCH



Today we cross into South Sudan. It became the world's newest country on 9 July 2011, ending Africa's longest-running civil war. The end of the war though was not the end of South Sudan's problems. Communities have been hit hard over the last three years by internal conflicts, major flooding incidents, and the impact of Covid-19, all of which have deepened an already dire humanitarian crisis. Cry out to the Lord for the people of South Sudan, and for their leaders. Pray that when hope is in short supply, they would find it in Jesus.

22 MARCH



Give thanks that despite many challenges facing South Sudan, the church is growing. According to Joshua Project, 92% of the population are in people groups that have been reached by the gospel. From the outset, AIM's work in South Sudan was supported by Congolese Christians. Today AIM's missionaries support African workers and South Sudanese men and women as they take the good news of Jesus into the remaining groups who have yet to hear of him.

Coming in to land

There are 85 airports in South Sudan. Out of these, only three have paved runways.

23 MARCH

The Boya Hills stretch out in front of us, taking us towards the Laarim people. Here, an AIM team works in three different villages. Give thanks as they share, "We have been very encouraged as our three Sunday morning gatherings have seen more growth and consistency recently. An early believer is now ministering to his family and taking part in leading others. There are weekly gatherings in ten different locations, and we are seeing more people undertaking literacy practice so they can engage with the Bible."

Angelo is a Laarim believer



26 MARCH

Nearly four million people in South Sudan have been driven from their homes by conflict and resulting poverty. Half are displaced within South Sudan, many others live in some of the world's largest refugee camps on its borders. "Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger; homeless and hungry. Bless those who work to bring them relief. Inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts."

29 MARCH

Watch out for giraffes as we travel through one of Africa's oldest national parks, Garamba. Once a dangerous area, with fighters from South Sudan and the Lord's Resistance Army targeting elephants for ivory sale, the park now employs 500 full-time local staff with 2,000 more on short-term contracts. Give thanks that the growing ranger force provides security not only to wildlife, but also to tens of thousands of people living around the park, slowly returning peace to this corner of the world again.

24 MARCH

AIM has recent or current work among the Laarim, Lopit, Toposa and Didinga people groups in South Sudan. To continue our ministry, we need more people willing to go. As you clock up your miles today, why not pray about how you could be involved. Could you go? Could you raise awareness of these needs in your church, or could you get involved with more fundraising projects to allow others to go?

Find your fit

If you're considering mission, why not take our quiz and see if you can find where you fit in? Visit: eu.aimint.org/findyourfit.

27 MARCH

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

African proverb

"It is a fool who rejoices, when a neighbour is in trouble" – South Sudanese proverb.

30 MARCH

The HIV pandemic has fallen off our radar in the Global North but in Africa it is still a huge health challenge, stretching the health resources of many African countries. Annemarie Boks works in Adi, DR Congo as a Director of an Aids Awareness Programme established by the CECA 20 (Communauté Evangélique au Centre de l'Afrique) church. Pray for her as she prepares workshops for church leaders that encourage and equip them to serve people living with HIV and to model to their churches an acceptance of those with HIV.

Annemarie



25 MARCH

Today we're in Juba, crossing the White Nile which flows north into the Sudd, the largest wetland in Africa. It acts as a giant filter that controls and normalises water quality as well as regulating flooding. Join us in praying, "Creator of all, we thank you that the earth is yours, and everything in it. Give us eyes to see the beauty and possibility in all you have created, help us not to take it for granted."

The Sudd swamp

For many years the Sudd swamp proved an impenetrable barrier to navigation along the Nile. The ancient Egyptians failed to reach the areas south of it, and it also marked the limit of Roman penetration. In later times, the Sudd hindered the search for the source of the Nile.

28 MARCH

Our route takes us into the Democratic Republic of Congo and skirts the border with South Sudan. DR Congo is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa. With a population of over 75 million, it is the most populated, officially Francophone, country in the world. Gilles and Myriam Bonvallat head up our French office and seek to raise up more missionaries to go to Francophone countries in Africa. Pray for them today, and for volunteers to work with them to enthuse the church in France for mission.

31 MARCH

The church in much of DR Congo is strong, responsible for Bible schools, primary schools, secondary schools, medical schools, and universities. Yet there are pockets of people where the gospel is not known. Spend some time praying for the church in DR Congo to be mission minded, and also for the UK church, your church, to prioritise sharing the gospel with those who don't know the full story of Christ.



1 APRIL

DR Congo is among the most resource-rich countries on the planet, with an abundance of gold, tantalum, tungsten, and tin – all minerals used in electronics such as cell phones and laptops. Pray that leaders would be able to mine these resources in ways that benefit the whole population and lead to overall improvements to the country's infrastructure.

International football

Arthur Masuaku who plays for the Premier League football team West Ham, represents DR Congo internationally.

