



THE
MENNONITE
BRETHREN
CHURCH
IN
ZAIRE

J. B. TOEWS



The
Mennonite Brethren
Church
in
Zaire

BY JOHN B. TOEWS

General Editor: Paul G. Hiebert

Board of Christian Literature
General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
Fresno, California

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Distributed by

Mennonite Brethren Publishing House
135 North Main
Hillsboro, Kansas, USA

Christian Press
159 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Printed in the United States of America by the
Mennonite Brethren Publishing House
Hillsboro, Kansas 67063

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

The Mennonite Brethren, representing a small segment of the Christian world, have been strongly involved in missionary outreach in their 118 years of history. Around the world they now number 80,000. The North American segment, the chief missionary base, represents more than 30,000; Russia an estimated 20,000; the remaining 30,000 are the fruit of missionary endeavor around the world. The current annual denominational budget for evangelism and church planting abroad is one and a half million dollars.

The present volume is the second of four in a series designed to update the story of Mennonite Brethren missions and church growth. The first, *The Mennonite Brethren Mission in Latin America*, by J. J. Toews, appeared in 1975. A forthcoming volume will outline the philosophy and principles of missions followed by the Mennonite Brethren church. Another volume will detail the missionary endeavors in Asia. The publishers are grateful to the team of three knowledgeable authors — Dr. J. J. Toews, Dr. G. W. Peters, and Dr. J. B. Toews — who have put a great deal of time and labor, much of it gratis, in gathering and writing their material. Though these volumes were initially designed principally for classroom use in Bible institutes, colleges and seminaries, we believe their readership will be much larger.

The author of this volume, Dr. John B. Toews, is a professor and a former president of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno. His course on the Book of Acts attracted large enrollments for many years. The author served for 10 years (1953-1963) as the executive secretary for the denomination's Board of Foreign Missions, now called the Board of Missions and Services. For more than 20 years he has been a member of that Board. Two special trips to the African Continent were undertaken specifically to procure accurate data for this book. Earlier visits, four of them (1952, 1956, 1960, 1963), were made in conjunction with his administrative assignment. His years of experience and contact lend perspective to his writing.

Dr. Paul Hiebert, general editor for the entire series, is a

professor at the School of World Mission in Pasadena, CA. He is responsible for the study guide which appears at the end of the book and the questions at the end of each chapter.

Assistance in the preparation of the history has come from the Board of Missions and Services, headquartered at Hillsboro, KS. They and the publisher desired that this volume, in providing information and inspiration, will maintain and heighten the interest of Christians, Mennonite Brethren in particular, in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ worldwide.

Elmer Martens, Chairman
The Board of Christian Literature

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire is not large. To some it may seem like a small object bobbing on the broad current of African life and history. Yet despite its relatively small impact on Zairian life, and its correspondingly minor influence in Africa, it represents a significant witness as a member of the body of Christ.

As a continent Africa must be reckoned with in the future, for its natural resources are vast and the potential for development enormous. It also has the population to develop that potential. Given the right mix of motivation and capital the Africans could be a significant world force even in this industrial era.

Smith Hempstone in *Africa—Angry Young Giant* states:

There is this about Africa: it is an outsized continent filled to such an extent with cruelty and kindness, with joy and sadness, with monumental sins and great compassion, that it seems to inspire in the stranger either loathing or a curious passion and fascination. Nowhere are there greater opportunities for good or for evil, for the recognition of one's essential character.¹

Located in the heart of the continent, the church in Zaire is deeply involved in the struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness, between the devil and Christ. Though at times the battle seems to have been a losing one, ultimate victory is assured through Christ. He who planted the church in Zaire is the one who testifies: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8, NASB). The story of the church in Zaire is therefore important to our recognition of God

working out His purpose in history. There is a church in Zaire, and the church in Zaire will triumph.

A special word of thanks to leaders of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire and the missionaries there, who provided much of the resource material and data for this volume — and to Laurene Peters, who has typed and retyped the manuscript.

John B. Toews
August, 1977
Fresno, CA

INTRODUCTION

History can give us a sense of identity — of where we have been and where we are. It can also give us a sense of direction — what today's critical issues are, and what our course of action might be. John B. Toews' history of the Mennonite Brethren mission and church in Africa does both.

As we read of the early pioneers, and of those who followed, we catch a glimpse of a small part of God's work on earth. We see His power at work in the lives of those who sought to do His will. They were human, all too human, caught in the mundane tasks of living and in the tensions of interpersonal relationship. Yet God has chosen to build His kingdom through the lives of people such as these. And in the reading we see a little better our own place in God's work.

But a careful reading of history should do more than warm our hearts. It should give us a perspective by which we can evaluate the present, with its problems, and principles to guide our decisions. This demands that we take a critical look at history, not to detract from those who have gone before, but to learn from their experiences so that we may avoid the pitfalls of the past. We need to remember that people work within the context of their times and cultures, but this should not keep us from critically evaluating their methods and actions.

In this book Dr. Toews shows us from where we have come and where we are headed. The first half of the book traces the history of the mission, starting with the two major beginnings in which sharply contrasting missionary methods were used. A comparison of these throws a great deal of light on the nature of problems of cross-cultural communication. In the second half the author shows the growth and development of the church in times of trial, which reminds us that the sufferings of the church continue even though we ourselves may not be experiencing them. Throughout Dr. Toews inspires us to renew our commitment to the world wide mission to which God has called us, providing us with insights necessary to make our participation meaningful.

The volume is written as a textbook for use in courses on

missions, and consequently does not go into the extensive detail characteristic of a definitive history. But it does provide us with a clear outline of the history of the Mennonite Brethren missions and church in Africa that will be useful both to the student and to the many in the churches who have had a share in the work.

Paul G. Hiebert
General Editor

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Part One

The Setting

1

THE LAND OF ZAIRE

The Republic of Zaire, once known as Congo, is located in the south central part of the African continent. It covers an area of 904,747 square miles, about equal in size to the United States east of the Mississippi River.

The name Zaire dates back to the fourteenth century when the Portuguese explored the area. During the colonial period, 1907-1960, it was known as the Belgian Congo. Independence was gained in 1960 and in 1971 the Belgian Congo was renamed Zaire, to reflect its ancient heritage.

Zaire includes the greater part of the Zaire River basin. The only outlet to the ocean is a narrow strip of land on the north bank of the Zaire estuary along the south Atlantic. The vast central area is a low-lying basin-shaped plateau sloping towards the west and covered by tropical rain forest. Mountainous terraces on the west, plateaus merging into savannas on the south and southeast, dense grasslands towards the Zaire River in the northwest, and high mountains to the east surround this interior plateau.

Zaire lies on the equator, with one-third north of it and two-thirds south. The climate is, therefore, hot and humid. In the west and south of the equator the rainy season lasts from October to May. The storms are often violent, but seldom last more than a few hours. North of the equator the rains last from April to November, and in the central region the rain falls more or less regularly throughout the year. The average annual rainfall for the entire area is about forty-two inches.¹

Neighboring countries are the Congo Republic (Brazzaville), the Central African Republic, and the Sudan on the west and north, Uganda, Rwandi, Burundi, and Tanzania on the east, and Angola and Zambia on the south.

THE PEOPLE

Zaire has a population of about twenty-four million representing about 200 ethnic groups. In spite of this ethnic profusion, the population can be divided into three major cultural clusters:

(1) *The Pygmies*, believed to have been the first inhabitants of the Zaire Basin. About 50,000 live in the western and northwestern part of Zaire, and 30,000 in the Kibali-Ituri and Kivu districts.

(2) *The Negroes* are represented by: (a) the Bantu, who are found everywhere in Zaire except in the extreme northeast. They constitute the largest segment of the population and number approximately eight to nine million; (b) The Sudanese, who inhabit the north and northeast areas of the Zaire. Their number is estimated at two to three million; (c) The Nilotics, who are settled in the northeast and are not very numerous.

(3) *The Hamites*, which include several groups of the Bahema shepherds living on the eastern frontier of Zaire.

Of the perhaps 200 languages and dialects spoken in the country, the four principal ones are:

(1) *Lingala*, developed in the 1880's in response to the need for a commercial language. In time the original fragmentary jargon was given written form, and it is now used extensively along the Zaire River from Kinshasa to Kisangani, and in the north and northwest. It is the official language of the Zaire national army.

(2) *Kingwana*, a dialect of the Kiswaihili introduced into Zaire by Arabs, especially the Zanzibari Swahilis, in the course of the 19th century slaving operation. It is spoken extensively in the northeastern, eastern and southern regions of the country.

(3) *Kikongo*, primarily the language of the narrow neck of land between Kinshasa and the ocean. A simplified dialect is spoken in the region just east of Kinshasa (Kituba/Kikongo ya Leta). Most of the languages of the western Zaire belong to the Kikongo language group.

(4) *Tshiluba*, primarily the language of the Baluba ethnic group of Kasai. It is a form of the Kiluba language of the Kivu and Kitunga Baluba and is widely used in southeastern Zaire.

Soon after 1884, when Leopold II, the king of Belgium, claimed the Zaire territory as his personal possession, the French language was introduced as the national language. It is still in use.²

The languages of southwestern Zaire, where the Mennonite Brethren mission and church are located, are all related at various degrees of remoteness. Neighboring tribes may speak languages that are mutually intelligible, but the twenty-five or so language groups that exist in the region are sufficiently different to require language learning on the part of a Zairian moving from one area to the other.

Traditionally, each ethnic group stayed in its own area. With the arrival of the foreigners, however, mixing of populations has been extensive. In the larger centers and industrial areas representatives of many different tribes live together. This has given rise to Mono Kituba or Kikongo (ya Leta), a commercial language or lingua franca used by people to communicate with those who do not know their tribal language.

HISTORY

It is not known when the Bantu and other peoples who make up the population of Zaire first occupied the area. Information about the Zaire River basin, however, did reach Europe in the 15th century when the Portuguese explored the area. These early explorers stayed near the mouth of the Zaire River. They found a well-developed society organized into a kingdom comprising parts of what is now Zaire, Cabinda, Congo (Brazzaville), and Angola. The Portuguese introduced Christianity; a few Christian churches and artifacts from this period are still in existence. However, the area remained practically unknown to most Europeans until Henry Morton Stanley's dramatic trans-continental voyage that started in east Africa and ended at the mouth of the Zaire River in 1877. Stanley was exploring central Africa on behalf of Leopold II, who quickly realized its potential value. Other nations responded by putting forward claims to it. This precipitated the Berlin Conference of 1884, at which Leopold II's claim to

Zaire was recognized. Zaire, then called the Congo, remained the personal possession of the Belgian sovereign until he ceded it to the Belgian state in 1907.³

Large corporations developed and exploited the Congo during the decades between the world wars. Copper, rubber, and diamonds were exported. These raw materials, together with tin and uranium, were particularly important to the allied cause during World War II.

The post-war call for human rights, abolition of colonialism, and independence found an echo in the hearts of the people of Zaire. The pressure built up during the 1950's exploded into riots in January, 1959. The Belgian king then announced that the Congo could look forward to independence without undue delay. A provisional constitution took effect in 1960. Parliamentary elections resulted in the appointment of Joseph Kasavubu as president and Patrice Lumumba as prime minister.

Independence came in June, 1960. The internal power struggle that followed erupted into civil strife. In September, 1960, Colonel Mobutu, head of the army, took over the government to halt the bickering and increasingly chaotic conditions.

The mysterious death of Lumumba in February, 1961, plunged the country into further strife. The former vice-prime minister, Antoine Gizenga, proclaimed himself heir of the legitimate government, setting up a rival administration at Kisangani (ex-Stanleyville). By the time Mobutu returned the reins of government to Kasavubu in February, 1961, four major groups were contending for power. The ensuing struggle brought the United Nations into the picture with both diplomatic initiatives and a military force to establish political and civil security and order. The UN troops remained in Zaire until June 30, 1964.

From 1963 to 1965 rebellions against the central government continued in the provinces of Kwilu and eastern Zaire. The followers of Pierre Mulele, an early collaborator of Lumumba, initiated a reign of terror that included brutal acts against humans and widespread destruction of property. This had a major impact on the Christian church in the region

because it became a special target. The sacrifice, hardships and loss of lives proved a severe test of the commitment and character of Christians, including those in the Mennonite Brethren Church.

A presidential election scheduled for the spring of 1966 resulted in a political struggle that ended only when Lieutenant-General Mobutu, commander-in-chief of the Zaire national army, seized control of the government on November 24. Mobutu declared himself president for five years, disclaiming any intention of establishing a military regime.

Shortly after taking power, President Mobutu announced he would prepare another constitution and submit it to popular referendum. The referendum was held in the spring of 1967, and on June 24 Mobutu declared his constitution had been accepted by an overwhelming majority of the voters. With the acceptance of the new constitution the bicameral legislature was dissolved and elections for a new unicameral legislature were planned. The new constitution also provided for a stronger presidential style of government, following the pattern of rule by decree introduced by President Mobutu.

Presidential elections were held in early 1971, with Mobutu as the only candidate. He was elected as the head of the state by an overwhelming majority. Under the leadership of President Mobutu the country is apparently moving towards a stabilization of the political structure and the rebuilding of the social and economic foundations of the country.⁴

Zaire has been divided into eight regions. Each region is headed by a governor. Candidates for these positions were appointed by the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR) and elected by the people for an unlimited term. Each region has its representatives in the national assembly in Kinshasa. The candidates for these assignments are also selected by the MPR and elected by their respective constituency. The representatives propose social, educational, and welfare developments for their respective regions.⁵

The Republic of Zaire takes a very active part in the pan-African community. President Mobutu has served as the head of the organization of African states which was created in

1963. Zaire's participation in the various organizations of the pan-African development reflects the president's hope that Zaire will have a significant influence on the development of the pan-African community.

ECONOMY

Zaire has majesty, mystery, and a commanding romantic spell. Not only is it picturesque but also extremely important to Africa and to the world at large. It is a rich country in almost all senses of the word.⁶

Zaire has the greatest undeveloped water power potential of any country in the world. The Zaire River, one of the three major rivers of Africa and the sixth longest river in the world, flows for 2,900 miles. Its basin covers more than 1,400,000 square miles, half of the area of the United States. When it reaches the ocean its discharge is the third largest of any river of the world. The Inga Dam now under construction will harness part of these major energy resources.

The Zaire River is particularly important because its tributaries are the basis of the country's communication. Zaire has 8,750 miles of navigable waters constantly traversed by wood-burning steamers. Without these it could not function as a modern state. Yet two impassable sections reduce the usefulness of the Zaire River: Stanley Falls near Kisangani and the section between Kinshasa and the seaport, Matadi. At the latter segment the river drops 850 feet in 200 miles and has thirty-two different cataracts. Short railways exist at both these intersections so that the rapids can be bypassed, but this does not make for easy or efficient transportation.⁷

Water transportation, however, continues to serve as the lifeline of the country in view of very limited road and railway systems. There are only 3,065 miles of rail, and these are on three different gauges. There are no modern highways connecting the major centers of the country like Kinshasa, the capital, and Kisangani, the important commercial and cultural center of the east.

The wide variety of natural resources has been the main spur to development. Rich mineral deposits in southern

Katanga are an important world source of copper and zinc and a leading source of cobalt. Mined industrial diamonds from Kasai account for about 75 percent of the total produced outside the non-Communist countries. Large quantities of tin columbite — tentalite, manganize, and several rare metals are extracted in other regions. The soils on the whole are not particularly fertile but differing climatical zones have permitted a wide range of products. The tropical forests are a source of large quantities of valuable timber. The known deposits of coal and oil are, however, limited.

By comparison with other African countries the exports of Zaire are well diversified. The economy is thus less dependent on price fluctuations of a single commodity. Although export earnings declined with the general economic disruption caused by the movement toward independence, Zaire has continued to run a trade surplus. Hardest hit was agricultural production and the exports of its products, but mineral exports increased slightly and have provided an increasingly important share of the country's export earnings since independence.

Industrial and manufacturing activities are mainly centered in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. These areas have substantial sources of electrical power, benefit from sizeable urban manpower resources, and are located on main transport arteries.

Approximately 80 percent of the people of Zaire live in rural areas and use traditional agricultural methods. Some produce and process coffee, cocoa, tea, rubber and palm products on plantations for export and sugar for domestic consumption, but most of the African farmers, usually working on small plots of land, produce mainly staples and vegetables for local markets. However, they do provide some palm oil, rubber and coffee for export. Before independence a considerable amount of cotton was grown by Zaire farmers for use in local textile mills and for export. This activity was given a severe setback by the 1964 rebellion and at the present time Zaire is a cotton importing country.

The resources of Zaire promise a steadily developing economy, a major factor in the important role which Zaire plans to play in the future of the pan-African community.⁸

CULTURE⁹

The majority of the over two hundred tribal groupings in Zaire belong to the Bantu cultural and linguistic cluster. The Bantu inhabit all of Zaire except the northern and northeastern fringes, where the Sudanese and Nilots live. The Kwango-Kwilu region in which Mennonite Brethren work has been concentrated is in southwest Zaire and is inhabited by Bantu tribes.

The Bantu people live in villages of approximately 300 people, although some have as many as 800 residents. Villages are scattered about and require considerable travel between them. They now tend to be strung out along the rural highways and roads. According to recent census figures, there were about a million and a half people in the Kwango-Kwilu region — including those living in large centers such as Kikwit.

Villagers have few material possessions. A house built with sticks and grass, consisting of one or two rooms, houses a family unit. Their wardrobe contains one set of clothes, the women wearing the traditional African wrap-around and the men following European styles.

Traditional life is agriculturally oriented. Life is on a subsistence level and the family depends on the produce of the gardens worked by the women for their staple diet, the manioc root. The diet is supplemented by hunting and fishing carried out by the men.

The traditional African system of bartering to exchange goods is vanishing. Crops can now be sold in the large urban centers. Those in the larger centers share their earnings from their jobs with their relatives in the village. Even the bride-price given by a man to the wife's family is now largely monetary.

The solidarity of the African family is one of their most important values. The African family includes kinship links through the mother's family and the father's family as well as the families of one's own children. This means that family solidarity includes four or five generation levels. This kinship group acts as a unit, and to attack one is to attack all. Responsibility for each other is shared by all members.

Each village has a chief and a body of ruling elders who act as judge and counseling body to resolve social conflict and ensure social control and cohesion.¹⁰

RELIGION¹¹

The people believe in a God who created the universe but who is now an aloof being. They think less in terms of seeking peace with this God than of ensuring a good relationship between themselves and the relatives in their clan. This includes both clan members still living and those who have already died.

The greatest good for the African is a state of well-being brought on by good health and good fortune in activity in which he is engaged. Sickness and misfortune are never considered accidental. They are traceable to individuals (living or dead) who cause evil. People consult the witchdoctors in order to tap their formulas or acquire objects which will help to ward off evil influence and insure their health and prosperity. These specialists manipulate the supernatural forces for good or evil. Such power for good and evil is thought to reside in certain objects (fetishes). The spirits of the departed also control the forces. It is generally thought that a person who was wicked in life becomes an evil spirit and can cause trouble among the living.

