



Mission to Heal: Sharing Medical Knowledge at Africa's Pole of Inaccessibility

- By [Glenn Geelhoed](#)

Overview

Some might ask why Dr. Glenn Geelhoed has the right to make wrenching life-and-death decisions about the impoverished people he treats. Simply, where he travels, there is no one else to make them. This is especially true in the Central African Republic, where the so-called government provides no security and no infrastructure. *Mission to Heal* is the story of several weeks in the CAR teaching, healing, and learning.

This is a tale of Western and indigenous caregivers operating side-by-side on the fringes of surgical civilization. Day by day, Glenn and his teams operate without electricity, with limited supplies, often with only local anesthesia. Their patients are stoic, and the supporting caregivers are resourceful and generous in the extreme.

Many believe that the Zande and Mbororo people in this region, very near the most remote point on the African continent, are beyond help. Yet Glenn tells a different story--sometimes tragic, but frequently funny and often hopeful. Despite the backdrop of marauding invaders, refugee camps, and a deep history of geopolitical instability, Glenn works with the local people to develop a sustainable healthcare program--work he has been doing around the world for more than forty years.

The feats of his caregiving teams and the indigenous communities in which they work reveal a crucial lesson for our time: humility, perseverance, and resilience can be effective weapons against some of the world's greatest

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Meet the Author

Glenn W. Geelhoed is the founder of Mission to Heal, an organization that sends medical practitioners and students to places of great need to develop indigenous medical capabilities. He is a Fulbright Scholar, past president of the Washington Academy of Surgeons, an inductee of the Academie de Chirurgie de Paris, 2005 recipient of the Medical Mission Hall of Fame Award, 2006 recipient of the George Washington University Medical Center's Faculty Distinguished Service Award, 2009 recipient of the American College of Surgeons' Volunteerism Award for International Outreach, and 2013 recipient of the University of Michigan Medical Center Alumni Society's Distinguished Service Award.

He holds advanced degrees in international affairs, philosophy, anthropology, epidemiology, tropical medicine, and executive leadership in education, has run more than one hundred thirty marathons, and each year spends many months in remote corners of the globe on medical missions to treat the poorest populations on earth.