

❖ Appendix

Terms, history, and background

Mission names

The Congo Inland Mission (CIM) was founded by two small Mennonite groups in central Illinois in 1912. Over time, missionary candidates applied from other areas, and the supporting base of CIM broadened. By the 1950s and 1960s the CIM board included representatives from six different North American Mennonite conferences.

In 1972, following the conclusion of a fusion of mission and church in the Congo, the CIM board opted to change the name to Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM).

AIMM area geography

The Illinois-sized area for which the CIM accepted evangelizing responsibility in 1912 is located in south-central Congo. In the north it skirts rain forests; in the south it recedes into rolling savannah and touches the Angolan border. Three major rivers cross this area from south to north—the Kasai River in the east, the Kwilu River in the west, and the Loange River, which makes its way through the central Mennonite area. All three rivers eventually converge in the Congo River. The volume of water the Congo River discharges into the Atlantic is second only to that of the Amazon of South America.

The languages of Congo

As there are hundreds of ethnic groups within the borders of the Congo (equal in size to the United States east of the Mississippi), so

are there hundreds of dialects. Over time, four major tribal languages have come to dominate the linguistic landscape: Swahili in eastern Congo; Tshiluba in Congo's heartland; Kikongo in the western part of the country; and Lingala, the language of the tribe from which President Mobutu came in northwestern Congo, which became the language of the military. Tshiluba became the language used by CIM/AIMM missionaries along the Kasai River. Otherwise missionaries sought to learn and use the language of the people among whom they lived and served.

Urban centers of the Congo

As far as the work of CIM/AIMM was concerned, four urban centers were important: Kinshasa, the capital (called Leopoldville by the Belgians), followed by Kikwit to the west, Kananga (Luluabourg to the Belgians) to the east, and Tshikapa centrally located to the mission area. Mbuji Mayi, the capital of then-South Kasai, was the center for the refugee church that emerged after independence (see the section on Mennonite church names below).

Belgian administrative structures

The Belgians divided the entire country into a handful of large provinces over which there were Belgian "governors." Each province was then divided into "territories," over which there were Belgian "administrators." Then came "sectors," over which African chiefs were chosen and appointed by Belgians to preside according to their local village customs. A number of stories in this book deal with Mennonite Christians who were appointed to such roles after political independence.

Eight CIM/AIMM mission posts

- 1912 Ndjoko Punda (Charlesville) among the Lulua, Baluba, and Bakuba people
- 1913 Kalamba among the Lulua people (relocated eight miles to the west to Mutena in 1964)
- 1921 Nyanga among the eastern Pende
- 1923 Mukedi among the western Pende
- 1950 Banga among the Lele and Wongo
- 1950 Kalonda overlooking the Tshikapa government/commercial center among the Chokwe, Pende, Lulua, and Baluba

- 1953 Kamayala (acquired from the Unevangelized Tribes Missions (UTM)) among the Chokwe and Lunda
- 1954 Kandala (acquired from an independent Canadian Baptist couple, Percival and Rosalind Near) among the southern Pende and Sonde

CIM/AIMM schools

Helping Africans across the threshold of literacy so they could enroll in a variety of educational programs was an early and enduring goal of the mission. Across time, educational opportunities the mission offered took many forms.

- primary schools, grades 1–6, followed by several options:
- two-year teacher training programs for lower primary levels
- two-year preparatory study for secondary schools
- four-year teacher training programs for teaching and supervisory roles
- four-year high school leading to university level study
- training for pastors and leaders
- two-year post-primary Bible study for village evangelists
- a four-year Bible Institute established at Kalonda in 1953
- a joint three-year pastoral training program established with the Mennonite Brethren Mission in 1963 at their mission post Kajiji on the Angolan border
- a merger of the above program with a similar American Baptist school in 1968 eventually located in Kinshasa
- vocational training
- two-year vocational training programs in woodworking and masonry
- a four-year training program for girls in design and sewing
- on-the-job training of nurses, midwives, and surgical assistants

Mennonite church names

In this book we refer to two main churches, the Mennonite Church of Congo (CMCo) and the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo (CEM). But the history of these names and the churches themselves is complicated.