As a result of this worldview, one of the greatest concerns of a villager is to avoid the evil powers that can damage his life. Their reverence for their ancestor is based on their desire to placate those who have died and thus insure their continued goodwill toward the living.

Besides health and prosperity, another over-riding value of life for the people of Zaire is having descendants. Many of their actions can be traced to the tremendous value that they place on having a large family.

The African of Zaire expresses himself esthetically in music and drama, oral traditions and graphic arts. Music is based on an interplay of rhythms rather than on melody and harmony. There are numerous traditional instruments. Oral literature is abundant in the form of fables and proverbs, riddles and historical accounts. Art-work is seen in the designs

put onto pottery, into woven cloths, wood carvings, masks, and other figures.

MODERN ZAIRE

One of the most significant phenomena in Zaire today is urbanization, and the accompanying detribalization. When the traditional patterns and values of rural village Africa are brought into an urban setting they come into conflict with a new way of life. Not only is the African confronted with the European culture that has caused urbanization, but traditional patterns of life are often hard to follow despite serious attempts to remain traditional in the city.

The urban family is almost entirely dependent upon cash income. It is usually impossible for the women to have their own gardens, as they do in the villages. This puts the woman in an entirely different role in the home. The man becomes the chief provider, even though a woman will often supplement her husband's income by selling things daily at one of the marketplaces.

Family solidarity continues as an important principle for the urban Zairian, but it becomes an almost unbearable burden for those who are wage earners. A person with a job virtually has no money to his name, because whatever he does earn goes to meet the many needs of the extended family.

Social control is exercised in the city mainly by the city government. This is considered an impersonal force and does not represent as strong a restraint for Africans as tribal sanctions did. When a person begins to do or not to do something simply because of the pressure of external constraints, attitudes towards breaking the law and disobeying ethical standards change. Thus there is more moral laxity in the city.

The traditional African worldview is seriously challenged by everything that he learns in school and reads and hears from European civilization. As a result many urban Africans take on a European veneer in order to show how much progress they have made into the modern world. Bantu philosophy and outlook are so firmly rooted in their conscience, however, that most city dwellers still resort to traditional viewpoints when

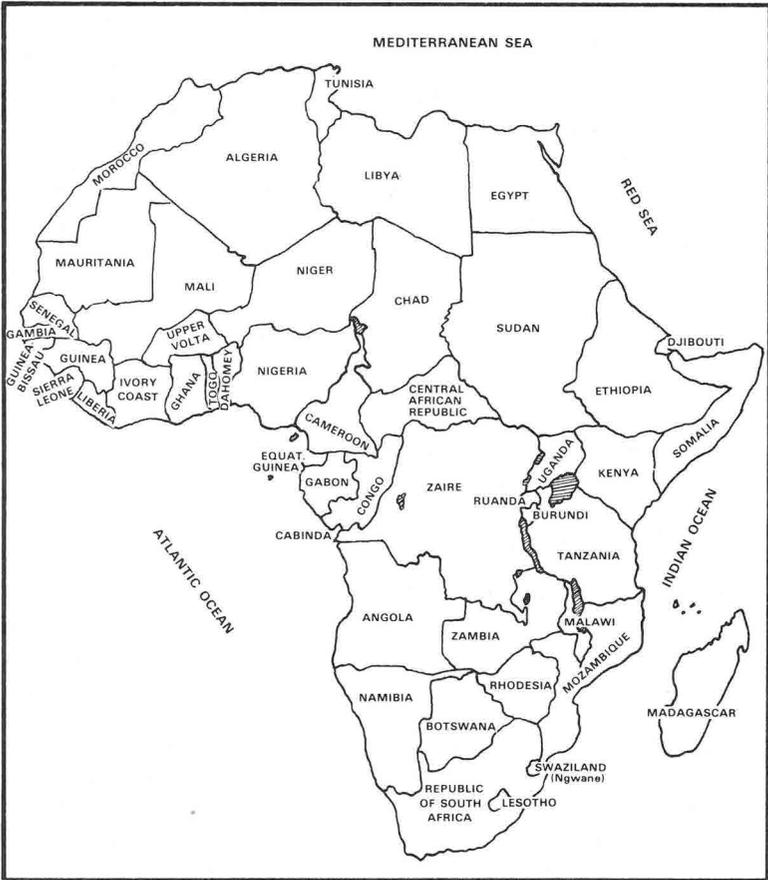
they must make an important decision.

Many Africans in the city are extremely lonely. Though it is almost impossible to maintain the traditional way of life in the city, they cannot, and often do not want to, become completely European. Some Africans resolve this conflict in interesting ways. It may lead to a schizophrenic type of life, for example, in which a person adopts two different styles of life depending on the situation. No satisfactory resolution of the problem has taken place and the person is often in conflict with himself. The well-integrated African in the urban environment is rare indeed.

It should be noted that the break-up of traditional African values and patterns is slowly reaching the rural villages as well.¹²

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1

1. Environmental factors such as rivers, mountains, forests, roads, soil, and rain influence the way people live. How do these affect the lives of missionaries, and how would they affect the communication of the gospel?
2. Missionaries are faced with the fact that people in other societies have different languages and cultures. To what extent is it important for the missionary to learn the language and the culture (the social, economic, political, and religious beliefs and practices) of the people among whom he works, and why?
3. How should Christians respond to other religions? Are they totally false and therefore to be destroyed completely? Do they have some aspects of the truth on which the missionary can build (e.g., Paul at Athens)? Or how should we view other religions?



Countries on the African Continent

2

CHRISTIANITY IN ZAIRE

CATHOLIC MISSIONS

The earliest Christian contacts followed the explorations of Diego Cao in 1484 and in 1485. These initiated several centuries of contact between the Kongo Kingdom and the Portuguese empire. Although such contact was principally commercial, Roman Catholic missionaries worked ardently for well over a century in the region of San Salvador, the capital of the kingdom.

History also records the existence of a Dutch and Flemish settlement numbering a few hundred just south of the mouth of the Zaire River. They carried on commerce and at the same time sought to evangelize the Africans. In 1619 the Roman Catholic bishop M. B. Soares protested to the pope about the efforts of this "heretical" group.¹

The influence of Catholic missions increased greatly when they were given privileged status during the colonial period (1884-1960). Two factors contributed to this. One was that Belgium itself was more than ninety percent Catholic. Naturally the administration in its colony reflected the strong Catholic position at home. A second major factor was the educational system in Zaire. Schools were missionary activities, not government run, though a few were operated by private agencies. At the same time the state gave extremely important financial assistance to mission schools. Of the 26,540 schools in Zaire in 1955, eighty percent were Catholic. Yet they reached at the time only thirty percent of all Zaire children of primary school age.

In 1925 the Belgian government gave the Catholic Church a twenty-year monopoly on governmental subsidies to

education. State money poured in to eight Catholic missions, while the Protestants had to maintain their schools from their own funds. Not surprisingly they were rapidly outdistanced. Though no full report has ever been made on the billions of francs received by Catholic missions during those twenty years, some magnificent institutions built during this time are evidence of ample funds. Only when the twenty-year monopoly expired in 1945 did Protestant missions receive some government funds for education.

Catholic influence during the twenty years of complete monopoly cannot be over-estimated. Even in most remote bush areas and on lonely roads Catholic schools and hospitals were established and religious shrines erected. At the time of independence nearly 3,000,000 people in Zaire were identified as Christians, most of them as Catholics. By then the church had no fewer than twenty-six bishops in Zaire. Only one, however, was a native of Zaire.

Louvainium, the first university in Zaire, was established by the Catholics near Kinshasa. In the initial years of its existence it was an adjunct of the University of Louvain in Belgium.² A second university was established in Lubumbashi in the early 1960's.

Since independence the government has assumed responsibility for the educational program of Zaire and considerable progress has been made. The school system has been standardized and finances provided through government channels. A third university has been established at Kisangani. Even though missions today are continuing to assist in the educational program, the responsibility no longer rests with the church.

PROTESTANT MISSIONS

The first Protestant out-post in Zaire was the Livingston Inland Mission, established in 1878 on the Atlantic coast near Matadi. In 1884 the work and staff of this mission were transferred to the American Baptist Mission Society. By 1886 five Protestant missions had been started in the lower Zaire from Underhill Station near Matadi up to Kinshasa. The

Christian and Missionary Alliance established a mission center at Boma, the early capital of Zaire, and advanced northward to the frontier of the state. Other Protestant missions followed.

The effort of a Methodist missionary, William Taylor, deserves special mention. He sought to encourage missions to "earn their keep," providing for their personnel and teaching the African constructive trades and professions along with the Gospel. To help him carry out his dream Taylor was proclaimed "bishop for Africa" by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1884.

Taylor's plan was to found a chain of small mission posts from Angola to Mozambique. The missionaries were to be well equipped on arrival. Once they were established, however, they were to develop local agriculture and industry to provide for their own livelihood and become independent of financial help from abroad. The ambitious plans foundered on the inadequate resources of that period, coupled with difficult climatic conditions.

During the years of 1886 to 1896 that "Bishop Taylor's mission tried to work in Zaire, very few of his missionaries managed to learn the local languages, and fewer still had energy to devote themselves to anything but staying alive. Of the eighty-six who went out eleven died, fifty-one, of whom the majority became ill, returned home and the last one ceased work in 1898."³

The heroic effort of William Taylor to establish a mission that would maintain itself in the Zaire climate and its economic circumstances is of special significance for the early years of the beginning of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the 1920's when the early missionaries, forced by circumstances, were generating the major part of their support for over twenty years, thus proving that William Taylor's dream was a possibility.

During the 1890's the Garenganze Mission, supported by individual British Plymouth Brethren, established a Christian witness in the province of Katanga. Missions of the Disciples of Christ (American) and the American Presbyterian Mission advanced during the later 1890's into the Kasai area, thus bringing the witness of the Gospel to the eastern part of Zaire.

Other Protestant mission societies that entered Zaire during the years following are: the Westcott Brothers' Mission, the Africa Inland Mission, the World-Wide Evangelization Crusade, the Unevangelized Tribes Mission, the Congo Inland Mission, and others.

During the colonial period Protestant mission growth was considerable. In 1911 there were nine missions with 226 missionaries on fifty-two stations, 2,275 Congolese helpers and 22,013 communicant members. A 1959 report released shortly before Zaire's independence in 1960 indicates forty-five mission groups with 2,608 missionaries on 345 stations laboring together with 645 ordained national pastors, 11,200 non-ordained pastors and 20,128 catechists. Communicants in 1959 numbered 821,025 with 345,473 catechumens and a total Protestant constituency estimated at 2,500,000.⁴

Like the Catholics, the Protestants turned to education as a major means to plant churches. Yet the heavy involvement of evangelical missions in education through the years has been much debated. Is education for conversion only? Is it not also to prepare and train leaders for the church? Should education give modern knowledge to those without it? Can education enable church members to earn a living and form a basis for a self-supporting church? Even though all these positions have been debated, a considerable proportion of Protestant effort has been channeled into education.

Some missions refused to accept the benefit of government subsidies, fearing government interference. Their reluctance, however, caused many problems when their daughter churches struggled for economic and social advancement. Most Protestant groups felt that if they turned down this aid it would seriously prejudice the possibility of advancement for a growing number of eager students seeking higher education. Without a certificate from a recognized school, Protestant students would have found many doors closed to them. By 1959 there were some 469,667 pupils in 11,179 primary schools, with 1,228 students in ten Protestant secondary schools and hundreds of other Protestants attending the "lay schools" in cities.

Protestant missions have also contributed much through

extensive medical programs carried on under difficult circumstances. Some of the pioneers were medical doctors, following the example of Livingston. Most Protestant stations sought to have at least one person versed in medicines, since illness and disease were so prevalent. Even a minimal knowledge of medicine and a basic first-aid kit could help win friends when an infected bite or festering sore could rapidly cause loss of limb or death. Eventually most stations sought to have either a hospital or dispensary. By 1959 there were some 186 hospitals or dispensaries for 345 mission stations. The evangelistic contact made through medical work often laid the foundation for future friendship, cooperation and conversion.⁶

The history of missions in Zaire has recorded a high degree of inter-mission cooperation. Emory Ross offers the following summary:

Nowhere in Africa has cooperative advance been more marked than in Zaire. Here is to be found the oldest implemented cooperation in Africa. Here the first general missionary conference for a whole African area was held in 1902. The world's first field continuation committee on the plan recommended by the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 was formed in Zaire the following year. A union quarterly called the Congo News was established in 1912. A union mission house was directed in then Leopoldville in 1921. The "Congo continuation committee" was reorganized into a Congo Protestant council in 1925 with wider membership and larger commitments. A proposal originating in Zaire for a mid-Africa missionary conference grew into a large and important gathering on African mission and education in Belgium in 1936. The Zaire jubilee and west African conference was held in Kinshasa in 1928 with 200 missionaries present. A year later the then Congo Protestant Council established in that city a permanent residence and office with a full-time secretary. In 1933 a bi-monthly union religious publication for French speaking Africans anywhere was issued from the Council's office. In 1934 Dr. John R. Mott presided over interdenominational conferences of the greatest significance for all religious work in Zaire. In 1935 the name Church of Christ in the Congo, later changed to Church of Christ in Zaire, recommended during these conferences, was adopted by missions and churches for the whole growing evangelical church. In 1935 a union book shop, capable of serving as a general buying agency for all of Zaire missions so desiring was established in Kinshasa.⁶

It is, however, regrettable that the Congo Protestant Council extended Zairian church representatives voting rights only in 1956. In 1960, shortly before independence, leadership in the Protestant Council was transferred to nationals in the election of Pastor Pierre Shaumba as secretary-general of the Protestant churches. He served in this capacity until he was replaced by Jean Bokeleale in 1968.

A number of cooperative Protestant efforts are worthy of note. Several major advanced educational centers were established, as well as the large medical facilities in Lower Zaire at Kimpese which became a center for training national nurses. The *Centre d'Accueil Protestant* in Kinshasa was a very important inter-mission provision for missionaries in transit to the interior.

Of long range significance in the Protestant ministry of the Gospel in Zaire was the central printing press LECO (now CEDI) in Kinshasa. This has served the entire constituency since 1946, the nerve center for the development of literature and distribution of Scriptures. It assisted in the translation of Scripture portions and provided an editing center for Christian periodicals in various languages. A nation isolated from the rest of the modern world for centuries longed to receive more enlightenment through education. To these thousands of searching people the printing press in Kinshasa served as a channel for guidance and direction.⁷

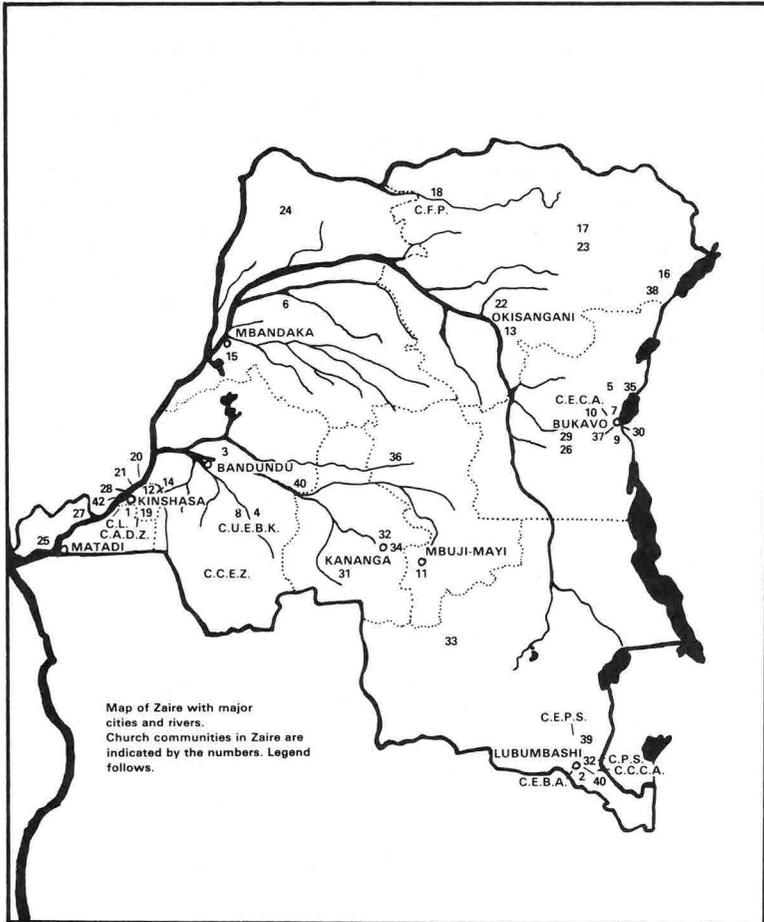
A serious weakness of the church in pre-independence Zaire was the lack of well-trained leadership. Pastoral training schools were often centered around one or two missionaries. The curriculum was generally governed by the special interests of the respective teachers, resulting in lack of standardization. The levels of instruction varied greatly. Much of the instruction was given in tribal languages, with little or no theological literature available. Most pastors coming from the local tribal setting found serious limitations in their ability to relate to the "non-mission world." This weakness in leadership brought on a major crisis when the church was faced with the demands of a church in transition from a strongly mission-centered orientation to that of an independent church in a newly autonomous country.

The mission-centered church building program during the Colonial days had failed to build the church on the roots of its own culture. The frame of reference in doctrine, ethics, style of life, social and functional organizations, was not closely related to the religious and sociological grid of the people.⁸

The sudden change affected by the move to independence found the church unprepared to develop its own identity in relation to its environment and culture. Its theology was undefined and insufficiently understood by many. The church was unprepared to assume leadership for its ongoing witness and its administrative functions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2

1. One of the early strategies in African missions was to build a compound with a school and a hospital. Discuss the pros and cons for using this strategy. Keep in mind the conditions of the time in which this approach was used.
2. From the beginning one of the key questions was how to train national leaders. What are some of the alternative forms of leadership that might have been used, such as fulltime paid pastors, part-time lay pastors, etc., and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each. Remember the relative poverty of the people among whom the work was carried on.