2 APRIL

Justin and Clement are Congolese missionaries, seeking to reach people in their own country, working in Manonga, Bas-Uele, to plant churches among the Barambu and Zande people. The region is known for its heavy spiritual oppression. People, even pastors, are nominally Christian but their lives are ruled by witchcraft. But they told us about one village where, "Mothers accepted Christ and cut the talisman off their children. Whole families found peace and freedom."



3 APRIL

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33

Elephants and gorillas

More forest elephants and lowland gorillas live in the forests of CAR than almost any other place in Africa.

4 APRIL

We are now at a border tripoint, where South Sudan, DR Congo and Central African Republic (CAR) meet. These borders, and many others in Africa, were drawn by European powers during the colonial age, a time that became known as the 'scramble for Africa'. Just as Africa was used to benefit and empower European countries and their populations, today we continue to exploit others for our convenience. Spend some time thinking about the difference you can make, through things like your buying choices or the power you have to lobby your local MP. How can you and your church 'act justly'?

5 APRIL

CAR has been fighting a civil war since 2012. These years of conflict and instability have destroyed infrastructure and government institutions, leaving millions of Central Africans without access to health care and food. Only 3% have access to running water. It is one of the world's most difficult places to live. Pray for mercy for the people of CAR. Pray for the children with nearly half of the country under 14.

Humanitarian assistance

The UN estimates that 1.3 million children in CAR are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. Approximately 14,000 child soldiers have been recruited by armed forces on all sides. Some have been kidnapped, but others join voluntarily for protection or to avenge a loved one's death.

6 APRIL

Spanning a length of 1,362km, the Evangelical Community of Churches in CAR exists from Bangboui to Bangui. Faithful pastors proclaim the Word of God, even in refugee camps, using loudspeaker systems powered by 12V batteries. Church leaders trained in trauma healing continue to minister using solar-powered handheld MP3 players embedded with challenging stories and Scripture. Give thanks that Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18.

7 APRIL

Our road leads us up from the capital, Bangui, skirting the Nana-Barya Faunal Reserve. Established in 1952, the reserve is named after the Nana Barya River which borders it in the north. The reserve covers an area of 893 square miles and is an area of lion conservation. Give thanks for its immense beauty. In this land of rainforests, rivers and abundant savannah, may the natural resources be used to bless its people.

African proverb

"When elephants fight, the grass suffers"
- A proverb from CAR

8 APRIL

The first AIM missionaries arrived in Chad in 1987, working alongside other mission agencies and a Chadian church, the Eglise Evangelique au Tchad (EET), some 92 years after our founder's vision to reach the Inlands of Africa. In 1991 AIM reported 115 people groups were without a church. Today, Joshua Project registers 80 people groups without gospel witness. Give thanks for the 35 people groups reached in the last 30 years.

Bring your umbrella...

Although one third of Chad is in the Sahara, rainfall in Chad's southwest tip, where we are travelling is roughly the same annual amount as in the UK. We'll be passing through woodland savannah and deciduous forests.

9 APRIL

The majority of the 80 people groups still waiting to hear the Easter message in Chad are Muslim groups situated in the north of the country, with the south containing the large Christian population. Pray for Dr Ann today as she works among one of the northern groups. She is waiting for team members to join her and develop the ministry. Pray too for southern Christians moving to the north for employment opportunities, that they would reach out to their neighbours and inspire their churches to join us in evangelism.

10 APRIL

*"Rejoice greatly,
Daughter Zion! Shout,
Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes
to you, righteous and
victorious, lowly and
riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a
donkey."*

Zechariah 9:9

11 APRIL

The local government in Chad has invited AIM, knowing we are a Christian organisation, into an area among an unreached Islamic people group to help run the local government centre. Pray for Mark and Hannah who are joining this work. They will be teaching basic healthcare, running English language classes and creating sports initiatives. Give thanks for this opportunity to build relationships and share about Christ.

12 APRIL

Chad is oil rich and companies are now starting to extract and utilise these reserves, giving new employment opportunities for young Chadians. Many of them need English for these roles, so AIM is involved in language teaching, using the Bible as an English text. Pray for Paul and other AIM workers involved in this ministry, that as they develop friendships with their students they may have opportunities to talk more about the Scriptures and what they mean for us.

13 APRIL

Pray for Hannah, an AIM missionary who teaches at Wellspring Academy. Wellspring serves the children of cross-cultural Christian workers in Chad, providing a quality education, a safe space for the students to talk, interact with others and grow in their faith.

Third culture kids

Third culture kids (TCKs) grow up outside their parents' culture and their passport countries. A Denizen survey in 2011 found 30% grow up to have postgraduate qualifications — and 85% speak two or more languages.

14 APRIL

MAUNDY THURSDAY

'The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

15 APRIL

GOOD FRIDAY

'He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

Isaiah 53:5-6



16 APRIL EASTER SATURDAY

Father God we thank you for all that we have learnt on this journey. As we celebrate Easter, may we not forget those who have yet to hear of all Jesus has done for them. Guide us, Lord, as we consider how we can best be your hands and feet in taking your gospel to all nations.

17 APRIL EASTER SUNDAY

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

1 Peter 1:3

