

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives.

Isaiah 61:1 NRSV



Nicodème Coulibaly



Fabé Traoré

We need your partnership through prayer,  
relationship, and financial gifts to continue to  
empower the church. Thank you for your generosity.

Front cover: (Top) Nancy Myers, Fidèle Nkita Mbombo, and Hélène José Mbombo  
at the literacy teacher training in Mbuji Mayi, DR Congo. All three of these women  
have been actively involved in organizing the literacy project. (Bottom) New  
literacy teacher practices method at training in Mbuji Mayi.

# Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission

*Lifting up new leaders*



## New leaders in Burkina Faso seek to be better equipped

The Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso has been slowly and steadily growing over the past 40 years. The church now has around 25 congregations and over 700 members. This development is remarkable, considering the dominance of both Islam and African Traditional Religion in that context.

The church's Basic Bible Training program, its first attempt at training its own leaders, began almost a decade ago. The first several years this program struggled to find even one or two students. Pastors and other church leaders are generally perceived in Burkina Faso as being poor, and it is a difficult job at the best of times. Anyone who ventures into such a vocation needs a strong sense of call to stay the course.

Years of patient building and investing in youth on the part of established leaders, is beginning to pay dividends. Last year for the first time the church approached AIMM with a problem—5 young leaders were seeking either to begin or continue university-level programs to develop their gifts and better serve the church. They needed financial help to undertake these studies. Would AIMM be willing to assist them? AIMM said "YES!", delighted to participate in strengthening future church leadership.

- ◆ **Issa Ouattara** teaches children in Orodara and Sipiguiy and works with others on Siamou Bible translation. He is working toward a Bachelor's in Theology at Logos University in Ouagadougou.
- ◆ **Sidi Traoré** is pastor at Kangala. His desire is to be a trainer in the Basic Bible Training program, and so he is also pursuing a B.A. in theology from Logos University.
- ◆ **Othniel Dakuo** coordinates the church's ministry on behalf of AIDS victims and their families. He is currently studying for an M.A. in theology from Logos University.
- ◆ **Nicodème Coulibaly** is currently the administrator for the Burkina Faso Partnership Council. Nico is pursuing a B.A. in missiology from the Sahel Institute of Missiology in Ouagadougou.
- ◆ **Fabé Traoré** is pastor at Samogohiri, and a member of the Sicitte Bible Translation team. He is beginning a doctorate at the Christian and Missionary Alliance Faculty of Theology in Abidjan, focused on Transformational Leadership.



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# Leadership training in Sierra Leone



## Sierra Leone

In April 2018, AIMM sponsored a 4-day leadership training in Sierra Leone led by Bruce Yoder of Mennonite Mission Network. There were 25 participants. Near the end of the training, Pastor Solomon Bandor of Christ Salvation Mennonite Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, sent the following message:

“May the peace and blessing of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, be upon us. The leadership training is going on well and is very important for us. Bruce is a very good tutor with great knowledge and experience. On behalf of myself and the entire membership of the church, I want to thank AIMM so much for organizing such training.”

Over the last five years, AIMM and Christ Salvation Mennonite Church have been gradually building a relationship through a series of visits, connecting leaders within both organizations, getting to know each other, and discerning how best to work together. The church desires full partnership with the AIMM family. Together we are moving in that direction through training and conversation which provide deeper understandings of Anabaptist spirituality and church organization.

know each other, and discerning how best to work together. The church desires full partnership with the AIMM family. Together we are moving in that direction through training and conversation which provide deeper understandings of Anabaptist spirituality and church organization.

Bruce Yoder with Pastor Kelvin Kerren in Freetown



Claudine Lutondo

# Churches collaborate to provide literacy education in DR Congo

Claudine Lutondo, one of the first literacy students in Kinshasa, stepped up to the lectern with her text in hand. She held the microphone and read her prepared speech in Lingala without hesitation before the large audience of over a hundred gathered to celebrate the graduation of the first literacy students from the training programs in Kinshasa. Their teachers, friends, family, distinguished pastors and theologians, community leaders, and AIMM staff were among those in attendance. The celebration included choir performances, exuberant worship, and reflections offered by distinguished guests all to recognize the incredible achievement of the twenty women and men who became literate in their own language in less than one year.

Almost a quarter of the population of Democratic Republic of the



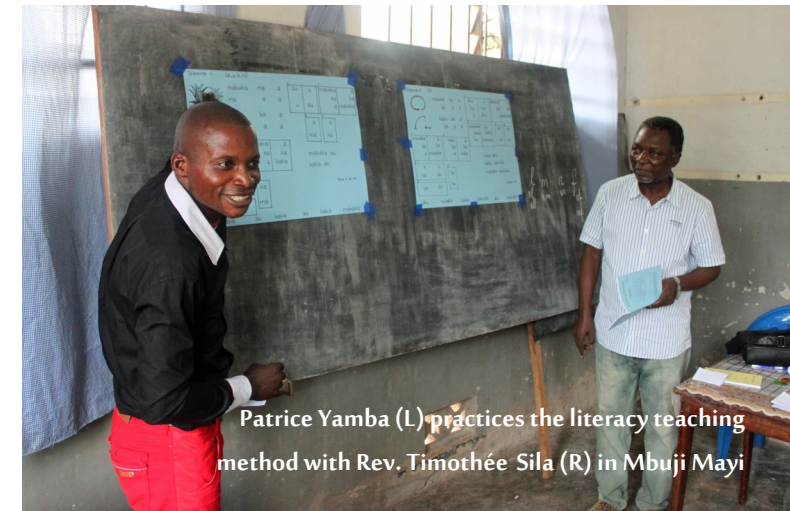
Rod Hollinger - Janzen awards a graduating literacy student in Kinshasa

Congo is illiterate. About one in three Congolese women are illiterate. It is no wonder that literacy was identified as a priority for the church by Marie Fumana, Adolphine Tshiana, and Hélène José Mbombo, leaders of the women’s organizations of the Mennonite churches in Congo. Offering literacy training is a way for the church in Congo to bestow dignity on the vulnerable and invite new members into their churches. When AIMM joined the effort by providing funding, we had no idea what the scope of the impact would be. Since its inception one year ago this extraordinary collaboration has already provided literacy education to well over one thousand students!

Literacy classes are emerging all over the Congo, as more and volunteer teachers are trained by Rev. Timothée Sila. In April as many as 70 individuals, men and women, young and old, from around the region, gathered in a long, crowded classroom in Mbuji Mayi for a weeklong training organized by Joseph Nkongolo, Service and Development Coordinator of Mennonite Church of Congo and Hélène José Mbombo, President of the National Women’s Association of Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo. This is the third training and a fourth is tentatively scheduled for Tshikapa in August of this year. Volunteers desire to become literacy teachers to reach out to their communities, to empower brothers and



Joseph Nkongolo



Patrice Yamba (L) practices the literacy teaching method with Rev. Timothée Sila (R) in Mbuji Mayi

sisters who never had the chance to learn to read and write, to bring good news to the oppressed.

Joseph Nkongolo gathered the group of eager volunteers and maintained morale in the crowded room by asking everyone to rub their hands together and then pass a blessing on each person as they came to the front. Before long the whole room was rubbing their hands together, smiling, and laughing as they shared blessings. Beginning with such small acts, giving of themselves, they are not only teaching literacy skills, they are building the church.



Literacy teachers in training in Mbuji Mayi