Church Communities in Zaire

LEGEND

1. Community — Salvation Army, Kinshasa
2. Community — Assemblies of Brothers, Lubumbashi
3. Community — Baptists of the Kivw, Goma
4. Community — Mennonite Brethren Churches in Zaire, Kikwit, Bandundu
5. Community — Free Churches in Zaire, Bukavw, Kivw
6. Community — Baptists of Bandundu, Semevdwa, Bandundu

7. Community — Grace Churches in Zaire, Bukavw-Kivw
8. Community — Pentecostal Churches, Bukavw, Kivw
9. Community — Evangelical Mennonites, Mbuji-Mayi, Kasai (oriental) East
10. Community — Disciples of Christ in Zaire, Mbandaka, Equator
11. Community — Anglicans of Zaire, Bunia, Upper-Zaire
12. Community — Assemblies of God of Zaire, Isiro, Upper-Zaire
13. Community — River Baptists of Zaire, Kinshasa 1
14. Community — Baptists of Lower-Uele, Bondo, Upper-Zaire
15. Community — Baptists of Western-Zaire, Kinshasa 2
16. Community — Evangelicals of Christ of the Heart of Africa, Isiro, Upper-Zaire
17. Community — Evangelicals of Christ in Ubangi, Gemena, Equator
18. Community — Alliance Evangelicals in Zaire, Boma, Lower-Zaire
19. Community — Berenne Evangelicals in Zaire, Shabundu, Kivu
20. Community — Evangelicals in Central Africa, Kisangani, Upper-Zaire
21. Community — Evangelicals of Upper-Zaire, Kisangani, Upper-Zaire
22. Community — The Association of Evangelical Churches of the Lulonga, Basankusu, Equator
23. Community — Evangelicals of Zaire, Luozi, Lower-Zaire
24. Community — Free (Community) of Maniema-Kivu, Shabundu, Kivu
25. Community — Evangelicals of Kwango, Kinshasa-Gombe
26. Community — Free Methodists in Zaire, Bukavu
27. Community — Mennonites in Zaire, Tshikapa, Kasai-East
28. Community — Methodists in Central Zaire, Kananga, Kasai-West
29. Community — Methodists in Southern-Zaire, Lubumbashi, Shaba
30. Community — Pentecostals in Zaire, Kamina, Shaba
31. Community — Presbyterians in Zaire, Kananga, Kasai-West
32. Community — Presbyterians of Kinshasa, Kinshasa-Limete
33. Community — Sankuru Region, Kole, Kasai-West
34. Community — Assemblies of God in Eastern Zaire, Bukavu, Kivu
35. Community — United Baptist Churches of the Kwilu, Kikwit, Bandundu
36. Community — Central (Community) of Christ in Africa, Lubumbashi, Shaba
37. Community — Assemblies of God in Zaire, Kinshasa 1

38. Community — Garenganze Brothers in Christ, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 39. Community — Assemblies of Evangelical Brothers in Shaba, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 40. Community — Christian Churches in Africa, Bukavu, Kivu
 41. Community — Independent Evangelical Baptist Churches, Kikwit, Bandundu
 42. Community — Evangelical Seventh-Day Adventists, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 43. Community — Evangelical Zairians, Dibaya Lubue, Bandundu
 44. Community — The Faithful Protestants, Bondo, Upper-Zaire
 45. Community — Evangelical Pentecostals of Shaba, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 46. Community — Protestants of Shaba, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 47. Community — Mambasa, Upper-Zaire
 48. Community — Autonomous Baptists Between Wamba-Bakali, Bandundu
 49. Community — Episcopal African Baptists, Lubumbashi, Shaba
 50. Community — Cooperating Evangelicals in Zaire, Feshi, via Kikwit, Bandundu
 51. Community — Evangelicals in Ubangi-Mongala, Gemena, Equator
 52. Community — Light, Kinshasa
 53. Community — Baptists of Southern Kwango, Kinshasa-Gombe
- Note: To find a corresponding church (community) please locate the number on the map.

Part Two

Mennonite Brethren Missions in Zaire

3

A CORN OF WHEAT FALLS INTO THE GROUND

Mountain Lake, a small village in the southwestern part of Minnesota, was founded in 1877 as a new settlement for Mennonites who had emigrated from Russia. The severe climate, rolling prairies, wide expanses of open land studded with lakes and inhabited by waterfowl and antelopes, challenged the courage of these early settlers. They had left the rolling steppes of the Ukraine to make a new beginning in America for the sake of their Christian faith. Economic prosperity and the security of a homogeneous culture had been left behind in the Ukraine.

The family of Aaron F. Janzen, known for its deep piety, a disciplined program of biblical instruction through daily family devotions, and regular participation in a church fellowship, was part of this group of emigrants. To this family was born a second son, Aaron, on May 24, 1882.

The family lived five miles northwest of the Mennonite center of Mountain Lake. Only seldom did the children of the family have opportunity to go with their father to town, and thus their way of life offered only limited exposure to outside influences. In this environment, strengthened by the demands of pioneer life for physical endurance and a conservative, pietistic culture, Aaron Janzen developed a strong personality with courage, endurance and individuality.

At the age of 24 (late 1905) Aaron professed his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. The depth of his commitment in this spiritual crisis experience later made him willing to attempt the impossible, to sacrifice homeland, loved ones, possessions and life to answer God's call.¹

About his motive Aaron wrote: "The zeal for missionary work is derived from the belief that to die without the knowledge of Christ is to be lost for all eternity. We cannot but give to others what we ourselves have been given, the assurance of salvation and the fulfillment of an abundant life."²

The believer's responsibility for those who have never heard the gospel is reflected in Aaron Janzen's personal statement, entitled "Are the Heathen Lost?"

If the heathen, those who have never heard the gospel, are not lost one would not sense any deep compulsion to obey the command of Christ to preach the gospel to all the people. There is no purpose in simply bringing civilization to them, give to them our western culture such as schools, colleges, teachers, doctors, nurses, hospitals, etc. To give them these benefits would cost too much and demand too great sacrifice of separation from loved ones, living in a far away land, consorting with alien and all-cultured people, enduring deep and long drawn out loneliness, exposing the body to serious climatical diseases, facing possible attacks by lawless mobs, and finally, maybe passing through sudden and terrible death. Life would be considered too precious to spend its strength in the pursuit of such objectives. Unless the heathen need the gospel for the saving of their souls, to redeem them from a hopeless grave separated from God and Christ and their eternal doom then only it is worthwhile to leave homeland, kin and kindred, ease, comfort, physical and educational advantages, all that goes to make the home life alluring and profitable, for the sake of delivering people from perdition and bringing them to Christ and at last to an eternal heaven.

The Old Testament speaks to the condition of the heathen in the passage of Psalm 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Micah affirmed this truth in a statement "I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen" (Micah 5:15).

The words of Jesus express the heart of the New Testament gospel when he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16). The master here implied that the preaching of the gospel was a matter of life and death; that the man which does not believe must remain in his lost condition and that it is only the man who heard and received the gospel who shall be saved. The assignment of Paul was very clear when the Lord said to him, "To open their eyes,

and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18). Here then is the revelation of the all-seeing one. He affirmed that the heathen are spiritually blind and do not see; that they walk in darkness and need the light; that they are in the possession and under the dominion of Satan required to be delivered from him and brought to God; that the sins are so many and great as to call for divine forgiveness.

All that remains therefore is for us to decide which we love the better, ourselves and our ease or Christ and the souls of men.³

Aaron Janzen's dedication to the task of bringing the gospel to the people who have never heard is further reflected in one of his messages.

The largest part of earth's millions are still unevangelized. The command of Jesus requires that all people are to hear the message of redemption. Therefore the gospel must be published among all nations. Why then has it not been done? If the Christians were really convinced that the heathen were lost a greater effort would be made to get them to know Christ. Paul speaks of the heathen world, that they are "dead in trespasses and sins . . . children of wrath . . . having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:1, 3, 12). Acts 4:12 speaks to this point by saying "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." It may be that God is calling you and that he wants you to go. Will you obey the spirit? It may be that God wants you to send a substitute; so earn much money but invest that money in sending some substitute that will go and bring the gospel to those who know it not. Pray laborers out to the field. Pray in the money. Pray until the world is evangelized.⁴

THE KINDLING OF THE FLAME

The explosion of missionary zeal in the heart of Aaron Janzen had its roots in Russia.

The spiritual revivals within the Mennonite community of southern Russia in the 1850's and 1860's resulted in the birth of the Mennonite Brethren Church. This vital new life came with the early Mennonite settlers in Minnesota. As early as 1887 the Mennonite Brethren churches in Mountain Lake and

Bingham Lake, Minnesota, revealed a strong sense of responsibility for unsaved people—all those who had never heard the gospel. The mothers organized a missionary society. They prayed for the salvation of the lost, and prepared articles for the annual mission sales to gather finances for mission work, practices that have continued to the present.⁵

Such spiritual concerns awakened a response in the sons and daughters of these godly mothers. Already in 1895 a young couple from the Minnesota churches, Henry and Maria Ewert Enns, had left loved ones to go to Africa to bring the good news to the people. The consecration service in the church, with Elder Heinrich Voth officiating, followed by the farewell at the railroad station in Mountain Lake, marked the beginning of a missionary movement which was to span the globe. From the train platform the departing couple reminded the congregation of the words of Romans 14:8: "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

The first young couple from Minnesota was joined by Peter and Margaret Wedel, members of the Kansas churches. They were sent out by the Mennonite Brethren Church under the auspices of a missionary society of Baptists in the Cameroons in Africa. The mission field quickly took its toll. Henry E. Enns died on the mission field in 1896 after being there only for seven months. Mrs. Wedel was forced to return home because of ill health less than a year after their arrival. Peter Wedel's health also failed because of inadequate medication. He made an effort to reach Europe, but died August 10, 1897, while on the Atlantic. His body was buried at sea. By now Maria Enns was the only one of the four left on the field. The severe climate resulted in her death on January 3, 1898.

The echo of Henry and Maria Enns's parting words from the train platform continued to reverberate in the hearts of people at home. Though only sixteen, Aaron Janzen was not unaffected by this example of sacrifice for Christ. After his conversion eight years after the deaths of the first missionaries of the community, young Aaron with his bride, Ernestina Strauss, whom he married in July, 1911, volunteered to fill the

gap created through the death of the first Mennonite Brethren missionaries to Africa. Since they could not go under the auspices of the Mennonite Brethren Church, they volunteered to become some of the first missionaries of the Congo Inland Mission, a newly organized society with inter-Mennonite participation.⁶

SERVICE WITH THE CONGO INLAND MISSION⁷

After graduating from the Mountain Lake Bible School, Moody Bible Institute, and attending the German Baptist Seminary in Rochester, New York, Aaron Janzen and his wife, Ernestina, a nurse, left for Africa on November 16, 1912. On January 24, 1913, the young missionary couple, together with Sarah Kroeker (later Mrs. Anderson), arrived in Djoko Punda (Charlesville) in the Kasai district of Zaire. Less than a month after their arrival Alvin J. Stevenson, who had preceded them to Africa to assume responsibility for the establishment of the Congo Inland Mission program, died on February 6, 1913—a further casualty of a tropical disease. His last words to the young missionaries who had just arrived was, “Don’t get discouraged, even though I die, for people at home die too.” These concluding admonitions from the lips of a dying co-worker only deepened the impact of examples that had earlier motivated the lives of Aaron and Ernestina Janzen.⁸

On April 15, 1913, the first child of the Janzens’, Alvina Anna, was born in Africa, yet the joys of parenthood were brief. The infant died because of inadequate medical help available. Their second child, a son, arrived November 18, 1914, and they named him Aaron John. They loved and enjoyed their son for five years. The second test of their commitment came on June 28, 1919, when Aaron John also succumbed to tropical disease. The two graves of the only children the Janzens ever had became a major test of their obedience to God’s call to the mission field.⁹

The continued testing of their commitment sharpened when those to whom they had come to minister threatened their lives. Describing how they sought to win the Bapende tribe, Aaron Janzen writes,

The chiefs of the villages were exceptionally hostile. Many times our lives were seriously endangered. God demanded of us a complete sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel in which we even should discount our own lives. At first the natives did not want to sell us even from their food products. A slave boy of about 20 years was tied up and drowned because he often came to our house at the mission station. Finally after much time and much prayer the chiefs gradually became more friendly.¹⁰

The eight years of service from 1912 until 1920, though extremely difficult and very demanding, laid the foundations for the establishment of the Congo Inland Mission. A. A. Janzen established two mission stations—Kalamba in the Kasai district and Nyanga among the Baluba. Both still have a strong witness.

Eight years of pioneer missionary work in a tropical climate, with almost nonexistent transportation facilities, among sometimes hostile Africans, and frequently poor health because of inadequate diets, medical provision and living facilities, and finally the loss of two children, tested them to the core of their being. Repeatedly they faced up to the demand of true discipleship stated by Jesus:

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26, 27, 33).

The results of their pioneer years illustrate the words of Christ:

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my father honor (John 12:24-26).

The pioneer ministry of Aaron and Ernestina Janzen was not in vain. A church of 30,000 members stands as a living witness to their faithful efforts. It was truly of God that the Janzens accepted the appointment with the Congo Inland

Mission and became part of the founding of the Mennonite Church of the Congo, now Zaire.

ASSIGNMENT TO PLANT A MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH

The Aaron Janzens' experiences under the Congo Inland Mission prepared them for an even more difficult task. Right from the beginning they had hoped their ministry would be in relationship to the Mennonite Brethren Conference. They entered the open door God provided through the Congo Inland Mission, awaiting further direction. Letters to loved ones and reports to conference churches underscored their eventual objective to serve under the Board of Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

A. A. Janzen wrote:

It had often been upon our hearts to start a work in Africa for our own conference. We had notified the Mission Board beforehand and shared with them this deep desire. In November 1920 we asked the Congo Inland Mission Board to release us from our commitment. In the assurance that it was the Lord that guided us I went in search of a new area to start a pioneer work.¹¹

In midsummer of 1920 Aaron Janzen took several African Christians with him and traveled inland over 300 miles on foot. Because of the difficult travel conditions and the uncertainty about the final destination, Mrs. Janzen chose not to accompany her husband. After weeks of travel the group came to a commercial center called Kikwit. Here they met a doctor who told them of a thickly populated territory near Kikwit in the region called Kikandji. At Kikandji Janzen found the people very open and receptive to the gospel. A middle-aged man by the name of Kayemba accepted Christ as his Savior, and in his enthusiasm about his new discovery willingly left his tribe to return with Janzen to the Nyanga station for his family.

The experiences of the long journey confirmed in Aaron Janzen's heart that the Lord was going before them. At Nyanga he shared his discoveries with his wife. On May 28, 1922, the Janzens took the second step of faith, leaving the Congo Inland Mission station for an unknown future. At the

mission station in Nyanga they already had large gardens and fruit trees, and it was not easy to leave all these provisions for their daily necessities. The Janzens left Nyanga almost empty-handed financially. Limited savings from their meager missionary salary plus a small inheritance from Mrs. Janzen's mother were inadequate for the task they were undertaking.

Eight Christians from the Nyanga and the Charlesville church accompanied the Janzens as they started off in hammocks for the new work in a new area of the Congo. The journey proved extremely dangerous and physically taxing. One of the joys was to gather around the campfire with the African Christians and sing the songs of Zion and to pray together. Nearly three weeks later, on July 15, 1922, they finally arrived at Kikandji.

Kikandji is about 250 feet above sea level. The sandy ground was quite unsuited to growing a garden. Some distance away on the slopes of the hill there was more fertile ground. For several months the Janzens lived in a tent while trying to construct a primitive house. The cold winds at night made the tenting uncomfortable, and their discomfort affected their health. Aaron Janzen became seriously ill with malaria, and his condition became critical when his illness turned into black water fever. As his condition worsened he came very near death. Ernestina Janzen, alone without medical help, with no one to turn to for comfort and support, wrestled in prayer with God for the life of her husband.

Both were inwardly tortured by many questions. Had they not understood the Lord when they ventured forth to bring the gospel to a people who knew Him not? If it was the Lord that led them, would He now let this loved one die? Had they truly understood the Lord in leaving the CIM mission and venturing out on their own? Their description of the experiences during those days of crisis remind us of the struggle of Jacob when he wrestled with God all night, finally crying out, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

The Lord was gracious in answering their prayer and a change in the condition of Brother Janzen set in. The recovery was very slow and took a long time. His weakened condition made it extremely difficult to continue the work in

the building of their small hut. After weeks and months of struggle the small dwelling had a roof and they were able to move into the primitive facilities thereby being protected from the winds that blew over the hills and the rain that fell upon the tent.¹²

The birth pains accompanying the founding of our Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire had not yet ended. While the Janzens were still at work on their dwelling a missionary family came to Kikandji, expressing their willingness to join the Janzens in their difficult task. The experiences which brought the Bendicsons into contact with the Janzens appeared to be so miraculous that all were convinced that God had led them together.

Not long thereafter, while still at work on the erection of a house, Bendicson commented that he was not feeling well. In the evening he attended a group prayer meeting and prayed especially for his wife and children. During the night he became critically ill. There was no medical help available, since there was hardly a doctor in all of Zaire. For four days he suffered from a very severe fever. Then it appeared as though there was a slight change to the better. Meanwhile the Janzens and Mrs. Bendicson continued to pray earnestly for recovery. Yet early the next morning he gradually weakened. Toward evening, while Mrs. Bendicson was sitting at the bedside of her husband, he quietly led out in the song: "Then my soul shall feel no ill, while He leads me where He will, I will go without a murmur, and His steps I'll follow still."

The Africans surrounding the house interpreted the singing as a sign that improvement had come. After the completion of the song he again prayed and interceded on behalf of his wife and children. As darkness came on he spoke his last words: "I'm happy to go to be with the Lord." His lips continued to move as he prayed, even though the others could not understand the words, and he slipped away to be with the Lord.

The widow with orphan children, and the Janzens, veterans of much suffering, then prepared for the funeral. Rough boards served as material for a coffin. Aaron Janzen, only recently recovered from a very serious illness, preached

the funeral sermon. They could not understand how the Lord would permit this loss. In a personal account written by Janzen during these days of testing, he expresses somewhat the circumstances in which they found themselves:

We were without a committee to stand behind us, we were without a budget, we were without a salary and now without co-workers and the seventh year already of our second term without a furlough. The undertaking of this moment appeared to be so tremendous but our trust was in Him who had called us.¹³

Since the Janzens had left the Congo Inland Mission they had been without support except for occasional gifts from friends. Truly, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20, 21).

MOVE TO KAFUMBA

To continue the work with Kikandji as a base appeared impossible. The occasional gifts from friends proved inadequate. The solution for survival of the gospel witness appeared to be to depend on available resources on the field. The attempt of Bishop William Taylor, the Methodist missionary in the decade between 1884 and 1894 came to mind. William Taylor failed in the attempt. Missions accepted the result of Taylor's experiment and ruled out the possibility of self-support for missions in Zaire.¹⁴ Yet 30 years later A. A. Janzen found no other recourse but to attempt the humanly impossible and generate support from the resources available in their area.

Kikandji, located on a plateau with unproductive soil, an insufficient water supply, and unfavorable climatic circumstances, offered no possibility for the development of such resources. Six miles from Kikandji in a deep valley on the bank of the Nlongo River was dense African jungle known as Kafumba — elephant territory. The rich soil, the forest of palm and hardwood trees, a plentiful water supply and the availability of clay to manufacture brick all indicated that this site had potential. Upon application, 120 acres were made available to Janzen by a government grant. The relocation

from Kikandji to Kafumba demanded a new measure of faith and tremendous physical endurance. The clearing of the jungle, the erection of primitive facilities, the planting of fields and plantations for the production of coffee, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, peanuts, papaya, palm nuts, bananas, manioc, and mangoes was a struggle heightened by a continuous battle with elephants who deeply resented the destruction of their habitat. Aaron Janzen wrote:

It was too dangerous to sleep in the valley since elephants still had the preeminence. We usually could not come until nine or ten o'clock in the morning because the elephants did not get up early and we could not start until they had gone into the thicker forest for the day. Often when we came down in the morning some houses had been broken down by the elephants and many of our newly planted trees were pulled out and much of the crop ruined.¹⁵

The victory was won, however. By 1924 the primitive African house was ready for occupation. Also erected were a chapel, a missionary bungalow, boys' and girls' houses, barns for goats, ducks and chickens, a large workshop, storage rooms, and huts for African workers. Throughout, the objective was clear: approximately 300,000 inhabitants living in some 300 villages over 40,000 square miles were to be given a gospel witness.

