



80 ❖ A messenger of ecumenism

Dénis Mahouma has rendered forty years of faithful service as a registered nurse in a Catholic hospital. At the same time he has been an active lay leader in the Mennonite church in Kikwit. His life attests to his belief that Jesus Christ has broken all boundaries.

Born in 1948, Dénis was baptized at the age of eleven and completed his primary education at Kamayala in 1962. After two years of middle school at Kalonda, he enrolled in the medical institute at Kajiji and became a nurse. A brilliant, hard-working young man, he was immediately hired by the Catholic nuns of the congregation Notre Dame of the Faithful. He has served in their hospital ever since.

Married in 1972 to Evelyn, he and his wife have four sons and four daughters whom they have raised successfully, thanks to Dénis's steady employment.

This man of exemplary conduct has never hidden his membership in a Protestant church from the nuns with whom he works. Every Sunday he is in church, where he takes great responsibility as lay president. He has assumed, by turns, the duties of secretary of his local church council and chaplain of the Voices of Angels choir, of which he was one of the founders.

Ordained deacon in 1987 and elder in 1989, Dénis Mahouma is also president of the Mennonite Farmers of Kikwit. But this man of unparalleled humility knows how to manage his time so that he is always ready to respond to the call of his church community. De-

spite the demands of his profession, he has greatly contributed to the birth of a Mennonite Church of Congo (CMCo) congregation in Misengi. He has supported out of his own pocket numerous expenses tied to the construction of the building.

Dénis and his wife have often hosted missionaries and Mennonite Central Committee volunteers in their home. They have taught the newcomers Kikongo, one of four national languages, which is spoken primarily in Bandundu Province.

Dénis has never experienced the least conflict between his service with the Catholics and his service to his own church. About holy communion, Dénis Mahouma says that he is happier to serve than to be served.

A peacemaker, he refuses to define the church of Christ in tribal terms. For him, Jesus Christ has broken all the ethno-tribal frontiers. He maintains that membership in the church of Christ should be our common denominator.

Vincent Ndandula