

Author Ruth K. Clemens of “A Quest for Purpose” Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

BALTIMORE, MD, UNITED STATES, June 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ruth K. Clemens, former international program director with the Mennonite Central Committee, opens the door to a life lived on the edges of history and the heart of community. Her newly released memoir, “A Quest for Purpose,” published by Lucid Books, explores themes of calling, faith, and belonging through vivid accounts from her childhood in the Congo, her work with asylum seekers and her own search for meaning.



Born during her parents furlough in Illinois and whisked back to the Congo at just eight months old, Clemens grew up on a remote mission station among the Bashilele people. Her early years were marked by both idyllic adventure and the shadow of geopolitical change. The chaos of Congo's 1960 independence forced her family to evacuate, an experience recounted with immediacy and care in the memoir's second chapter, “Journey out of Congo.” Clemens shares the gripping sense of displacement and loss as her childhood home became a place to which she could not safely return. “As a child who had only lived in Banga, the Congo was my home. Leaving was both urgent and bewildering,” she shares.

The book is not just a collection of personal stories; instead it offers pointed observations on privilege, community, and what it means to search for purpose. Clemens writes candidly about her experiences as a white child of Mennonite missionaries, examining how her family was affected by, and at times complicit in, structures of colonialism. “It's important that we all recognize what we have and to cultivate humility about our places in life,” she reflects.

Finding Purpose Across Borders

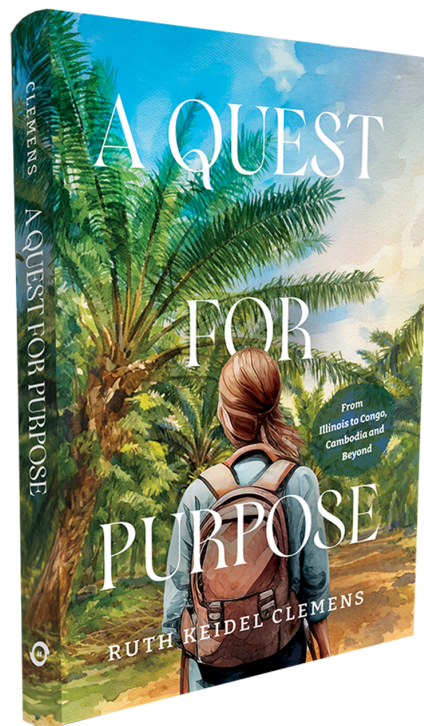
Clemens' commitment to service did not end with her childhood. Her career with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) took her across the world. She and her husband served as country representatives in embargo-era Cambodia, raising three young children in a context of scarcity, uncertainty, and resilience. Later, as MCC's international program director, Clemens would guide projects in over 45 countries.

Throughout, the thread of faith and community remains unbroken. The title, "A Quest for Purpose," is as much an invitation to readers as it is a personal reflection. "The whole movement of the book is about finding your calling wherever you are, loving God and neighbor and asking what that looks like in daily life," Clemens explains.

A Deeply Personal Perspective on Immigration

Now based in Baltimore, Clemens manages the Reservoir Hill House of Peace, a unique communal home that welcomes about 17 individuals at a time, half of whom are asylum seekers from Africa, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Her firsthand work with immigrants grounds her reflections on current debates about migration. "People do not leave home out of choice. They are fleeing desperate, untenable situations," she asserts.

Clemens brings nuanced insight to the discussion. She critiques both simplistic narratives that paint all immigrants with the same brush and governmental failures to adequately prepare



communities for demographic change. Yet she steadfastly returns to the power of community and the importance of recognizing each person's story.

Resilience Rooted in Family History

One of the memoir's most poignant chapters, "Developing Resilience and Determination (Chapter Four)," delves into Clemensfamily legacy. Her grandmother's family lost half its members in the 1918 flu pandemic and this history of resilience has shaped Clemens outlook. "It set a core strain of determination to live a life with meaning and purpose," she says.

Her narrative is equally attentive to the moments of beauty and adversity that marked her childhood. From surviving a near-fatal wasp attack at a remote lake, to learning piano on a Belgian instrument left behind during colonial upheaval, Clemens paints a picture of a life that is both ordinary and extraordinary.

Invitation to Discover Purpose

With practical generosity, Clemens has also created callingtools.net, a self-guided website to help individuals of all ages explore their own sense of purpose and calling. Developed with her sons and a family friend, the resource distills decades of career coaching, personal growth, and spiritual reflection. "The site is for anyone who is uncertain about direction in life. I didn't find my own clear calling until I was about 40," Clemens laughs.

A Message for a Fractured World



At its core, "A Quest for Purpose" delivers a call to reflect, act with gratitude and find meaning in service and community. Clemens writes, "Having a purpose or mission does not imply that I will do great things by society's standards. We are here for the purpose of loving God, family, and neighbors and to focus on the needs around us." Her words encourage readers to join in a larger story of curiosity, gratitude, and generosity.

About Ruth K. Clemens:

Ruth K. Clemens is an author, career coach, and retired international program director for the Mennonite Central Committee. Drawing on a lifetime spent in Congo, Cambodia, and the United States, Clemens brings a unique perspective to questions of faith, purpose, and justice. She is the developer of callingtools.net, plays piano for her local church, and continues to manage the Reservoir Hill House of Peace in Baltimore. "A Quest for Purpose" is her first book.

Close Up Radio recently featured Ruth K. Clemens, author of "A Quest for Purpose," in an interview with Jim Masters on Thursday June 4th at 10am EDT

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For more information about Ruth K. Clemens, please visit <https://ruthkclemens.com/>

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