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Annie Mbuyi's husband, Mathieu Shimatu, is the current vice president of Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM). Throughout their life together she has found ways both to support his ministry and to develop her own gifts.

It began before they were married. They met when they were both singers in a church in the territory of Ngandajika. Annie's father was a deacon in the church, and Mathieu's older brother was president of the choir. They became engaged, and Mathieu left for Mbuji Mayi. Annie followed him and they were married. Mathieu had by then joined the CEM but Annie did not immediately break with the church of which they had been a part. In 1987, however, the young married woman was recruited into the church by an elder of the CEM Tshiala congregation, where her husband was already a member. "It was by submission to my husband that I finally became a member of CEM," she says.

Although she had been baptized in her previous church by immersion, she decided to be baptized a second time at CEM Tshiala. There she began to serve as an intercessor, a ministry she continues to this day in her current congregation, Bitabe, in Kinshasa.

While praying generally for everybody in the CEM and elsewhere, Annie Mbuyi prays incessantly for her husband, who works at CEM headquarters in Mbuji Mayi, far from Kinshasa, where the couple maintains their home and reared their seven children. Ac-

According to Annie, Mathieu's work is fraught with difficulties and conflicts. She recognizes that God answers her prayers by protecting her husband during the eight, nine, or ten months a year he spends away from their home.

A fervent evangelist herself, Annie has brought many people to the Lord and has helped stabilize numerous households that were subject to tensions. The beneficiaries of her services testify that without her interventions their marriages would have broken up. Annie heaps advice on those concerned, notably on women, whom she asks to be patient and not to follow the counsel of other women who don't tend to their own marriages. Out of respect she calls her husband "Papa Mathieu."

When Mathieu was a theology student at the Christian University of Kinshasa, Annie Mbuyi was trained as a seamstress, although she never really took to that profession. Nevertheless she made and sold small articles and food products to subsidize her husband's studies. She still does this to contribute to household support.

Attentive to the gift of sharing, Deaconess Annie receives with a joyful heart all who come to her home. She considers older people her brothers and sisters and those her children's age as her own children, offering them her care without discrimination. Her generosity has attracted many people to her. In turn, she has directed them toward CEM, where they become members.

Filled with love for the church, Annie worries about the negative attitudes of some pastors toward the church's rules and bylaws. "I am often pained when I learn there are squabbles between one pastor and another," she says. "My sadness is very great when that affects the church and members of little faith lose their faith in God." In the face of such problems, she sometimes takes courage to approach the servants of God concerned, asking them to review their behavior and live like ministers of God. Her most ardent concern, she says, is that the CEM find peace—that the church be in peace like other denominations in order to progress in the same way.

Annie testifies that she feels the hand of the Eternal sustaining her life. "I am alive," she says, "and at forty-five years of age, God has already made me a grandmother."

Jean Félix Chimbalanga