



Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission International Central Council

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Dear AIMM Family,

It is with deep gratitude for what God is doing through you and our African brothers and sisters that I write. Having only recently started my new role as Co-executive Coordinator, I'm new to the dynamic web of relationships and ministries that make up AIMM. For me these last months have been a time of growing awareness and appreciation for the way your prayers, financial support, and collaboration strengthen the witness and vitality of our African partner churches. This has been a blessing for me, and I trust that being part of what God is doing in Africa and beyond is an encouragement and blessing for you. Thank you for the part that you play in the ministry of AIMM's worldwide fellowship!

The year 2021 has provided both signs of hope and ongoing challenges as we adapt to changing realities. Here in North America we anticipate returning to some semblance of normalcy in the coming months. The most vulnerable among us have received their COVID vaccines and large sections of the population are following. The summer months hold the hope of renewed interaction with family and friends and the relaxing of restrictions on our movement, our work, and our socializing. This is indeed good news! We are thankful, as well, that most of our African brothers and sisters live in regions that have been spared the high infection and death rates that have plagued North America. They have not been spared, however, the impact of decreased economic activity that has resulted from public health restrictions. This has been a significant challenge for families who find it difficult to meet their daily needs such as food and health care even in more normal times. Please pray for our African brothers and sisters as they discern how to meet this significant challenge as individuals, families, and church communities.

We are also aware of the disparity in vaccine rollouts around the world. As I write, North American vaccination rates vary, but are between four and 40% of the population and increasing. For most of our African brothers and sisters there is no access to vaccines due to short supplies and the lack distribution infrastructure. If the African countries of our AIMM partners were to experience the higher infection rates that have occurred in other regions, they would face a daunting situation indeed. Pray with me for God's continuing protection and care over our African brothers and sisters.

I thank God for the generosity and resilience among God's people around the world. The pandemic has meant less income for many and job losses for others, which might have created feelings of scarcity and insecurity. The AIMM family has responded differently, however, and has continued its donations and prayer throughout the past year. Your generosity has provided resources that African church partners have used to keep families safe. Churches have mobilized pastors and health experts to help communities learn how to slow the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable. Where health care systems are weak, churches can provide this valuable service through their networks in hard-to-reach communities. It is an opportunity to witness to the love of Christ in a very practical way. In both North America and Africa, AIMM partners have chosen to respond in ways that build hope, not in ways that encourage feelings of insecurity and scarcity. Praise God for this witness!

Over the past year public health measures have interrupted some of the ministries of AIMM partners, but during these past months they have adapted, and activities have resumed.

"Following Jesus, Making Disciples, Serving the Church"

- The Congo Literacy Project has provided adult literacy training in Mennonite Congregations and their communities across the DR Congo since 2017. While literally thousands of adult learners have benefited, there have not been enough trained teachers to attain the goal of reaching all of the 1,400-plus congregations. The need to train trainers who will in turn train the local teachers became evident, and workshops were planned for April and August of 2020. Public health concerns delayed these activities, but they finally took place in December and January in four different regions. Eighty-seven trainers learned how to equip adult literacy teachers for their important role in increasing adult literacy. Congolese churches and AIMM supporters contributed to support this effort. Your prayer and financial support are essential components of this ministry that is helping to reduce illiteracy in Congolese communities!
- Another ministry that has reinitiated activity is Bible translation, both in the DR Congo and in Burkina Faso. In the Congo, the Kishelele translation continues as the translation committee works with the Congolese Association for Bible Translation to correct and improve its work. The book of Hebrews was recently completed and the revision of the book of Revelation is upcoming. In Burkina Faso, the Siamou translation team checked their translation of Mark with the consultants in December and January and reviewed 2 Corinthians and Colossians in March.
- Co-Executive Coordinator John Fumana is working with partner churches in the DR Congo to prepare training in organizational vision and leadership for executive level leaders. This will increase the cohesion of ministry at the national level and, eventually, at all levels. Your generous support makes this ministry possible! Through it we envision churches that increase their capacity to make disciples and witness to the love of Christ across the country and beyond.
- Moreover, John recently led a week-long seminar on asset-based community development with the Christ Salvation Mennonite Church in Sierra Leone. This focused on helping church leaders capitalize first on local resources before looking for assistance from outside partners. We trust this will result in renewed initiative and concrete hope for the future of the church in Sierra Leone.

In addition, AIMM is pleased to announce the creation of a fund to signal gratitude for the ministry of Erwin Rempel, who has served the church for many years as pastor, missionary, mission administrator, and AIMM board member. He resigned recently due to health concerns. Erwin's colleagues describe him as an excellent administrator and gifted in organizational leadership and finance. This fund has been created to affirm Erwin's gifts and express gratitude for his ministry. Donations will be undesignated and go towards AIMM ministries. We invite your contributions in gratitude to God for Erwin's faithful and fruitful Christian service in North America and abroad. Please designate contributions to the **Erwin Rempel Fund for AIMM Ministries**.

I covet your prayers and financial support as AIMM continues to find ways to strengthen the Body of Christ across Africa. Your contributions have been, and will continue to be, signs of the love of God among our brothers and sisters there. I am convinced, too, that we as North Americans are equally blessed by our collaboration, our contributions, and our prayers in favor of the African church.

In Christ,



R. Bruce Yoder
AIMM Co-Executive Coordinator