



67 ❧ My heart made me do it

Nobody knows for sure how old she is, but she is in her forties. Musawu has a mental disability.

She converted to God more than fifteen years ago. Before that she frequented a Neo-Apostolic church in Lubumbashi, where she lived with her parents. After she arrived in Mbuji Mayi, she became attached to the Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM), which she joined during an evangelistic campaign.

The church was not entirely welcoming at first. She became the object of mockery and condescension by some of the former CEM members and especially young people. Despite this deplorable marginalization, Musawu remained attached to her congregation, braving all the humiliations of which she was a victim.

The fact that she was not given formal roles to play in the church did not prevent Sister Musawu from participating wholeheartedly. She attended all the organized meetings of the Sangilayi congregation, especially the women's gatherings. She joined church members in community encounters and in prayer meetings.

Shortly after her integration into Sangilayi, Musawu found her own ministry, which she began entirely on her own. She developed the habit of always being the first one to arrive at church on Sunday. She would sweep the floor, carry the benches from the parish house, and arrange them in the church. Asked how she came to do this, Musawu says with conviction, "My heart made me do it." She adds, "If I

photo—Mama Musawu

don't sweep the church and carry in the benches I don't feel right. I never want the place to be dirty." The day of the interview, at 4:00 in the afternoon, she was waiting for the end of a young people's meeting so she could take the benches back to the parish house.

Musawu now knows that many people of the congregation, including the pastor and elders, greatly value her services. They often give her money. On this day she had tied some money, which an elder had given her, into a corner of her wraparound skirt.

Sister Musawu affirms that she brought her mother into adherence with the CEM, although her mother continues to worship with the Neo-Apostolics. However, although Musawu is dependent on her mother for everything else, she categorically refuses to go to her mother's church. She says, "I love only the CEM, not just any church."

Now the congregation loves her as well. As one can easily see, Sister Musawu accomplishes her ministry voluntarily and regularly, to the great satisfaction of all the members.

Jean Félix Chimbanga