The Janzens' burden for evangelism is well illustrated in a letter by Ernestina Janzen, written in 1925 to her friends at home:

Greetings with the words "Go out quickly into the highways and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." These words have been constantly ringing in my mind for the past weeks but I hesitated to speak to Aaron about it because I feared that he would again be constrained to leave me alone and go into the villages for weeks at a time. His heart is constantly burdened with the spiritual condition of the thousands of people around about us. Today he came to me and said that the Holy Spirit had been speaking to him again for some time already to go out into the villages.¹⁶

Mrs. Janzen made the necessary preparations for her husband to visit the villages, packing food and clothing to last

him for three to six weeks. Because of the danger of contracting malaria and the hardships of travel, Mrs. Janzen remained at the mission station.

The early days of evangelism in Zaire were filled with difficulties. The Africans, remembering how white men came to round them up as slaves, found it extremely difficult to trust foreigners. The sight of the white man brought terror and hate, and many people fled into the forest. Yet gradually some of the younger people began to show interest in the Word of God. A few started to come to school, and each school term the attendance increased slightly. In 1926 the first convert, Luka Sengele, was baptized. In his testimony he referred to Joseph, saying he wished to follow his example in winning his brothers to Christ. During this same year 37 people were baptized, forming the nucleus for founding the African Mennonite Brethren Church.

Another early convert was a young man named Djimbo Kuvala (Timothy). He was adopted by the Janzens, became a Christian, and soon demonstrated great faith in God. He grew up to be one of the first village teachers, later becoming one of the outstanding leaders in the development of the Mennonite Brethren witness in Zaire.¹⁷

These early evidences of God's blessings were sufficient confirmation for the Janzens that they had correctly understood the Lord and that the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire was to be extended. Yet the need for additional support in prayer and finances became very evident. The Janzens also needed rest and to renew contact with the home constituency. They could not leave a work so blessed of God unattended for a furlough in America. They spent much time in fasting and prayer, asking God to provide someone that would assume responsibility for the work while they were absent. The Lord heard their prayer. A missionary couple from the Unevangelized Tribes Mission, the Elmer Hutchinsons, and two single women, Mary Miller and Daisy Florel, a nurse, were led of the Lord to assume responsibility for the missionary program at Kafumba. The Janzens arrived home on August 8, 1927.

In a letter written during that year A. A. Janzen expresses the overwhelming experiences of a furlough after spending

more than fifteen years in Zaire. The joy of meeting the family and friends who through the years had prayed and stood by them was great.¹⁸

The furlough from August 1927 until December 1928 was of great significance for the establishment of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. Through the visits to the churches at home the Janzens touched many hearts. Their commitment to evangelize Africa evoked a solid response and considerable financial support. The Holy Spirit also moved in the recruitment of personnel. The illness and death of Mrs. Hutchinson in Zaire in late 1928 required that the Janzens cut their furlough short and return to the field as speedily as possible. Yet they did not go alone this time. With them as they left on December 21, 1928, went the William Jantzes from Marion, South Dakota, William Jantz's sister, Eva, and Martha Hiebert of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Their arrival at Kafumba signaled a new chapter in the history of the development of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. They were met by Elmer Hutchinson, Miss Miller, Miss Florel and a multitude of nationals.¹⁹

The economically depressed years of the 1930's, when economic assistance from America came very sparingly, were diminished in impact by the broad agricultural and industrial development at the Kafumba station. What had appeared impossible served in those years as a major provision of God for the support and the extension of the evangelistic outreach.²⁰

The program at Kafumba gained considerably in home support as the years went by. The addition of new personnel gave added potential for outreach.

In 1932 the Henry Bartsches from Canada joined the Kafumba staff for a year. Then they moved on to establish the Pniel Mission at Bololo in the Dengesi area of the Kasai province of Zaire. (Details covering the Pniel mission follow in a later section.) Other key personnel were Kathryn Willems, who came in 1936, Anna Goertzen and Martha Manz, who arrived in 1938. The founding of the Pniel mission under the leadership of Henry Bartsch seriously cut personnel strength at Kafumba when the William Jantzes, Lydia Jantz, and

Katharine Harder chose to join the effort to establish the new mission to the north.²¹

A major test came to the outreach at Kafumba when Ernestina Janzen was called to her reward on September 24, 1937. Recurring malaria had gradually weakened her body and finally claimed her life. The mother of countless spiritual children in Zaire, a most faithful wife and companion of a great missionary statesman, a "mother in Israel" for the mission staff, she died in the midst of an expanding ministry.

Among the Africans Ernestina Janzen was known as "Mama Nkenda" (Mother Compassion or Mercy). Her faith, her spirit of devotion, and sacrifice had been a major source of strength in the pioneer work in Zaire for nearly 25 years. A. A. Janzen faced the loss with deep pain but also a new degree of submission. He wrote, "Dear Lord, I thankfully kiss the hand that gently stripped me bare, and laid me on thy tender breast to lose my sorrow there. 'Twas anguish when earth's cup was spilled, but now with thee it's overfilled for Jesus, thou art more to me than all earth's brimming cups could be" (Job 5:18).

The man of God did not falter, for Janzen was a man of prayer. Those who knew him more intimately knew he regularly withdrew for long periods of intercession and prayer. He had understood the implications of the admonition, "Pray without ceasing." There is no doubt that it was in this fellowship with God that he found the source of power even in life's deepest disappointments and many "impossible" situations.

For six years Aaron Janzen lived alone, unwavering in the leadership of the program God had entrusted to him and his co-laborers. On January 23, 1943, he was united in marriage with Martha A. Hiebert, one of the workers at Kafumba since 1929.

The character of the missionary era of this great pioneer of missions, A. A. Janzen, could well find its proper description in Hebrews 10:34-39:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the

promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

EXTENSION OF THE BASE FOR A WIDER OUTREACH

The addition of staff brought the evangelistic vision of A. A. Janzen into focus again. This expressed itself as follows:

Evangelism

The Mennonite Brethren Church historically was known for its evangelistic concern. A. A. Janzen brought this heritage to Zaire. His early efforts to evangelize the villages proceeded under much pressure and distress. The new staff made a new thrust possible.

From the very beginning the missionaries agreed that the area could be evangelized only by Africans. Thus the first effort concentrated on developing workers to send into the villages. In the face of complete illiteracy, preaching and teaching of the gospel was combined with teaching the people to read and to write. A school at Kafumba was erected to train evangelist teachers. These were to go into the villages, live with the people, teach them to read and write, and serve as the messengers of the Good News.

This approach, even though it was strictly missionary station centered, appeared to be the most effective approach for its day. Within a few years from 90 to 140 teachers were serving in villages throughout the region around Kafumba, teaching the children to read and write and speaking to men and women concerning Jesus Christ. The educational effort that developed is described in a report by the mission secretary, A. E. Janzen, in November, 1945.

There are three types of schools at the mission station: the central school, the women's school, and the teacher training school. The central school consists of men, women, girls and boys who have come from the elementary village schools and from villages where there are no schools. Here they are taught the Old Testament and New Testament Bible stories, singing, reading, writing, arithmetic, French, hygiene, drawing, Bible memory work, gymnastics, games, geogra-

phy and agriculture. A pupil of average mentality may finish this school in five years and is then admitted to a teacher training school.

The women's school is conducted like the central school, except that the women do not spend as much time in the school because they must be at their fieldwork part of the morning.

The teacher training school consists almost entirely of saved boys and girls, but there are a few who come from other schools where they were not taught the Word or were too young when they attended the central school to grasp the meaning of really being born again. Here they are taught the deeper biblical truths and more advanced knowledge in the other subjects taught in the central school. There are usually only about 50 students enrolled in this institution. These are the ones who become fairly strong teacher-evangelists upon their graduation.²²

Literary Work

The population of the Kafumba station area was made up of three tribes, Kipende, Kisongo and Kimbala, each speaking a different language. This made it extremely difficult to print Christian literature. The major means of communication was the Kikwango language, a trade language widely spoken in the area.

The vision of Aaron Janzen again became evident. He established a printing press at Kafumba and began the translation of material from English and other languages. Djimbo Kuvula, the adopted son of the Janzens, became the first printer.

The stories of the New Testament and the Old Testament were translated into the Kikwango language and printed for the schools on the station and in the villages. Other portions of the gospels were also printed and distributed, song books were prepared, and the necessary textbooks, readers and other school materials were produced in the small print shop at Kafumba. This ministry had an inestimable impact during the early days of missionary work in central Zaire.

Medical Ministry

The message of Christ's love cannot be brought to people without relating to their physical needs. The ministry to

the sick becomes the key to the heart of many people, opening them to the message of the gospel. A dispensary of clay was erected at Kafumba early in the ministry there. Though the potential for medical assistance was limited because of the inadequate training of missionaries and lack of medical supplies, the ministry of love became a major expression of compassion and understanding. In the early months a patient load up to 30 and 40 each day kept the staff busy. Especially significant was the obstetrical department, helping many mothers with the birth of their children. The reports of the early missionaries contain many experiences of divine intervention in this healing ministry when human resources proved inadequate.

Industrial Training

Aaron Janzen's practical orientation as missionary showed in his commitment to industrial development and training. For the African in Zaire this proved highly significant. A large carpentry shop on the mission compound helped the men learn the skills of the building trades: sawing boards, making bricks, burning bricks, and preparing other building materials. Boys and girls who attended the school helped in the harvesting of crops from the variety of gardens, learning not only the fundamentals of agriculture but also helping to provide food for everyone living on the mission station.

During this period of development in the late 1930's there were about 450 boys and girls in the station school, with 1500 attending village schools. Fifty students in the Bible school were preparing as teachers and evangelists. These Africans became God's instruments for getting the gospel into the villages, with baptized believers numbering over 1600 at this stage of outreach.

On May 27, 1943, Aaron Janzen achieved his goal. The Mennonite Brethren conference took over full responsibility for the work at Kafumba. In spite of trials and severe testings this work had been blessed by the Lord. In reflecting back on the hardships and criticism of the work at Kafumba, A. A. Janzen quotes: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3

1. What is the primary motivation that should lead us into missions? Is it the love of the people, the belief that they are condemned to hell if they do not hear the gospel, or obedience to God's command? How do these motivations relate to each other?

2. The pioneers began the work outside of the conference structure, but later the work was accepted as part of its mission program. To what extent should this be the pattern by which we get a vision for new work? And how should those who have a vision work in relationship to the existing structures of the church?

4

A SECOND BEGINNING

In Canada, interest in African missions began with the ministry of Henry and Anna Bartsch. Both were products of the burgeoning Bible school movement that was to play such an important role in later Mennonite Brethren missions.

The first Bible school in Canada had opened at Herbert, Saskatchewan in 1913, and for several years was the center of biblical education.¹ The strong migration of Mennonite Brethren from Russia to Canada after World War I added momentum to the movement. Faculty from the Tschongraw Bible school in South Russia, for example, started the Winkler

(This chapter is an insert that is not really vital to the development of the present Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. The work in the Dekese territory was discontinued in the 1950's, with all direct relationships to the Mennonite Brethren Church severed. The chapter, however, is vital to an understanding of the mission of the Mennonite Brethren Church in North America in Zaire.

The spiritual dynamic reflected in the commitment and sincerity of the missionaries to the Basonge-Meno, their missionary approach, characterized by a supernaturalistic faith, their evangelistic communication with little or no regard for the cultural and social background of the people, and a willingness to move ahead in the face of human impossibilities, cannot be passed over. The light this chapter throws on early missionary concept, method and strategy is vital for an understanding of the history of the missionary movement that provided the historical roots for the birth of the church in Zaire. Author.)

Bible School. Others sprang up rapidly: 21 such institutions were started between 1913 and 1942. They had a basic program of Bible studies, with a strong emphasis on the responsibility to proclaim the gospel as God's message to the world.² Seventy-five percent of the missionaries sent by the Mennonite Brethren Church in the worldwide witness of the gospel studied at these Bible institutes. (It is noteworthy that pastors and church leaders [59 percent], missionaries at home [86 percent], Sunday school workers in local churches [67 percent], and church school instructors [66 percent] were also the product of these schools within the Mennonite Brethren fellowship between 1913 and 1963.³)

Into this educational atmosphere came Henry Bartsch, born in Russia in 1896 in the village of Sparrau in the Ukraine. He had spent his childhood and youth in a Mennonite village and was nurtured in the homogeneous culture of the Mennonite colonies. After only three years of high school, he had to return home to assist on his parents' farm. He was eighteen when the First World War erupted in 1914. In the medical service of the Russian army he was exposed to the dangers, cruelties, and horrors of the Caucasian battlefield. The heavy responsibilities placed upon him as a young man had a significant impact upon his character development. He learned to face dangers, to fearlessly challenge the impossible. He developed a faith in the providence of God and confidence in his own ability to face a task even though it was difficult.

The Russian revolution in 1918 brought Henry Bartsch's release from the medical corps. Just after his arrival home his father and many others died in the flu epidemic that swept postwar Europe. Bartsch had several narrow escapes⁴ during the anarchy that followed the revolution. Since the new regime had not extended its influence to the Ukraine, hordes of bandits roamed the Mennonite colonies, killing people at will.

Bartsch committed himself to Christ as Savior when he escaped from a hail of bullets fired at him by pursuing anarchists. He accepted his escape as evidence of the providence of God. After eight years of struggle for survival during the war, the revolution, ruthless anarchy, and disease and hunger, he came to Canada in 1923 with the help of his

uncle, Henry Bartsch of Dalmeny, Saskatchewan.

On his arrival in Canada he at first accepted his uncle's offer of partnership in a farming operation which would guarantee him a good livelihood and perhaps prosperity. Farming, however, brought him no peace. He used the long winters in Saskatchewan to continue his studies. For two years he attended the Bible school in Herbert, Sask. Then he went to the Winkler Bible Institute in Manitoba for study under the widely-known Bible school teachers of that day, Dr. A. H. Unruh, John G. Wiens and Gerhard J. Reimer.⁵

In May, 1928, he was married to Anna Funk and for a time renewed his effort to become a prosperous farmer. During the alternating success and failure of the farming operation he could not rid himself of the deep-seated feeling of a divine claim on his life. In 1930 the newly married couple met the A. A. Janzens, who had returned on furlough to present the spiritual needs of Zaire to the people at home. God spoke to the Bartsches in an evening service in a direct way. They shared the conviction that they must participate in the assignment to bring the gospel to the unreached millions of Africa, and Zaire in particular.⁶ The response to God's call was immediate. The farm operation was liquidated without any assurance of how and when they would reach Africa. The path from Dalmeny to Africa through Winnipeg, Kitchener, New York, and Bremen, Germany, was filled with hindrances that could be overcome only by unwavering faith and a sense of divine mission.

The Bartsches left Dalmeny without any assurances of financial support. Individuals assisted them with small contributions. Since 1931 was the beginning of the Depression, financial resources for missions were extremely limited. Added to this were a rough voyage, hostile Belgian officials who barred their entrance to the Congo, seven months of waiting in Europe for visas, and illness.⁷ Of them the words of Romans 4:20-21 are true: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, he was able also to perform."

On December 26, 1931, one year and three months after they left Dalmeny, the family landed in Matadi. On January

15, 1932, they reached Kafumba, joining the A. A. Janzens and their co-workers to bring the gospel to a people who did not know Christ, the Savior.

PROVISION FOR HOME SUPPORT

The dedication of Henry and Anna Bartsch to the Lord's call, the continuing missionary vision at the Winkler Bible School, coupled with the school's missionary prayer band, resulted in the founding of an Africa Missions Committee, later called the Africa Mission Society. The organization began with a group of students at the school led by the counsel of a faculty member, Gerhard J. Reimer. Its purpose was: "To support the work of Henry and Anna Bartsch with intercessory prayer, to solicit gifts for this ministry and to generate interest in the work in the broader constituency."⁸

The possibility that the future support of Henry and Anna Bartsch could be transferred to a church body or a conference was considered carefully when the committee was formed. Yet membership in the association was not limited to any church or conference. The society recognized a broader missionary responsibility than only the specific assignment to serve as a supporting agency for the work of Henry and Anna Bartsch in Zaire.⁹

Legal requirements led to formal incorporation. This was arranged in 1934, with the official title of The Africa Mission Society (*Africa Missions Verein*). An official publication, *Der Kleine Africa Bote*, was launched in June, 1936. The work of the society was viewed by the directors as provisional until the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren churches or some other organization from within the broader brotherhood would assume the responsibilities.¹⁰

The birth of the Africa Mission Society must be viewed in the context of the evangelistic dynamics within the Mennonite Brethren church. The emphasis on personal, experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ — conversion — and personal responsibility for a lost world, generated the kind of spiritual concern within the brotherhood that could not be contained within the slower moving, corporate function of a conference.

Much of the earlier missionary thrust from within the brotherhood found its start in steps of faith by individuals.

SEPARATE MISSION MOVEMENTS

The Zaire outreach of the Janzens and the Bartsches through the independent mission organizations had parallels in the history of Mennonite Brethren missions.

One of these was the witness of the gospel to the Hakkas in China begun in 1911 through the personal dedication and initiative of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wiens of Henderson, Nebraska. The H. C. Bartel mission to China in 1901 was a similar thrust from the churches of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren.

Mennonite Brethren mission outreach in Brazil was started by the Jacob D. Unruhs from Shafter, California, in 1940. Students from the Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Saskatchewan, responded to the spiritual needs in Colombia and initiated the research needed to establish a Mennonite Brethren mission field there. In Paraguay God spoke to the G. B. Giesbrechts in 1933 about the spiritual need of the Lengua Indians, resulting in the founding of the mission society, *Licht den Indianern*. A student from the Bethany Bible Institute, Isaac Goertz, was burdened with the spiritual need of the Mennonites in Mexico — his kinsmen — and pleaded their cause before the larger brotherhood. The plea of one brother found an echo in the bosom of the brotherhood and a mission to Mexico was born.¹¹

An additional factor beyond the spiritual dynamics within the brotherhood contributed to the founding of the Africa Mission Society. For more than a decade after the mass migration of Mennonite Brethren people from Russia to Canada, none of the Russian Mennonite young people interested in missions abroad had been considered for an assignment by the conference Board of Missions, nor did they have any representative on this Board. The Africa Mission Society was thus an answer to their exclusion from active participation in the existing program of the brotherhood. Corrective action on the part of the conference during the years 1943-1945 removed these areas of tension and resulted in the

transfer of the program initiated by the Africa Mission Society to the conference Board of Missions. The Africa Mission Society was dissolved after the transfer of the work to the conference.

TO AN UNKNOWN PEOPLE

One year after the arrival of Henry G. and Anna Bartsch at Kafumba they dismantled their tents to go on into the unknown, "a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1). Disagreements over the personnel structure and organizational function, plus tension arising from the charismatic emphasis at Kafumba and personal incompatibility of Bartsch hindered them from putting down roots at Kafumba. Their restless spirits searched for a fuller realization of the purpose which had brought them to Africa. Their pioneering spirits were not satisfied.¹²

On January 16, 1933, a small group of missionaries, including the Bartsches and their children, Eva and Lydia Jantz, and Katharine Harder, ventured out into the unknown.¹³ The single missionaries had all been part of the Kafumba staff.