Initially there was a single Mennonite church known as the Evangelical Mennonite Church of the Congo. With the advent of Gen-

eral Mobutu, this church was known as Communauté Mennonite du Zaïre (CMZa). With his overthrow in 1997 the name reverted to Communauté Mennonite du Congo (CMCo). The term *communauté* (community) is used to signify that the Mennonites, like all other Congo Protestant denominations, are members of a single overarching Church of Christ of Congo. In this book we call the CMCo the Mennonite Church of Congo. We use the French acronym CMCo because it is commonly used in Congo (pronounced “sem-co”).

When Congo acquired its political independence in June of 1960, a long-simmering animosity between the Lulua and Baluba people along the Kasai River erupted into violence which triggered a migration of the Baluba to their ancestral homeland in the South Kasai. This migration, described in a number of stories in Part III, took a large group of Mennonite leaders and members with it. Cut off from the mother church by distance and political cleavage, these refugees eventually established a second Mennonite church, which was eventually named the Communauté Évangélique Mennonite or CEM (“sem”)—called in this book the Evangelical Mennonite Church.

A third Mennonite Church exists in Congo today, which stems indirectly from the work of CIM/AIMM. Aaron and Ernestina Janzen were early pioneers who served with Congo Inland Mission. After several terms they became aware of a large area to the west of CIM territory where there was no evangelical witness. Of Mennonite Brethren background, they generated some support at home and returned to pioneer a new work in the Kikwit area. Following World War II the Mennonite Brethren Conference assumed support for this work. The church born of this witness and ministry is today known as the Communauté des Églises de Frères Mennonites du Congo (CE-FMC; Mennonite Brethren Churches of Congo).

Today the CMCo and the CEFMC number about 100,000 members each, while the CEM numbers about 23,000.¹

1 For a brief history of each of these groups, see these articles: James E. Bertsche, “Communauté Mennonite au Congo,” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*; <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C654035.html>; James E. Bertsche, “Communauté Évangélique Mennonite (Democratic Republic of Congo),” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*; <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C654033.html>; A. E. Janzen and Peter M. Hamm, “Communauté des Églises de Frères Mennonites au Congo,” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*; <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C65403.html>.

Congo church structures and terminology

Originally eight large church districts were named for the mission posts around which they had developed. As the church grew and as Africans took over self-governance, these districts were broken down into numerous smaller subdistricts. It is the intent that they all be supervised and led by an ordained pastor, although shortage of personnel does not always make this possible.

Annual assemblies bring together representatives from across these districts for discussion, planning, devotional studies, and decision making.

Each congregation, district, and denomination has an elected president/legal representative, a vice-president/legal representative, a treasurer, and a recording secretary, plus a variety of other positions as the church may decide. The term *legal representative* refers to the person who conducts any and all business with the government on behalf of the church—for instance, regarding land, schools, and hospitals. This position is required by the Congolese government, as it was by the colonial government.

Titles used in Congo churches frequently include pastor in chief (lead pastor), elder, deacon, evangelist, intercessor (prayer coordinator), youth animator, and choir director. As is clear from many of these stories, women have their own congregational, district, and national organizations and positions.

Some of the stories of this book reflect rivalries and frictions. Yet mature leaders have brought about reconciliation, often at the price of yielding authority to which they were entitled.

Names and traditions

Baptism among Congolese Mennonites is by immersion, and it follows a period of biblical orientation, declaration of faith, and observation of daily life. The one being baptized usually wears new clothing, and traditionally he or she adopted a new name to add to their village name. Frequently these names are of biblical origin. Thus Falanga becomes Falanga Elie, and Gavunji becomes Gavunji Rebecca. Now Christian names are often given at birth.

We have simplified the names in this book and arranged them in the usual English order. Congolese usually put the Christian name last, following an African given name and family name: Kabasela Mbaya André. The African given name (Kabasela) is treated as a per-

son's principal name in most situations and is often conferred according to an elaborate system of succession and relationship. The family name (Mbaya) is less significant than it is in Western societies. In this book we have eliminated most family names and put the Christian name first (André Kabasela). Women usually keep their own names after marriage.

Evangelism continues to be a strong theme among the Congo Mennonites. Where the church is growing, messages are direct and uncompromising: "Apart from the saving grace of Jesus, we are all lost sinners. But we have good news! You need no longer live in daily fear of the threatening world of dangerous spirits of our forefathers. Jesus changed all of that when he died on a cross and walked out of his tomb three days later!"

As these stories reveal, Mennonite Christians in Congo are subject to foibles, failures, and sins, as are the North American sons and daughters of Menno. But their stories are a reminder that God has a way of honoring simple prayers of penitence and a faithful witness to his name.

—The Editors