



# Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission International Central Council

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May 15, 2024

Dear AIMM family,

Imagine being a pastor who has dedicated your life to serving others in your congregation and your community and not having the resources to take care of your family. Unfortunately, this scenario is the case for many of the African pastors in AIMM partner churches.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, Paul tells us “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” **Yet too many African pastors cannot support their families as they do their good work.**

In the three AIMM partner Mennonite denominations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, small **congregations often find it difficult to meet their obligation to support their pastors** with adequate shelter, food, and other necessities. **As a result, the church is weakened.**

In some cases, **pastors sacrifice the well-being of their families to fulfill their ministry responsibilities.** Often their spouses carry an undue burden for their family’s needs, and a lack of resources makes it difficult for pastors to focus on their ministry, leading to frustration in their congregations.

When congregations and their pastors cannot navigate competing expectations to the satisfaction of both, relationships are broken and **the church’s witness is hindered.** Some prospective leaders become hesitant to take on formal pastoral roles because of congregations’ inability to manage this challenge adequately.

Pastor Guy Ifata has taken on the challenge of pastoral leadership for the past thirteen years. Married with four children, he leads the Bethel Kwilu local church, a congregation of 90 members, in the city of Kikwit. Bethel Kwilu is in the midst of constructing walls for their church, which only has corner posts and a roof. Pastor Ifata and his wife, Lydie Sumbeno, are helping with the construction project, not only providing some financial support but also labor.

Pastor Ifata’s **salary is not fixed.** He receives a lump sum at the end of each month, which on average amounts to 25,000 Congolese francs, or \$10. **This amount is insufficient to meet the family’s basic needs,** such as food, healthcare, education, and clothing. Therefore, Guy and Lydie undertake additional income-generating activities.

**Selling fuel on the side allows Guy to supplement the income he receives from the church.** He buys a barrel (200 liters) of fuel and sells it by the liter. In addition to being active in the church, **Lydie buys bales of second-hand clothes** and sells the individual pieces of clothing at the market. These two economic activities help the family to survive and meet some of their needs, and even support the church’s construction project, but **it is not enough.**

*“Following Jesus, Making Disciples, Serving the Church”*

AIMM's pastors' project will provide training to help Guy and Lydie maximize earnings and add capital that will increase their volume of sales, augmenting their income to meet their family's needs.

**The three Mennonite denominations in the Congo and AIMM are embarking on a project to assist and accompany congregations to reinforce local and sustainable support for pastors.**

After choosing pastors and their congregations and setting up action plans, the accompaniment project is providing **training in entrepreneurial and management fundamentals to the participants**. Pastor Guy Ifata is one of the 50 pastors embarking on this initiative.

**The project will provide startup funds for pastors who have successfully undergone the training and who present viable and sustainable action plans for their bi-vocational initiatives.** Income-generating activities will include small grain mills to grind cassava and corn, retail village pharmacies, retail village general stores, raising swine, and other activities. **Each beneficiary pastor and congregation pair will reimburse the startup funds**, sharing reimbursement payments evenly (50%-50%). Reimbursed funds will be invested in additional income-generating activities.

The Schowalter Foundation has generously contributed much of the necessary start-up capital, but we need your help. **Each \$100 donation will be paired with \$400 from the Schowalter grant to provide a \$500 loan to a congregation and its pastor. Or contribute \$460 to send one pastor to capacity-building training before the project and to provide entrepreneurial accompaniment** during implementation.

We are pleased to share this vision with you and **ask for your prayers and financial support**. Imagine the impact your gift will make for pastors, their families, and their churches "so that in all things at all times, having all that [they] need, [they] will abound in every good work"!

Yours in Christ,



John Fumana and Bruce Yoder  
AIMM Co-Executive Coordinators

**P.S. Empower a pastor; encourage a congregation!** Your gift of \$100 US will complete the loan for a congregation and its pastor. Your gift of \$460 will provide capacity training and entrepreneurial accompaniment for a congregation and its pastor. We are hoping for 50 donors to provide loans and 50 donors to provide entrepreneurial accompaniment. Your investment in this program will enable these pastors, their families, and their congregation to abound in every good work.