"We did not know where we were going," writes Anna Bartsch.

Their first destination was Simona. The roads were very difficult. The truck used for the journey was very unreliable. Long distances they walked, plodding through deep sand under a tropical sun. At times they crossed the swift streams by means of primitive bridges. When they passed through swamps the cargo had to be unloaded from the truck and carried to solid ground. Arriving at the village of Simona, they erected a temporary building on a hill at the end of the village.¹⁴ While here, the group was joined by the William Jantzes, another couple from the Kafumba staff.¹⁵

A few weeks passed during which there was continuous prayer, consultation and waiting for direction from the Lord. Through a state official they learned of a tribal group of 40,000 persons in Dekese territory, the Basonge-Meno, who were just emerging from cannibalism.¹⁶ The tribe was known for its warlike nature and its opposition to the intrusions of a colonial

power. Their history included killing of white men and feasting upon their flesh.

"That is no place for women and children," warned a Belgian state official.

After further prayer and searching for the will of God the Bartsches responded, "These people need the gospel of the Savior. The gospel was meant for people like these. The gospel can change them. The Lord of the mission is going with us, therefore we cannot shrink back but must say with Paul, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'" ¹⁷

Together with some other missionaries who had joined them during the time of waiting, including Mr. Haller, a missionary from Mangungu, the decision was made to leave women and children in Simona as the men investigated the area. The expeditionary group included Haller, Bartsch and Jantz. The women and children waited without news as days, weeks, and months passed. Mrs. Bartsch waited with three children, and was expecting her fourth. A windowless hut with a grass roof provided her shelter. Torrential tropical rains battered their primitive facilities. Reptiles, snakes in particular, endangered the children. On one occasion a roaring grassfire threatened to engulf the hut, but she cried to God for the lives of her children. Suddenly the direction of the wind changed and they were saved. The weeks of uncertainty about the future sapped the emotional strength of the waiting missionary mothers and their children. Were their husbands and the searching party safe? Would they return? Had they correctly understood the Lord in launching into the unknown? ¹⁸

Meanwhile the search party had reached the Dekese territory and selected the village Bololo to serve as an operational base. A group of thirty men was then hired to carry the belongings and the women with children from Simona to Bololo via Nyanga, Mangungu, Luebo and Bulape. After preparation, the weeks of hazardous travel in a caravan with thirty carriers under a tropical sun began. During the trip Anna Bartsch suffered with a raging fever reaching 104 degrees. God provided the assistance of a missionary doctor who was summoned from a mission station some distance

away. Finally, towards the end of April, the families were united with husbands and fathers, who had set out to meet their loved ones. The joy of reunion was sweet indeed.

During the stopover in Bulape—a Presbyterian Mission outpost—they were met by a missionary who addressed them in the words,

These are the missionaries whom God has chosen to go to the large tribe of the Dekese. Long have I prayed for this to happen, especially when I looked into the stars of that sky during the night and thought of the people of this tribe for whom there was no one to bring the gospel of life. Now I see the answer stand before me.¹⁹

This statement by a man previously not known to them came to the Bartsches as the voice of God confirming that the Lord was going before them. It was the Lord who called them to the Dekesies.

Nearly four months after leaving Kafumba, the group arrived at Bololo, the base selected to establish the witness to a people who had never heard of Christ and redemption.

LAND AND PEOPLE

Bololo, the base selected for the evangelization of the Dekese, is some 450 miles northeast of Kafumba in the heart of Zaire. At the time it was part of Lasambo province and the Dekese administrative territory. The southern boundary of the field was the Luilaka River which marked the northern boundary of the geographical area to be served from Bololo. From east to west the area to be evangelized was also about 200 miles. Forty thousand square miles with a primitive population of some 40,000 was the challenge accepted by the pioneering missionaries.

The topography of the Bololo field is very similar to that of the Kafumba area, though the forests have larger trees and the vegetation is denser. The eastern half of the field is more open, with a rolling terrain.

The Basongo-Meno people in the 1930's were very primitive. Their occupation was hunting. Their food consisted mainly of meat plus roots and fruits native to the tropical forests.

Travel in the area was extremely difficult. The villages

were far apart because the area was sparsely populated. This part of Zaire is best reached from the coast by water following the Zaire River into the Kasai, then into the Sankuru. The Djungo beach, the port for Bololo, is accessible to fair-sized steamers. From the port fifteen miles of jungle paths led to the village and the mission compound.²⁰

Religiously the Basongo-Meno people were animists, bound in fears and superstition. They believed the spirit world determined their course in life and death.²¹

SOWING THE SEED

Two dwellings for missionaries, schoolhouses, a dispensary to serve the medical needs of the people, several dwellings to house the pupils of the school, as well as a church were erected within a year of their arrival. The facilities, all constructed of local materials, were primitive and inexpensive, but they served the purpose.²² The real purpose was evangelism.

Internal transportation was slow and laborious. To carry the gospel to distant villages Henry Bartsch would take a bicycle and native carriers. Wherever the path prevented the use of a bicycle he had to walk or have the natives carry him on a "Kipoy."

The distance from Bololo to Bisongonda, for example, was approximately 40 kilometers and required seven hours of travel through heavy jungle. Tropical storms swept through the area, with lightning shattering huge trees and rain drenching foliage and travelers. The forces of nature reminded them of the supernatural powers in control of the elements of nature.

Bisongonda, with a population of about 600, was part of the Basongo-Meno tribal area. Neither the colonial authorities nor the missionary had ever had any influence here, since tribal attitudes were very unfavorable toward the white man. Because the witch doctors feared the loss of their influence upon the people they did not permit the children to attend the mission school. The tribal chief was an arrogant and outspoken opponent of all outsiders.

On his first visit Henry Bartsch sent a message to the

people inviting them to a worship service in front of the little hut in which he was staying. Only a few old women and some small children came, but they were not interested in hearing the Word, nor could they understand it. A few of the school boys that the missionary had brought along began singing at the top of their voices in order to be heard above the pagan noise. To bring the Word of God to the people in such a village seemed hopeless.

After darkness settled the young people and men who had been hunting all day in the forest came back to the village. A few of the men came to the meeting. The hostile chief also came, walked back and forth, then moved back into the shadows. The boys from the school continued singing and the audience finally quieted down. Henry Bartsch asked Ngunga, one of the better students, to pray, after which he began telling the people the story of Jesus healing the paralytic. Although the people were quiet and seemed to be listening Bartsch says, "I had the impression I was talking to the trees in the woods." A few minutes later a brawl erupted with swearing and raging of human fury. At the conclusion of the meeting the people sat around the fire in front of their huts and ate their balls of Kwanga.

As Henry Bartsch sat in the moonlight watching the panorama of a pagan village, heavy clouds rose in the west and in the distance he heard the rumble of thunder. In order to avoid the tropical storm he withdrew into the little hut, lit the lantern and began reading his Bible. Having found comfort at previous times from the Psalms he read from Psalm 84. However, verse seven, "they go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God," did not speak to his personal experience at that moment. He blew out the lantern and poured out his heart before God. A feeling of frustration swept over him as he began to wonder why he should be in such a pagan village. However, comfort soon came with the realization that it was God who brought him here and would continue to give strength and courage to press on.

Tired and exhausted from the long day's journey and the experiences of the evening, Bartsch lay down to sleep. However, the people of the village came to life after dark and

the crowd continued to sing and dance until dawn. Sleep came sparingly that night. With the morning Bartsch began preparations for the long homeward journey. The carriers, who had participated during the night in the dances, began quarreling with one another, each wanting to carry the lightest load. Eventually they started for Bololo.

To learn more of the area to be served Bartsch undertook the next day a journey of two and a half days over mountains, through valleys—wading through rivers where there were no bridges—until he reached the Sankuru River. Along this treacherous hippo-infested river the party traveled three hours to reach their destination, with a hollow tree trunk serving as a boat. It was large enough to accommodate Bartsch, his bicycle, a few of his belongings and two of the students from the school. They had to kneel and place their hands on the sides, balancing the boat with their body weight to keep it from capsizing. From the jungle beach they walked another two and a half hours to reach the Lutschwadi River, a small artery of the Kasai that flows into the main stream close to Port Franqui.

At the Lutchwadi they rented another primitive boat. This boat, however, began to fill with water. In addition to balancing the boat they now needed to keep their belongings out of the water and bail continuously to prevent the boat from sinking. Finally after much anxiety and great effort they landed close to Port Franqui. Bartsch now had to wait for his carriers, who were following on foot along the river bank.

After Bartsch and his students had waited in Port Franqui for three days to have their carriers catch up with them, two men out of the eighteen left behind on the Sankuru River arrived. The other sixteen had not been able to come because boatmen refused to take them across the Sankuru River. Without the help of carriers, they had to leave most of their belongings at Port Franqui, taking only the absolutely necessary things on the final leg to Bololo. The incredible journey had taken eight days. Henry Bartsch reported, "Except one learns to accept circumstances the way they are one would soon be unable to keep one's purpose in focus."²³

The experiences of Henry G. Bartsch at Bisonganda raise some questions for us in the 1970's about basic missionary

principles in philosophy and practice. What justifies subjecting oneself to weeks of extreme difficulties and dangers to tell a Bible story of how Jesus healed a paralytic to a primitive people who do not have the background to interpret the implications of the story? How much of the gospel is communicated by a white missionary who comes into a village with an inadequate knowledge of the language and a totally inadequate understanding of the culture of this strange people—the Basongo-Meno, head hunters of the African jungle? What is the lasting impact on the life of students in a mission school when they are ordered there by the colonial government because for the colonial official the mission school is the most effective way to “civilize” a headhunting tribe of the jungle?²⁴

Was the concept and method of missions consistent with New Testament evangelism, which reflects an identification of the messenger with the people, a communication of the gospel while relating to the people on the level of their religious background and culture?²⁵ How much is the emphasis to save souls a matter of religious accommodation to justify a given program to satisfy a conscious responsibility? This is not to question the motivation and honest dedication of these pioneer missionaries in the face of the greatest sacrifices.²⁶

HARDSHIPS AND PROBLEMS

The Bololo mission, founded in 1933 and vacated in 1942, demanded the highest degree of commitment to an assignment which the missionaries considered an assignment from God. The severe climate, coupled with inadequate medical facilities, took a heavy toll among the people who had accompanied the Bartsches to this area of service. The William Jantzes were able to remain at Bololo only three months. Eva Jantz had to return to America in 1934 and did not rejoin the Bartsches. In 1935 the work was interrupted when Bartsch had to return to Belgium and to Canada to gain the proper credentials for continuing the work. He had just returned to the field when Lydia Jantz and Katharine Harder both returned home for medical attention. The Bartsches were thus left alone to pioneer this difficult field.²⁷

Margaret Siemens from Winnipeg, Canada, volunteered as a missionary and went to the field in 1937. She was accompanied by Katharine Harder, who was returning to Zaire. In October, 1937, Herman and Tena Lenzmann came to the field, and in March, 1938, Karl and Maria Kramer joined the pioneers of Bololo. Yet severe climate and malaria continued to take their toll. The failing health of Anna Bartsch demanded the return of the Bartsch family in 1938. By August, 1939, the health of Tena Lenzmann forced the return of the Lenzmanns. The same year Katharine Harder returned home, followed by Margaret Siemens in October. The Karl Kramers, who had joined the missionary group, were from Germany and were considered citizens of an enemy country and were interned in May, 1940.

The courage of Henry Bartsch remained undaunted. As a result of the fragile health of his wife, he left the family in Canada and returned to the field alone. There he labored alone from August 25, 1939, until May 14, 1942. By then the demands became unbearable and he returned to Canada to care for his family. The mission compound was left in charge of the natives. At that time there were two houses for missionaries, a large church building, four school houses, dormitories for 150 boys and girls, barns for goats and chickens, and some 60 acres of land serving as the operational base of the mission.

The Bartsch family did not return to the field. The mission center remained unoccupied until 1946, when under the leadership of new missionaries, the William G. Baerg family, the missionary center was relocated from Bololo to Djongo Sanga, closer to the Sankuru River.²⁸

In addition to the great difficulties caused by climate, unreceptive people, primitive circumstances and health problems, we must not overlook the opposition from the Roman Catholic church and a priest that had been assigned to the Dekese area:

His primary mission seemed to be to cause difficulties for the Bololo missionaries either by setting the government administrators against the missionaries or by stirring up the local chiefs against Bololo, or by pulling the boys away from the Protestant school for other duties and by offering them gifts to attend his services. The battle against Roman

Catholic priests at times was almost as severe as the struggle against paganism and circumstantial difficulties. This remained so through all the years that the work in that area was carried on.²⁹

HIS WORD SHALL NOT RETURN VOID

The sacrifice of life, sweat, tears and health have not been in vain. Even though circumstances and local opposition limited the results of the labor, God did give His blessing. Progress was seen in evangelism, education, medical, and literary work.

Evangelism

Very slowly the missionaries succeeded in winning the confidence of the Basongo-Meno. Because of local fears much of the preaching had to be done in the open air before the people could be drawn into the chapel for services. However in 1936 the Lord blessed the ministry with a revival and eighty Africans professed conversion to Christianity. Now regular services could be conducted in the chapel, and these were frequently attended by 400 to 500 people. Yet not until 1942 were the first six baptized and organized as a church.

Missionaries were not the only witnesses. The older boys attending the mission station school regularly went into surrounding villages as witnesses for Christ.

Education

The Bartsches opened a mission school at Bololo as soon as they started the station. The missionaries considered life in the village to be so decadent that they thought it necessary to take the boys from the villages and bring them to the mission station.

Enrollment grew to 200 boys within a few years. Yet this was not a lasting development. The fluctuation of the mission staff and the constant opposition of the Roman Catholic priest seriously hindered the educational work.

The school has yielded, however, some healthy fruit. All six individuals who were baptized in 1942 were once students of the school. Four of these six served their own people as evangelists.

Medical Work

This phase of mission activity was important from the beginning. Katharine Harder, later assisted by Margaret Siemens, was in charge of the medical work. The greatest difficulty was to make the Africans recognize the value of medical and hygienic care, and to secure the necessary medical supplies.

The principal diseases afflicting the people in this area were malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and syphilis. A dispensary was erected in the very beginning to treat these diseases. A great deal of medicine was distributed and many afflicted were relieved of their suffering.

Literary Work

Eva Jantz gave herself wholeheartedly to the task of learning the difficult Dekese dialect in a pioneer attempt to put the printed page in the hands of the natives. To her credit, and the other missionaries, some 70 Christian songs were translated into the Lingala language. The Mennonite Articles of Faith were also translated and printed for use in the schools. Bible stories from the Old Testament as well as the Gospels of John and Mark, along with some stories from the Acts of the Apostles, were put into Lingala.

A NEW BEGINNING

At the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Buhler, Kansas, in 1943, the Bololo Mission was officially accepted as a Conference outreach.³⁰ Under the new arrangement missionaries could be recruited to take up the work begun at Bololo. William and Margaret Baerg and Susie Brucks were assigned to the Kasai region for a ministry to the Dengese people. Knowing the difficulties encountered by the missionaries who had been there earlier, they accepted the assignment with the earnest prayer, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:15).³¹

The Baergs and Susie Brucks, accompanied by A. A. Janzen, left Kafumba and set out through jungles and across

streams on the five hundred mile trek to Bololo. Traveling in an old Model A car and using flashlights and lanterns for lights at night, they arrived at Bololo in four days. As complete strangers and unable to communicate they settled down for the night. They felt the presence of the mighty God in this pagan environment. Since the Bololo station was in the forest they secured 40 men to carry the freight while the missionaries sailed along the Sankuru River to the Djongo Sanga Beach, 15 miles south of the Bololo site. Throughout the entire journey the missionaries were warmly welcomed by the people.

The new missionaries were immediately confronted with the reactivation of church activities. As soon as they gained a cursory knowledge of the Lingala language the missionaries began a building program. However, since access to the Bololo station was difficult and all freight and provisions had to be brought by carriers from the river to the station, the missionaries opened a compound at a new site.

Finding a suitable site for the station and the headquarters of the church proved difficult indeed. The chief of Djongo Sanga agreed to join the missionaries in looking for a place, and the police of Djongo Sanga and Bololo and a few other men also joined. The Lord directed the group to a suitable plateau with good water not far from the Sankuru River.

The Lord turned the hearts of the rulers and they gave permission to let three villages assist the Baergs in building the first houses. **Beginning May 29, 1946, 593 men and women** worked for three weeks to provide the first housing quarters for the mission. Ten thousand sun-dried bricks were made by the Bololo men and 10 hectares of forest were cleared by the men of Djongo Sanga.

Baerg gathered about him the children of the surrounding villages and began simple schools. The children listened to the Christian stories and the teaching of the gospel. This laid the foundation for a new way of life.³²

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4

1. On the basis of the early experiences in Africa, what strategies would you suggest for beginning a new work in a tribal society? What specific activities should the missionaries undertake?
2. There is considerable debate whether missions should be carried on through denominational boards, or through independent faith missions. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches as seen in the Africa experience.
3. To what extent should missions be involved in educational and medical work? What functions do these serve, and what is the caution we need to take when they are introduced into the work?

5

MISSION EXPANSION

1945-1960

Several key factors influenced the rapid expansion of Mennonite Brethren missions following the Second World War. For one, the "New Day" inaugurated by the end of the war generated a spirit of anticipation and hope for a better world and a better life. In the Mennonite Brethren churches this period was marked by a greater acceptance of responsibility for the gospel outreach. A. E. Janzen wrote:

From 1945 forward the constituency was ready, and this was a refreshing movement by the spirit of God to launch out to new countries and people and fields, to respond favorably to the many applications by young people, both in Canada and in the United States, who felt the call to missionary service and to respond commensurately with financial support.¹

The Bible institutes in Canada and Tabor College in the U.S.A. experienced a new influx of young people. Young men who had been in various services during the war years were released and returned to school. The Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, which had opened in 1944 as an advanced Bible school, formulated a standard college program and became a major training center for church and mission workers in Canada. Tabor College initiated a school of theology to give new emphasis to the training of men and women for the mission of the church.² The Pacific District Conference established Pacific Bible Institute in 1942. This also became a major motivating and training center for young people considering mission service. The continued contribution of the Bible schools in this thrust must also be noted.

The process of acculturation among the Mennonites was also a factor in the missionary thrust. The tensions resulting from this process were most apparent in the Canadian churches, since the majority of members had come as immigrants of the 1920's and 1930's. Many of the young people by now spoke English, but the churches retained the German language for church services and activities. The heightened spiritual responsibility found outlet in mission outreach in communities away from Mennonite centers and overseas. These did not endanger the infiltration of the "English environment" into the local church in Canada. The post-war economic prosperity also provided the financial resources for such mission activity.

The geographical expansion of missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church during the years 1943 to 1960 brought the message of salvation in Christ with new zeal to Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, West China, Peru, Japan, Mexico, Europe and Panama.³ During the three years from 1945-1948, 64 new missionaries were sent out by the churches of the conference; twenty to Africa, twelve to China, thirteen to India, thirteen to Colombia, six to Paraguay. The missionary staff abroad grew from fifty in 1945 to 114 in 1948, to 256 in 1960, with 206 new missionaries during this fifteen-year period.⁴

ZAIRE ACCEPTED AS A MENNONITE BRETHREN MISSION FIELD

The acceptance of the missionary program at Kafumba and Bololo in Zaire marked the beginning of the rapid missionary expansion of the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The minutes of the 1943 General Conference detailing the acceptance of the outreach in Africa shows the corporate action to assume responsibility for work begun by individuals and groups within the brotherhood. From the 1943 Year Book we note the following record of action:

Plan for Accepting the African Missions Kafumba and Bololo

The Conference instructed the Board of Missions and the Committee of Reference and Counsel in the 1939 conference

to work out a plan under which mission work in Africa could be accepted. This has been done and the plan was submitted to the churches through the *Zionsbote*. It contains certain principles which are of vital importance for this purpose. (a) The joint committee did not deem it advisable to look for an entirely new field, but rather considered two fields, Kafumba and Bololo, in Belgian Congo, in which some of our brethren and sisters work who draw their main support from our churches. (b) It was thought to be very essential on the one hand that there should be unrestrained willingness in the churches for such acceptance; and on the other hand these missions should have complete confidence in the conference so that they would place themselves unconditionally under its supervision. (c) The plan provides for the acceptance of both of these fields without discrimination, although it was not thought necessary that this take place simultaneously. (d) After the acceptance has taken place the mission will be supervised and cared for according to the stipulations in the constitution and the resolutions of the Conference. In supplying the stations with workers and material means due care shall be exercised that this be done with adaptation to the conditions as they exist on the fields.⁵

THE KAFUMBA MISSION

The missionaries of the Kafumba mission, in a letter to the Board of Missions dated December 29, 1938, and signed by A. A. Janzen, Martha Hiebert, Kathryn Willems, Martha Manz and Anna R. Goertzen, petitioned that the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America take over this mission, and offered to transfer to the Conference unconditionally all rights and privileges thereof. In a letter of July 25, 1940, they reaffirmed this petition and offer on the basis of the plan prepared by the Board and the Committee of Reference and Counsel in their joint session of April 5, 1940.

On the basis of this petition and in agreement with the earlier plan the Board of Missions recommended: (a) that the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America accept as its own the Kafumba Mission in Belgian Congo, Africa, and that it assume full responsibility for the maintenance and further development thereof. (b) That the Conference accept as its missionaries to Africa those workers who were on that field or at home on furlough — namely

Aaron A. Janzen, Martha Hiebert Janzen, Kathryn Willems and Anna Goertzen.

THE BOLOLO MISSION

The Africa Mission Society, through its Board of Directors, had presented to the Board of Missions several communications dated November, 1936, October, 1938, and March 11, 1943. In these they likewise petitioned that the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America take over the Bololo Mission. They declared further that they were willing to transfer the Mission to the Conference under certain conditions. If this could not be arranged satisfactorily, they asked for the establishment of a basis upon which they could function side by side with the existing mission organization of the Conference.

After discussion at the 1943 conference the following motion carried: That in view of the fact that the Conference delegation is not ready for a final vote on the motion (to accept the Bololo Mission on the same basis and for the same purpose as the Kafumba Mission) the discussion be discontinued here and a final vote taken on the motion on the following day.⁶

The action of the Conference the following day was as follows:

Kafumba field accepted: Motion that in view of the fact that the financial support of the Kafumba field has largely come out of our circles that the Conference accept the Kafumba field in accordance with recommendation of the Board of Missions. The motion carried. Bololo field accepted. Brother H. H. Janzen, chairman of the Africa Missions Society, Canada, spoke in behalf of the Board and says that they are ready to turn over the Bololo field unconditionally to the Conference as recommended by the Board of Missions if the Conference is ready to accept it gladly.⁷

The following motion is made and accepted: that the Mennonite Brethren Conference of North America accept the Bololo mission field from the Africa Mission Society and thereby take over full responsibility for this field. The motion carried.⁸

This action of the Conference is of historic significance, for it reflects the acceptance by the Conference of missionary

groups within the brotherhood as an expression of unity in faith and missionary commitment. The rapid expansion of missionary outreach that followed the 1943 decisions could not have happened without a movement towards unification of mission interests. A failure to reach unification in the area of mission interests and organization would have resulted in serious disruption within the brotherhood along the lines of mission priorities pursued by the several groups.

PATTERN OF CHURCH BUILDING PROGRAM

The expansion of the gospel ministry from the West to other continents of the world in the 19th and 20th centuries was strongly influenced by political and economic colonialism. Mennonite Brethren missions were no exception. A. E. Janzen describes the pattern of missions in Mennonite Brethren fields during this era as follows:

External circumstances in a period of strong colonialism, as well as insecurity on the part of the missionary in a strange and generally unfriendly culture, gave rise to a station and missionary-focused pattern. The station-centered pattern was generally adopted by other missions. Our missionaries readily followed this pattern. This was, however, a deviation from the biblical pattern.

On our own fields, in the earlier years, each station was practically autonomous. The early missionary who opened and built a station usually labored there and supervised it during his entire time of service. It was a station-centered pattern of operation. On the station property the church, the school and the hospital were built. The surrounding population looked to the station for its spiritual, educational (there were no schools for the masses of people in India then), and medical ministry. The national leadership (preachers, evangelists, teachers) also depended on the mission station for its economic sustenance. It is true that national churches were also established in the villages, but under this pattern hardly any of them became self-sufficient in developing their church program. Consequently this pattern gave them the concept that the mission churches were a foreign movement, responsible to a foreign organization. And so they were, in a measure. The Lord, nevertheless, signally blessed this approach, and thousands were saved and became members of the mission churches.⁹

The Congo mission work was no exception to this pattern. The program was station and missionary centered. To provide some understanding for the scope of such mission centers the Kafumba station may serve as a model. It was located on a tract of 160 acres of land acquired by A. A. Janzen in 1924. In the course of time much of the forest was cleared and replaced with a coffee plantation, citrus grove, and large gardens to raise food.

The institutional focus of the program resulted in a heavy concentration of personnel and buildings. A. E. Janzen's report of 1950 reveals the following institutions: a primary school, a teacher training school, a Bible school, a hospital and clinic, and a printing press.

The facilities for these institutions, the auxiliary buildings to support the program, the residences for the missionaries and national staff, demanded the steady addition of buildings. In 1950 there were fifty-five buildings on the Kafumba compound and more were built between 1950 and 1960.¹⁰ The missionary staff for the supervision of this program in 1950 consisted of: A. A. Janzen, general supervision and coordination of the program; Martha Janzen, in charge of Bible translation and preparation of curriculum; Kathryn Willems, in charge of the printing press and the girls' boarding. Frank and Clara Buschman, who taught in the Bible school, served as treasurer of the mission. He was also in charge of the boys' boarding and supervised the overall maintenance program of the compound. Irvin and Lydia Friesen were committed to village evangelism and served as superintendent for all the village schools (in 1952 there were seventy schools in the villages). Mathilda Wall worked in the hospital and was in charge of the clinic; Erna Funk supervised the hospital program and was in charge of the maternity; and Mary Toews taught advanced classes and was in charge of the teacher training program.¹¹

The ten missionaries at this time were assisted by 51 national workers on the station, all salaried by the mission. The total resident population of Kafumba in 1950 was 500, including the families of missionaries, national workers, students of the Bible school, and of the primary and secondary schools. The two stations established later, Matende with a

staff of fifty-six, and Kipungu with a staff of seventeen, had a total population of about 150 when families and students were included.¹²

The spiritual focus of such centralized institutional programs is difficult to interpret. We will return to a further analysis of these aspects of the mission approach in the light of the goal to build an indigenous church.¹³

EXPANSION INTO NEW AREAS

The 1943 conference action in accepting Africa as a mission field initiated not only an expansion of program but also a geographical expansion by assuming responsibility for new areas unreached with the gospel.

Matende

In December, 1945, A. F. and Mary Kroeker of Dallas, Ore., opened this station among the Bambunda tribe, in an area located about fifty miles east of Kafumba. The field, with an area of thirty-five square miles and a population of 50,000 people, contained some 100 villages. It offered the challenge of reaching a people previously untouched by the gospel. Abram and Sarah Esau and Margaret Dyck joined the Kroekers in 1947.¹⁴ The early beginnings of the ministry in this area occurred under the same primitive conditions that tested the faith and commitment of the earlier missionaries.

The Bambundas of that area had previously not received the evangelical message of the gospel, as those at Kipungu, Kikwit, Lusemvu and Gungu. Catholicism—in a syncretistic form incorporating the basic principles of animism—was dominant instead.

The unwillingness of the tribe to accept teachers from other tribes in developing an educational program and in the training of leadership proved to be a second factor that made the planting of a church in this area extremely difficult. Demon possession was another major factor. The response from the natives after the erection of the first building made of sticks, mud, and grass, was very slow and often discouraging. The witch doctor and a professional dancer strongly resisted the

establishing of a witness in their community. The first building of mud, poles and palm thatch had to serve as a chapel, school room, workshop, guestroom, and study. These primitive facilities became the scene of rich blessing when people who had long resisted the gospel inquired about the Christian faith.

Other missionaries who have served at Matende are Henry and Elsie Brucks, Elsie Fischer, Elsie Gunther, and Ernest and Lydia Dyck. The program in Matende developed very much after the Kafumba model. First they began a school. Then they initiated a medical ministry to serve the physical needs of the people. In 1952 they reported an enrollment of sixty-seven pupils in school. This enrollment grew until it reached 120. Matende also served as the base for a teacher training school established in January, 1953.¹⁵

An evaluation of Matende made ten years after its beginning raised questions about the wisdom of rapid expansion of the institutional work without the establishment of a responsible church body. After an administrative visit to Zaire by the author in 1956 he reported:

Our missionaries have labored faithfully in spite of the limitations of staff. The program far exceeds the human possibilities of the staff. For two years Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Dyck have held on, faithfully doing all that was possible for them to do. The sustaining grace of God has been very evident in the work on this station during the recent past. The program as such gives evidence how the demands of the educational program can become the occasion of an institutional ministry at a heavy cost to the major objective—that of evangelism and the building of an indigenous church. The only village evangelism done during the past year was in connection with the inspection trip to 15 village schools, which could be done only a few times in the course of an entire year. The growth of the church has been slow, with some encouraging response in baptism during the past year. The development of a native leadership in the church, however, has received very little emphasis. The direction and administration of the church is entirely in the hands of the missionary. The offerings were also allocated without any consultation with the church. The observation that the tenth from all the wages is withheld from all the workers on the station and village teachers as well as from the monthly ration allowance to the students of the E.P. is a point where we question whether it is a biblical way of

teaching the responsibility of Christian stewardship. We have reason to question the large program of village schools (15 of them) in comparison to the program of evangelism.¹⁶

But the question remains whether in pioneer missions the educational program should precede the evangelizing of adults.

The tension between education and medical services and evangelism—an issue affecting missions in general—is difficult to evaluate. In an underdeveloped society the communication of the gospel is conditioned by the effort to meet physical, economic and educational needs.

Kipungu

The Kipungu mission station lies sixty miles southwest of Kikwit. It serves an area of 4600 square miles with a population of 40,000 people living in 200 villages and some 200 commercial company posts. The people belong mainly to the Bambala and Bangongo tribes. This area was originally part of the Kafumba territory, and some visits had already been made to this territory, a few small schools were established and some evangelistic outreaches had been made into the territory. John B. and Ruth Kliever from Bakersfield, CA., pioneered the establishment of this missionary outpost.

The decision to establish a central mission station in this area led to an intensive investigation of possible locations. After several trips into the area a place known as the Kipungu hill was selected. In spite of the friendliness of the native chiefs the missionaries had to wait nearly a full year until permission was given to occupy this hill and erect the necessary building for a mission station.

Again the erection of a school and a medical center became priorities. The teaching ministry on the station was focused on the people who became mission employees.

There is, however, a unique phenomenon in the history of Kipungu. From October, 1947, until September, 1948, the period required to receive government clearance for the occupation of the Kipungu hill, the missionary staff John and Ruth Kliever and Anna Enns lived in a village named Kilembe. During this year the missionaries established close ties with the people in the village, engaging in a consistent teaching

program. The impact of this identification with the villagers, and the ministry to them, is strongly reflected in the further development of this church over several decades. The personal interest of the missionaries in the native people established a personal identification with them and a consistent teaching program that gave stability to the further spiritual growth and development of the individual believers and the corporate church body.

The contrast in missionary strategy between the station-centered approach and the personal identification of a missionary with the residents of a native village is significant enough to make it possible to reflect on the differing results and reach some conclusions. Kilembe thus can serve as a model of what can be achieved by evangelism in a village by resident missionaries.

True, some missionaries from Kafumba had visited Kilembe prior to the Kliewers' arrival. As a result the Kliewers immediately sensed a welcome as they established residence in the village. On the first morning a service was conducted with a young man, Justin Miyala, as helper. These classes, however, proved ineffective, since the teachers had not been trained.

After the first service people began coming for medical help. Two women came with a stiff back. A rubdown with mentholatum did wonders, and soon the whole village was in the lineup for rubdowns. A dental surgical chair was a rock outside, but many thanks were received for teeth pulled, even without anesthetics. In home remedy style boils were treated, sores bandaged, malaria pills distributed, and compresses recommended. This ministry, together with the personal contact it afforded, opened the door to the native's hearts.

An attempt was made to open a primary school. Bulamatadi conducted the classes under a tree, while Anna Enns, who had come to assist, taught in a small, primitive chapel.

One evening as Ruth and John Kliewer were about to retire they heard a knock at their door. Opening it, they saw a woman with a young lad as her interpreter. This woman told them of a heavy burden which for some days had prevented her from eating and sleeping. The Kliewers sensed her spiritual

need and were able to point her to the saving grace of God. She returned on succeeding evenings for further instruction. Soon others began joining her. Finally they had to find a larger place for their daily evening meetings as the entire village gradually began to participate.

Not long after, the head uncle of the village, Mukinimi, began coming to the meetings. He refused, however, to take off his cap during the services. One Sunday after the service he came to the house and said, "You see my cap is now off, I also want these bracelets taken off." The cap and the bracelets served as the sign of his authority in the village. This also made him responsible for all the heathen rituals. He had become a follower of Jesus and was ready to make a break with the old ways and the practices of heathendom. He and a widow, Kindua, were the first to make a public confession as Christians and were baptized, making a great impression upon old and young. Mukinimi took the Christian name Abraham and Kindua adopted the name Hannah.

Before the Kliewers left for furlough in 1953 a chapel had been erected in Kilembe. A school had also been established. Bulamatadi had developed into a strong leader. He was one of the first young men from Kilembe to attend the teacher training school at Mukedi and later the Bible school at Kafumba. Elia and his wife returned to Kilembe in answer to an official call to become their shepherd. The church faithfully supplied the support for Elia and his family, thus assuming responsibility for the leadership of their own church.

In 1958 John Kliewer returned to visit the village of Kilembe. He found the chapel full of people singing heartily. Today the work of God continues. The investment in time and life to establish the church at Kilembe has brought great dividends.¹⁷

The station at Kipungu, located on a high hill overlooking the densely populated jungle, had unique problems because of its geographical setting. The pioneer work in building a road to lead to the top of the hill, and the transport of all the materials for the erection of the station, demanded much patience and endurance. Because the educational program developed on the Kipungu hill grew rapidly, the need for construction of large

school facilities was great. A government subsidy, which extended to the lower level of the teacher training school, aided greatly. An expanding medical program and the need for a maternity hospital added to the pressure. Three permanent missionary residences were built. The hill also contained a native village housing all the teachers and workers for the hospital, and the maintenance staff for the compound.

In addition to the missionary staff mentioned, Abe and Sarah Esau, Theodore and Frieda Martens, Henry and Elsie Brucks, Anna Goertzen, Mary Toews, Ben H. and Anna Klassen, John C. and Edna Ratzlaff, Leslie and Hope Ortman, Martha Willems, Dorothy Kopper, and George and Margaret Faul all contributed to the work. Each one left some impact upon the work at Kipungu.

The report from 1957 records some Christian people in about fifty-four villages. This represents, however, only a small part of the 241 villages to be covered from the Kipungu center. The 1958 report also refers to approximately 370 church members in the area.¹⁸ An evaluation report of the Kipungu program submitted to the Board of Missions in 1956 contains the following comments:

1. The evidences of spiritual growth and the development of native leadership at Kipungu is reason for gratitude and is an important factor facilitating the establishment of an indigenous church.
2. Church at Kilembe is an example of an indigenous church pattern with native leadership. It shows a degree of personal responsibility on the part of the Christians in that they begin to assume definite spiritual initiative for their people.
3. The program of adult evangelism in the villages has been the weakest part of the program in the Kipungu field. In contrast to this we note a phenomenal growth in the institutional work on the station which has demanded the major part of the strength and time of the missionary. The staff is inadequate to do both and thus the one has been neglected.
4. The missionaries on the station have labored hard and faithfully to meet the pressure to which they were exposed. The sincerity and the devotion of their labor is exemplary. The circumstance that the major part of their time and strength was consumed by the operational and administration aspect of the program is to be regretted. Part of this

situation can be remedied by a reorganization of the work and by the provision of more adequate facilities for the institutional program. The other part may need to be met by a reevaluation of the specific missionary method most appropriate for the accomplishment of the aim of the mission — the evangelization of the field and the establishment of an indigenous church.¹⁹

Lusemvu

A mission station established in the 1930's by a Mrs. Near as an independent venture, the Lusemvu site was purchased by the Mennonite Brethren in 1952 and added to the expanding outreach in Zaire. The report by Frank and Clara Buschman on the work at Lusemvu dated July, 1953, shows the strongly institution-centered approach to the church building assignment there. The following is a quotation from the report:

Medical Work

Since there is no dispensary within a radius of 30-40 kilometers in each direction the people are anxious to get medical help at the mission station. From April 7 to July 7 a period of three months there have been 1,000 consultations. This number would be tripled if there were a native infermier qualified to give worm medicine injections. So far we have carried on this work ourselves without a native nurse. Daily services in Kipende are conducted with those that come.

School Work

At the close of school there were about 80 children enrolled at the Lusemvu station. More are expected to come when we open again in August. A number of girls came to the station before we could house them even in a grass hut. We have sought to train these children not only mentally but also spiritually by giving them the Word daily. At Gungu school there were 70 children enrolled in two classes.

Village Work

An effort has been made to become acquainted with the region. In the past months some 30 villages have been visited. Many of the villages are very large and great crowds come out to the services. Many of the village chiefs show a definite interest in having these services continue in their villages.

Church Work

No effort has been made to organize the church at Lusemvu or at Gungu. Our prayer is that the Christians

may be revived and be willing to confess sins and follow the Lord closer so that the future church can be organized at both places as self-supporting from the beginning.²⁰

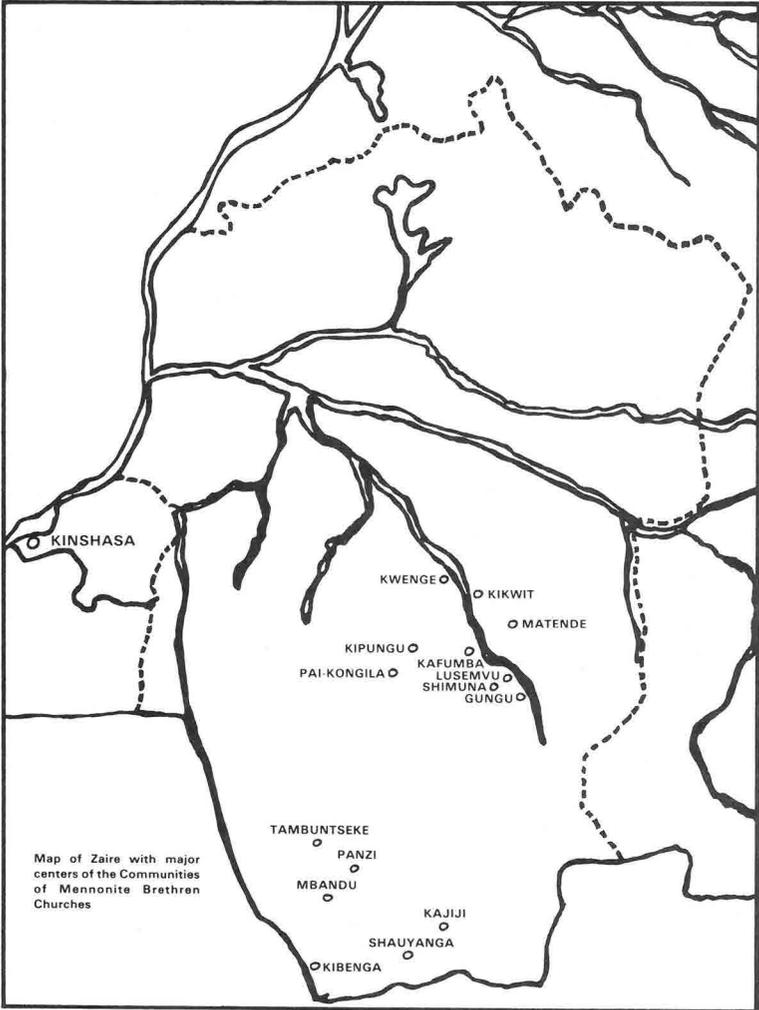
A report by Nettie Berg covering the period June 6 to December 27, 1957, reveals that 4,435 patients received medical treatment at Lusemvu, with an intensive spiritual ministry to the patients and their families.²¹ The enrollment at the school in January of that year was 250, with biblical instruction a central part of the curriculum. The report on the author's administrative visit in 1956 reveals:

The program of evangelism in the villages carried on by native teachers is very weak. All the missionary has been able to do in this area is to visit the schools and the catechists once or twice a year and to conduct services at such occasions. No program of adult evangelism is carried on by the missionary separate from the school. No prolonged evangelistic tour into the villages has been undertaken during the past year. The native church in the villages is scattered, without any systematic spiritual care. There is also no basis by which to evaluate the spiritual status of the believers.²²

The history of Lusemvu reflects some of the general trends in Mennonite Brethren missions in the 1950's when there was resistance to the concentration of the mission outreach in population centers. The original plan was that Lusemvu serve only as a secondary post and that a center for evangelism be established in Gungu, a developing city with a territorial government administrative post and growing commercial activity. The developing tensions on the field and the involvement of strongly personal and subjective factors favored the building of a station at Lusemvu.²³

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 5

1. Discuss the pros and cons of expanding to new fields versus strengthening and building the churches already started. What criteria would you use to determine when new churches are strong enough for you to move on to unevangelized areas?
2. What factors may have contributed to the success of the John Klievers in the village of Kilembe, and what significance would these have for planning future mission strategy?



Major Centers with Mennonite Brethren Churches

6

EXPANSION TO THE SOUTH

Modern missions during the past 150 years have demanded great sacrifices from the missionary family. Socio-cultural environments of underdeveloped countries made it extremely difficult for families from the West to provide the social and educational opportunities for their children that would equip them for re-entry into the society of their homeland. Separate schools for missionary children with a curriculum like that of their homeland and a western social environment appeared to be the solution to these needs.

In colonial empires, large western schools were built to meet the educational demands of the children of colonial government, industry personnel, and missionaries. In Zaire the Protestant missions found it necessary to establish their own schools independent from those of the colonial government to assure a positive Christian influence.

ECOLE BELLE VUE

The Mennonite Brethren in Zaire began a school for missionary children in February, 1950, at Kipungu. John and Edna Ratzlaff served as houseparents and teachers for six children from the Mennonite Brethren mission stations. A building of poles, mudwalls and grass roof served as the home for the Ratzlaffs, a classroom building for the school, and a dormitory for the six children. Obviously these conditions could only be accepted as a temporary solution, so a search for more permanent facilities continued.¹

A better location for the missionary children's school was found near Kajiji, the site of a former silk experimental station operated by the Smithsonian Institute. It was near a mission

station of the Unevangelized Tribes Mission. The location was 425 kilometers south of Kikwit. The high elevation in the foothills of the beautiful Angolan mountains, the favorable climate, and the fertile soil suitable for raising vegetables, spoke in favor of this compound as an ideal place for a school. Though far from the Mennonite Brethren mission fields in the north, the property was purchased. The school was moved in 1951. The beautiful setting and the panoramic view suggested the name for the school, *Ecole Belle Vue*, a French name meaning "School of the Beautiful View."²

The large stone building, forty by eighty feet, together with the numerous auxiliary buildings erected by the Smithsonian Institute, were easily adapted for classrooms, dormitories, living quarters, servants' quarters and storage for the newly established institution. The setting also provided excellent potential for expansion. In 1952 the Congo Inland Mission, an organization working at Kwango and Kassai field adjoining that of the Mennonite Brethren, joined in the development of the school. A board with representation from the two missions assumed responsibility for the operation and development of *Ecole Belle Vue*. The Orville Wiebes and the Walter Sawatskys, who followed the John Ratzlaffs as directors of the school, together with qualified personnel from the Congo Inland Mission, developed the campus and program of *Ecole Belle Vue* into a school with high academic, social, and Christian standards. The enrollment reached 43 in 1957. During the same year an accredited four-year high school program was added. A peak enrollment of fifty-five was reached in 1959, with the first class graduating in May, 1960.³

Independence came to Zaire on June 30, 1960, and the resulting political changes forced the closing of *Ecole Belle Vue* as a school for missionary children.⁴ Subsequently it was converted into a nurses' training school, which is still in operation. The missionary children's school was moved to Kinshasa and merged with the inter-mission school for missionary children in that city.⁵

Even though the history of *Ecole Belle Vue* was short, it made a great contribution to many young people whose parents were dedicated to bringing the gospel to Zaire. The

establishment of the school also served as the gateway for an expansion of the program into the Kahemba area, a wide territory along the Angolan border.

KAJIJI

The Unevangelized Tribes Mission, under the strong leadership of Miss Alma E. Doering (formerly of the Congo Inland Mission), moved into the southwest of Zaire in 1931 and built the first mission station at Shambungu. Eight years later this station was moved twenty miles to the south to a place called Kajiji.⁶ The inhabitants of this region come from a number of tribes. The Bachokwe were most prominent in the Kajiji area, while smaller tribes living there were the Balunda, Baninungu, Basingi and the Bayaka. Some of their languages were closely related and made inter-tribal communication possible. The character of these people was described by Missionary Clyde Shannon:

Landing at Matadi the natives who spoke French wanted to know where we were going. When they heard our destination was the Bachokwe people in the Kahemba territory, they warned us against it because of the poison and witchcraft. Even though the Bachokwe are only a small people in stature, they were feared for their evil ways. It was to these people I had come to bring the gospel.⁷

The experiences of the missionary pioneers in this region parallel those of A. A. Janzen in opening the Kwango field and those of Henry Bartsch in penetrating the Dengese territory.⁸ Death claimed the life of the first missionary, Markus Fritzell, a victim of pernicious malaria. Tropical dysentery, malaria, complications of childbirth, malnutrition and the medicines of witchcraft took a heavy toll of life among the native population as well as the missionaries.⁹

The pioneer record of the Unevangelized Tribes Mission includes names like Fred Borts, Abraham Zook, Dr. Leban Smith and others.¹⁰ The experiences they encountered are typified by the following experience of the Shannons when they visited a Balunda village in 1936. There Clyde noticed a corpse of a young man being carried into the village. Some men had been out hunting and at noon, hot and weary, had stopped at a

stream to drink. One young man went into the cold water to bathe. When he came out, he knelt down, fell forward and died. The men concluded that he had been killed by witchcraft, so they called the witch doctors and sorcerers to divine the murderer. The wailing, crying and singing were interspersed with gun shots that reverberated from the surrounding hills. The people sensed the presence of evil spirits around the village.

This occasion gave the Shannons an opportunity to present the message of salvation. The results of that visit were not immediately known. Some years later, however, a church center was established in this village. Then a death led to a Christian funeral, which was in sharp contrast to that earlier occasion. Instead of wailing all night they sang Christian hymns that spoke of their faith in Christ.¹¹

The isolated state of the people was again demonstrated at the birth of the Shannon's oldest son, the first white baby most natives in that area had ever seen. Legend had it that the white people came out of the water. From the crest of a hill the natives showed Shannon two white spots on the water. "See," they said in a hushed voice, "two men are coming out of the water now." People came from far away to see the white baby, curious how the baby would be fed. The care of infant Ralph Shannon became an important part of the identification of the Shannons with the people. It did more to help them to communicate than all the previous teaching.¹²

The Station

Dr. and Mrs. Leban Smith, with two children, and the A. E. Zooks, with their three children, in 1940 pioneered the mission outpost at Kajiji. They were able to use the many rocks in the area in a major building program. During the first seven years the Smiths and Zooks erected 25 buildings on the compound for missionary residences, schools, a hospital, quarters for teachers and school children, storage houses, etc. The mission station thus became a sizeable center in the shadow of the Angola hills to the south.¹³

The Unevangelized Tribes Mission dissolved in 1952 and the two stations of Kajiji and Panzi were offered to the

Mennonite Brethren Conference. The location of Ecole Belle Vue so close to this area made the acceptance of this large southern territory desirable, both for the continuation of the school and for the stationing of missionary personnel. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Prieb and Miss Katy Penner arrived in 1953, the first Mennonite Brethren missionaries to occupy this area. Dr. Ernest W. Schmidt and Mr. and Mrs. Abe Esau came to Kajiji in 1955 and rapidly built up a medical program. Bob Kroekers supervised the work, 1956-58.

At one point the area was seriously affected by a food shortage caused by a blight that destroyed the manioc fields. The entire missionary outreach was affected by the famine, which lasted for two years. The people had not yet been influenced by industrialization and the economic changes so evident in some of the northern areas.

The Church

The Kajiji church, organized in 1942, had a native pastor and a membership of 100. The thirty-three male members of the church were employed by the mission as teachers, maintenance men, medical workers, builders and servants. Believers were gathering regularly for worship in five outposts in the villages. A total of 139 people were baptized the first year of the work by the Mennonite Brethren missionaries. In the second year, 1955, 121 people were baptized. The area thus soon had a community of 500 baptized believers, but there was no organizational structure to guide the village believers. Village teachers were responsible for evangelism and received a monthly remuneration which averaged \$5.15. The national church provided the largest part of the finances required for village education and evangelism.¹⁴

The primary school on the station had an enrollment of 280 boys and forty girls, and had ten teachers. The head master had an educational equivalent to grade six and taught fifth grade.¹⁵

The work at Kajiji gave evidence of the untiring faithful ministry of the Shannons. The fact that they had to labor alone under extremely trying circumstances contributed to some of the serious weaknesses of the program.

The national leaders on the station showed ability and carried part of the responsibility for the church. The organizational structure of the church, however, was weak and foreign. There was a great need for systematic Bible teaching. As was common in many missions, they withheld a tenth of all wages, even from non-Christian employees, to teach Christian stewardship.

In their program of village evangelism the missionaries visited from one to three villages per day, or 130 villages in the sixty-day period. That gave some opportunity for sowing the seed, and this cannot be discounted, but whether the message was understood by the people well enough to establish believers, remains open to question and further study. The training of leaders and a systematic teaching ministry were the greatest needs in the church planting efforts of those years.¹⁶

PANZI

One hundred miles west of Kajiji, Panzi was established as a mission center by the Unevangelized Tribes Mission in 1931. The present site was given to the mission by the colonial government in 1938. J. Rolfe and Edna Graves, missionaries here for many years, gave this field to the Mennonite Brethren in 1952 when the Unevangelized Tribes Mission dissolved. The first Mennonite Brethren missionaries were the William Baergs and Elsie Gunther, who came in 1954 when the Graves left for the U.S. on furlough. The John Esaus and family arrived in 1955.¹⁷

Area and Population

The total geographical area of the Panzi mission field is large, extending about fifteen miles east, fifty miles north, 120 miles south and 130 miles west of the mission station. A survey of this area in 1956 revealed a population of about 45,000 living in approximately 300 villages. The larger part of the population is from the Bayaka and the Basuku tribes which occupy the northern and middle part of the area with the Balula-Bayaka and the Baholo tribes in the southern part of the field. Although the Roman Catholic Church had penetrated this area some years earlier, most of the population was not

Catholic but pagan. Traditional witchcraft, superstitions, and the accompanying fears governed the social structure of their life. The colonial rule penetrated this area only in the mid-1950's and had made few changes in the lifestyle of the people.

The main occupation of the people was hunting and agriculture. In some areas they planted small fields of peanuts, manioc, corn and some small coffee plantations. Several large industrial companies had surveyed the area for mineral deposits and had begun a few mines.

The Station

The Panzi mission station was located on a high elevation and had a favorable climate similar to that of Kajiji. When the Mennonite Brethren took over the station there were three residences of semi-permanent materials (rock foundations with the walls constructed of sun-dried brick plastered with cement from the outside and a grass roof). The other buildings, classrooms, and church were all of temporary native construction. Panzi, in contrast to other stations, did not have a medical program because a government dispensary was located only half a mile from the center.

The Church

The church on the Panzi field is a highly disciplined and organized structure with good leadership. Membership is 1,063, of which only eighty-eight belong to the congregation on the station. Nine hundred and seventy-five believers live in seventy-four different villages in groups ranging in size from two to forty-seven.

The churches are divided into six regions, each of which is led by a pastor and evangelist. In addition, each congregation has a leader or an overseer who is responsible to gather the believers for regular worship and fellowship. Evangelists and pastors visit all the villages of their region regularly and minister to them with Bible studies of several days duration. With the local leader or overseer they contact every member of the church, receiving the offering from the members and discussing with them their Christian walk and testimony.

Every six months the record of each member in the region is reviewed by the pastor and recorded by an office worker at the mission station. The standing of each member and his participation in attendance at the services and offering is thus available in an efficiently organized card system. Members who are not faithful in their spiritual testimony and regular voluntary participation in the offerings are considered under discipline.

Each region has a monthly Sunday gathering, with three services. Twice a year the entire church has a one-week conference. Evangelists, elders, and teachers and other Christians gather for spiritual instruction, edification, and business meeting. (In 1957 when the author was present 2,500 were present for such a conference.) Mornings and evenings are given to the ministry of the Word. The afternoons are devoted to reports on the status on the work and planning for the next half year. Church problems that cannot be settled in the regions are also presented for disposition. The six-month budget is also adopted. This includes full financial responsibility for the seven evangelists and the seventy-six village teachers.

During the dry season (the summer vacation for schools) all teachers are required to go out two by two as evangelists to unevangelized areas.

In 1956-57 the believers at Panzi built a church seating 2,000 people. Part of the funds for the rock building and sheet iron roof were donated by Sunday schools in America. But the major share of the cost of construction was borne by the church. During the first year of construction the church contributed 11,185 Belgian francs. All of the rocks and sand for this large edifice were carried two and a half miles up a steep hill on the backs of the women and children of the church. The conference adopted a resolution requiring every male member to contribute 100 francs and every female member fifty francs. The efforts of the believers are a monument to the unity of the Panzi church.

The church of the Panzi area also assumed full responsibility for the financing of education and evangelism programs. This amounted to 78,988 francs, which was gathered from

three sources: (1) each member of the church was obligated to pay a monthly membership due; (2) each region was responsible for planting a field of peanuts (called "the Lord's field"), with the income from the crop being channeled into the conference budget; (3) certain offerings in the worship services were sent to the central conference treasury.

Another rather unique practice in this area was their program for training followers. A new convert was called a follower. The local group of believers decided whether a person professing salvation was living consistently in his daily relationships, since the testimony of life was the first requirement to be recognized as a follower of Jesus. A follower was required to memorize a prescribed number of Bible verses with the village teacher. For several weeks he had to come to the station for instruction in the Scriptures. During these weeks he was required to do daily physical labor without remuneration and was observed by the elders of the church. Over a period of one year the follower received some eight weeks of Bible instruction in addition to the memorization program. A follower who through this period of probation and instruction gave true evidence of salvation was then considered as a baptismal candidate. During 1954, the year Mennonite Brethren assumed responsibility for the Panzi field, 136 were baptized. The following year 115 people were baptized. During the years 1955 through 1958 the Panzi area had a record of 250 to 600 followers per year, many of them later baptized and becoming members of the church.¹⁸

The Educational Program

The entire program of the village and mission station schools was coordinated into one unit. The village teachers offered grades one and two, where the children learned to read and write. Grades three to five were offered in the program on the mission station. The seventy-six village schools were all under the responsibility of the church. The teachers were held responsible by the church for their testimony of life as well as their work. Teacher salaries were paid from the central church treasury. The believers in the villages were also responsible for the erection of the dwelling for the teacher and the school

house, which also usually served as the house of worship for the congregation.

The school at Panzi accepted the children of the Christian families who had completed second grade. The central school assured a higher standard of education. All the boys had to bring their food, with the mission supplementing their ration with two francs per week (four cents) in recognition for the work they did in the afternoons. Girls received one dress per school year but no remuneration for their work. In 1955 there were 525 students on the mission station.¹⁹

One evening per week was set aside for a special meeting to nurture the spiritual life of the teachers. In addition they also shared in the services in the church and in the daily chapel services on the station. The salaries of the teachers averaged approximately 200 francs per month and were paid partly from the mission budget.

Observations

The response to the gospel in the Panzi area in the 1950's was unique. In addition to the special work of God through the Spirit, the work of the missionaries of the Unevangelized Tribes Mission, Rolfe and Edna Graves, must be recognized. Their identification with the people and their sharing of themselves must be recognized as a key to the response to the gospel in this area. Factors that contributed to the further growth of the church were the following:

1. The organizational structure developed by William Baerg. The approach at that stage of church development harnessed existing spiritual, human and economic resources, transferring much of the responsibility from the mission to the nationals. The character traits and temperament of the Bayaka and Basuku lent themselves well to this transfer.

2. The training of the "followers" gave incentives for response and growth. The demands of Scripture memorization and economic stewardship during their probation period no doubt had great value. Yet the rigid requirements in Scripture memory, in financial contributions and in voluntary service on building programs contained the seeds of legalism and a fundamental misunderstanding of salvation by grace. The

permanent effects of such church regimentation will need to be evaluated in the light of where the church is today, some 20 years later.

The pattern of the Panzi program described thus grew out of the organizational gifts of the leading missionary, William Baerg. His sensitivity to a properly motivating approach in a primitive culture and the example of his personal dedication provided strong spiritual dynamics. The ultimate effect of the exercise of that gift needs to be evaluated in the light of the church today. Did this pattern establish truly indigenous churches?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 6

1. Discuss some of the specific problems facing missionary wives, and missionary children. How should wives find a sense of fulfillment? How should children be educated (in local schools, in missionary boarding schools, by the mother at home with correspondence courses, or by leaving them in the home country)?
2. Under what conditions should the Mennonite Brethren Conference accept mission programs that others offer to us? These types of offers are repeatedly made.

7

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE IN BUILDING THE CHURCH IN ZAIRE

The early decades of Mennonite Brethren missions were a spontaneous expression of the church's scriptural faith and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. The responsibility for the ministry to a large extent was assumed by the missionaries called out by the Lord from the church. The churches at home constituted the praying and supporting background to those who went out into the field.¹ The expansion of the mission program was largely spontaneous, with little study of fields, and patterns of work tried in other fields. There was little effort to establish a program and strategy for the missionaries for the field to which they were sent. The general philosophy of missions called for men and women who would go out "to bring the gospel to the millions who are lost." Thus the spiritual motivation of obedience to our Lord's command constituted practically the only requirement for the task.² The motivation was biblical—and the constituency was sincere in its support. Believers went to the mission field because "we must win the lost for Christ."

The first official statement of "Guiding Principles and Field Policies" was adopted by the Mennonite Brethren Conference and published in April, 1947. It set forth the following five points as a basis and guide:

1. To present the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to every one in the area of the mission field.
2. To baptize those who accept Jesus Christ by faith and receive them into the church.
3. To teach new converts all that our Lord has commanded us, leading them on in their spiritual life through nurture in the Word.

4. To organize and establish such believers in local churches for mutual edification, fellowship and service.

5. To unite the local churches of a field into an organized conference or convention which shall become a church that continues the propagation of the gospel in its area, directs and regulates its own church affairs, and meets its own financial requirements.

In practice these policies led to the establishment of mission stations and the operation of institutions designed to achieve the goals outlined in the statement³ along the patterns already described in the preceding chapters.

The operational base was the mission station. Institutions were the means to reach the goals. Evangelism through proclamation expressed the over-arching concern to call men and women to accept the salvation provided through Christ Jesus.

The emphasis that churches ought to become rooted in their own cultures and be responsible for the work emerged only at the end of the 1940's and the beginning of the 1950's. It should be noted that the political trend of the post-war era—the worldwide demand for liberation from colonial rule—became a strongly motivating factor toward eventually making the church independent. The Mennonite Brethren mission policies and practices were no exception. Only in 1951 do the minutes of the Board of Missions reflect this emphasis in the following statement:

We reaffirm our conviction that the Apostolic example of missions is our scriptural pattern to be followed on the fields where it is our privilege and responsibility to propagate the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Our first obligation according to this pattern consists in evangelization. The second assignment is the establishment of self-supporting indigenous churches. In the latter effort the missionary must transfer the responsibility of administration and preaching in the native church to the native Christians as soon as the Lord gives us converts who can be charged with such responsibility. The missionary accepts the duty of scriptural instruction and guidance for the church as exemplified in the relation of Paul to the Gentile church of the Apostolic age. Our missionaries on the field are encouraged to constantly pursue this scriptural pattern in all of their endeavors.⁴

A new set of field principles and policies was adopted in October 1952 by the Board of Missions.⁵ The efforts in Africa in the ensuing years, 1952-1961, were aimed at changing the overall program to conform to the statement of policies⁶ (see Appendix B). This statement of policy sets forth the biblical priorities for missions as understood by the Board and missionaries. The first priority is the proclamation of the gospel. This is to be followed by the instruction of the new converts to establish them in the faith. Then comes the organization of local churches and the wider fellowship of believers. Education and medical service are classified as contributory avenues to the main aim of preaching and teaching the Word.

The full implementation of the priorities, however, did not prove easy on the fields, since the major demand for personnel and resources came from the rapidly expanding educational program and medical ministry. For fuller understanding of the church building process in Zaire we need to examine more closely the development of several of these institutional efforts.

EDUCATION

The development of an extensive educational program as part of the missionary assignment in Zaire must be seen in the light of basic skills necessary for the propagation of the gospel by nationals:

1. Converts needed to be able to read to comprehend and to assimilate the Word of God.

2. The colonial government made no provision for the formal education of the people during the major part of its administration.

3. The Roman Catholic Church in Zaire had introduced the educational program as its major avenue to christianize the masses of the people. It introduced schools in various areas, giving the people an education and then claiming them as part of the Roman Catholic community.

The early Mennonite Brethren missionaries who came into the interior of Zaire found the people ignorant of the rest of the world and illiterate. As recently as 30 years ago the "talking machine" (phonograph) brought forth gasps of unbelief and

surprise in the hinterland. The radio was for them part of the spirit world.

Into this setting came the first Mennonite Brethren missionaries with the message of God's love and redemption. The message was transmitted by the spoken word and by the example of life. There were no written languages in which to communicate the gospel. The pioneers had to learn the language in order to proclaim the message.

Developing a written form of the language and teaching the people to read and write were clear priorities. Not surprisingly the early schools used the Scriptures in their reading, recitation, history and character study. Clearly, the educational program was thus a valid strategy for implanting the message of the gospel into a culture that lacked any understanding of the Christian faith.

Unfortunately, the educational efforts were directed only at the young. Thus, the older people frequently felt that the gospel was a message for children, since the children attended day school, and they were the ones that could learn to read. This veiled the gospel to the point where many older people rejected the message, feeling that they were too old "to learn to read" and to become "a Christian."⁷

After strenuous years of labor the language was reduced to writing and school materials prepared in the form of Bible stories, readers and simple arithmetic. At first the missionary was the only teacher, with the school on the station and the students a select group of children. As soon as these first students learned the rudiments of reading and writing, some of them were employed as teachers in the villages. These teachers were prepared to read, to write, to do simple arithmetic and memorize Bible verses. They also learned songs to introduce to the villagers key concepts of spiritual truth. The most promising children were taken from the village schools to the station boarding schools, where more formal instruction was offered. Here they were also exposed to a Christian community so they would assimilate a Christian life style while advancing in their education.

Station schools were co-educational. Thus it was very natural that after the completion of the school Christian young

men would marry Christian girls and establish Christian homes. These couples gradually moved back into the villages and lived out the new life style there. Some of the young men who attended the station schools would remain for further instruction in a Bible school. From the graduates of the Bible schools came the teachers and preachers the Lord called into His service. The school program thus became a basic avenue of evangelism, combined with a process of training young people for life and establishing Christian homes for the development of a Christian community.⁸

The worldwide awakening of underdeveloped countries under colonial rule resulted in a general response to educational opportunities. The mission schools in Zaire, originally designed specifically to serve as an evangelistic channel, gradually became an educational system adopted by the government to bring educational opportunities to the wider population.

By the mid-fifties, ten years after the close of the Second World War, the educational program of the Mennonite Brethren in Zaire had become a major effort. Consider the following data from the educational program in the Kafumba area in 1956. That year 394 students, 296 boys and 98 girls, were enrolled in the station school. Ten African teachers served as a faculty under the direction of Margaret Dyck. The school operated in three large buildings of native construction and one permanent two-room house.

Now the government began offering subsidies for the educational program. The faculty, though rather inadequately prepared, did their utmost to offer the educational opportunities to the masses of children. The Department of Education now determined the curriculum, including a forty-five minute period each day for religious instruction. The schools, once strictly Bible-centered, now became part of a regular educational program introduced into the entire country of Zaire.

In 1956 the Kafumba field operated fifteen village schools. In each of these villages there was a Christian community which numerically ranged from sixteen to 200 people. The twenty teachers working in these schools were mostly men with an average education of grades four or five. A number of these teachers also had the benefits of a year or two of Bible

school training. The average cost for a village school per year was \$92 per teacher in form of salary and \$26 per teacher for supplies. The total enrollment in the village schools was 905.

In addition to the twenty teachers there were forty catechists scattered through the villages. These catechists were to establish schools in the villages, teach the children, be a witness to the community and serve as a base for the planting of the gospel. The catechists were also a major influence in sending the children from the villages to the schools in central places and in particular to the mission station schools. The catechists on the Kafumba field in 1956 were all under mission salary. Their monthly allowance was minimal and below that of the village teachers.⁹

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Initially the colonial government was discriminatory in subsidies to mission schools, for until 1948 subsidies were granted only to schools operated by Catholics. This stemmed from the fact that almost all government officials were members of the Roman Catholic Church. Leaving the Catholic Church meant either eventual dismissal from office, demotion, or forfeiture of advancement opportunities. This stated government position, plus the fact that the majority of Protestant missionaries did not master the French language, created a sense of inferiority on the part of the majority of Protestant missionaries.

When in 1948 the colonial government extended subsidies for education to Protestant missions a number of issues arose that created a major crisis for Mennonite Brethren missionaries: 1) Did their theology allow them to accept the subsidies offered? 2) Could they meet the financial and educational requirements to become eligible for the subsidies? 3) Where should they get the professional people with sufficient knowledge of French to meet the academic standards of the government and at the same time assume such responsibility without neglecting their first priority of evangelism? 4) Could they rightfully stand in the way of the Zairian young people who would benefit from the subsidies being offered by the

government of their country? All Protestant missions faced these issues. Some were able to resolve them more rapidly than others. Several missions were unable to find a solution and were forced to gradually withdraw altogether from Zaire.

The policy of the colonial government to promote education in Zaire through the missions demanded that all missions which intended to continue the work in Zaire come to a basic decision about the status of education in the overall program of their missionary outreach. For the Mennonite Brethren missionaries this issue became increasingly critical. Some of the Mennonite Brethren missionaries considered the acceptance of subsidy for the educational program a violation of the principle of the separation of church and state. They felt differently about subsidy for the medical program, because it concerned only the physical needs of a people. But the school ministry directed itself to the spiritual part of man as well as the intellectual part in which the state was interested.¹⁰

A subsidized educational program meant expanded facilities, more and better materials, and a uniform program conforming to recognized academic standards. It would permit a broader exposure to the world at large and allow the national people to take steps necessary to take their place among the nations of the world.

The Board of Missions pressed toward the acceptance of the subsidy. The missionary staff on the field was divided on the question. In March, 1949, at a special conference held in Kafumba attended by the general secretary from the home board, the missionary staff voted to table the subject of a subsidy. The chairman's vote against subsidies had broken a tie.¹¹

The Board of Missions through its administrative staff continued to press for a subsidized educational program. The tension continued until February, 1952, when, upon the urgent recommendation from the home board, the mission staff on the field consented to accept a subsidized educational program. However, many of the participants in the discussion and in the final decision accepted this with great reluctance.¹²

Entering a subsidized educational program necessitated

an immediate enlargement of missionary staff qualified by a study in Belgium and equipped with an adequate knowledge of French and the history and government structures of Zaire. The government standards also demanded better facilities. This made considerable construction necessary immediately. Even though most of the finances came from the government, the expansion demanded much missionary involvement.

The new thrust for educational achievement seriously affected the main objective of the missionary program—evangelism and the establishment of national churches. The tension that eventually developed is strongly reflected in a document entitled, “Review of Present Missionary Methods in Light of Our Primary Objective.” The implications of this review can be understood only through a careful study of the document recorded in Appendix B.¹³

The review shows that the focus had clearly shifted to education. Though the benefits of the educational program in respect to evangelism were fully recognized, it was producing results that were negative in relation to church planting. The evaluation points to the negative affects on motivation, the concept of priority, and the influence of cultural processes that gained greater importance than the emphasis on salvation and the need for a community of the redeemed. The struggle to recapture the priority of evangelism and church planting is revealed in the “Plan of Procedure for the Future of Evangelism” (see part 2 of the review in Appendix B).

To meet the need for qualified teachers in the program a Teacher Training School (EAP) was opened in Matende. Ernest Dyck served as the director, assisted by other missionaries. Ninety students were graduated from the course and channeled into the primary school system.

A second school established jointly by the then Congo Inland Mission and the Mennonite Brethren Mission in Nyanga launched a program to prepare qualified men for leadership in the schools. Until 1960—independence—only missionaries held positions as directors of the schools. The following table lists the missionary staff serving as school directors in 1960.

TABLE 1
MISSIONARIES WHO DIRECTED THE EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAM BEFORE 1960

Station	Category	Director
Kafumba	Primary School	Harold Kruger
	Bible Institute	Irvin Friesen
Matende	Primary School	Mary Toews
	E.A.P.	Ernest Dyck
Lusemvu	Primary School	Anna Goertzen
Kajiji	Primary School	Elizabeth Shannon
	Medical School	Dr. Ernest Schmidt
Panzi	Primary School	Henry Derksen
Kipungu	Primary School	Dorothy Kopper
	Preparatory School	Martha Willems
Nyanga	United Teachers' Training School	George Faul

THE MEDICAL MINISTRY

Teaching, healing and feeding were an integral part of our Lord's ministry. The church continues to reflect the responsibility to the whole person for salvation and for the relationships within the redeemed community. The Mennonite Brethren Church from its inception revealed a concern for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of the world. This understanding of the gospel led to the incorporation of a healing and feeding ministry into the missionary program.

In an animistic culture sickness and death are often viewed as products of the spirit world. Thus sorcery and witchcraft are used to overcome the attack of the spirits endangering people. In such a culture the gospel would not be effective if it did not make provision for healing from illness and deliverance from evil spirits. Cases of people being possessed with evil spirits were also not uncommon in such an animistic environment. As an example we quote a description

of an incident on the station at Kipungu:

One Sunday morning there was a knock at the missionary's door. He was summoned to come quickly to the worker's village. Though this was a long city block away, screaming could be heard. Running over to the village he found a man rolling in the dirt in apparent agony. One of the bystanders explained that the "ndoki" (evil spirit) had entered his house and laid hold of him. This man had told the "ndoki": "You can't lay hold of me because I'm a Christian." The spirit had then left and entered into the hut of the man now rolling in the dirt and had entered into him. The missionary knelt by the rolling figure and placed his hands upon the man. The man quieted down. He was asked whether he would like to ask God for a deliverance to which he responded "yes." The missionary, with his hands laid upon the man possessed with evil spirits, prayed and commanded the spirit in the name of the Lord to depart. There was an immediate response and a complete release.¹⁴

A report from the Kafumba station describing the medical work of these early days gives further insight into the nature and the implications of such a ministry:

In the medical work we are often confronted with mountains which appear to be insurmountable. It is especially difficult when the medicines do not last and one has to resort to palm oil and pretend that this will take care of the majority of diseases. We now have room in our dispensary for 18 patients. This does not include the relatives who somehow find room too. The rooms are always occupied. Some stay with us about two or three months and these are the ones with whom we seem to make the best progress in presenting the gospel message. After hearing it over and over they seem to be able to grasp it. Many sick come to us who can be cured only through a series of injections. We are unable to meet the great need mainly because we are not recognized by the state as a qualified institution. Our closest village has a number of lepers. Those people refuse to go to the state hospitals, and it is no wonder. These people need love and compassion which they do not get from government institutions. As Jesus in His lifetime touched people so it continues to be necessary for those who love Him to touch the lives of these people in desperate circumstances. One mother gave birth to twins and they were killed in the village after the mother left here. This is a common practice because of superstition. Birth of twins or more than one at the same time is looked upon as being an evil omen.¹⁵

The people of Zaire had many diseases at that time. Some, like intestinal worms, were due to eating uncooked foods or from unclean vessels. Others, like syphilis, were the results of immorality. Still others, like malaria and sleeping sickness, came from bites of mosquitoes and tsetse flies. Ulcers and leprosy were very common. Infant mortality was high because the people were ignorant of proper child care and feeding. Thus the mission clinics were very busy places.

People suffering from every conceivable ailment would come to the mission station in order to find help. This contact offered an ideal opportunity to meet their spiritual needs. The gospel was given out to the patients as a group and as individuals either by the nurse in charge, some other missionaries, or national workers. The medical ministry thus offered an excellent opportunity for evangelization.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From a clearly primitive level the rapidly growing medical work grew into a professional arm of the missionary program. In order to attain recognition with the government of Zaire accredited personnel were essential. Better dispensaries and equipment were required. The signing of an agreement with the government with respect to standards and subsidies meant periodic inspections and conformity to regulations.

Mathilda Wall was the first registered nurse with full qualifications to come to Zaire. Her arrival in 1947 was soon followed by the coming of Erna Funk, another registered nurse. Other missionaries also acquired special training for the medical ministry.

The increased demand for this ministry led the staff to consider erection of a standard hospital.¹⁶ A step toward this was the arrival in 1955 of Dr. Ernest Schmidt and family. Dr. Vernon W. Vogt followed two years later. A broad survey of the medical needs in Zaire had led to the conclusion that the Kwango District, and in particular the Kahemba territory, had the most underdeveloped health services. So when a Belgian charitable organization, "*Fonds du Bien-Etre Indigene*," offered to supply the funds to build a hospital at Kajiji if the

mission would staff it, Dr. Schmidt was sent there.

The patient load increased rapidly. In June, 1955, the first unit of the new hospital and the maternity were dedicated. By 1966 the medical ministry in Kajiji had grown so much that 144 beds and an extensive maternity department were available. The limited missionary staff and the lack of sufficient supporting national personnel made the medical program at Kajiji, as well as that at several other places, extremely tiring physically, emotionally, and spiritually.¹⁷

Response to the Christian Message

A box of medicines and rudimentary knowledge of medical techniques was part of the equipment of the pioneer missionaries to Zaire. The practice of some simple medicine was the most effective means of combating witchcraft. For the native Zairian medicine and magic were one and the same thing. Why should they cast away idols and fetishes if they had no substitute for times of illness? Most chiefs considered the healing of diseases as one of the assignments of the idols. Not surprisingly, many developed a strong faith that the Word of God and prayer added to existing practices would make the treatment for diseases more effective.

A Christian medical worker was preferred by the natives to any government doctor because he related more to their basic culture, where religion and the healing ministry were already integrated. To the native in Zaire religion is not one aspect of life. It is a way of life which governs every aspect of their existence. In times of sickness it is only logical that the treatment and medicine given be done with prayer to a higher power for healing. People are most responsive to the gospel when they feel a special need for the intervention of a higher power.

The healing ministry also opened the door for the gospel to villages where no church worker or evangelist would have had entrance. Patients who stayed at the hospital for some time heard the Word of God and many accepted Christ as their Savior. When they returned to their villages, many of them long distances from the station, they became the messengers of

the gospel to their own relatives. Any future contact with the village would bring a good response from these people who had experienced the power of faith and healing on their own body.

The following statements from pastors who come from village areas testify to the effect of the medical ministry in opening the hearts and developing the confidence of the people for the message of Jesus:

Pastor Kamanda Pierre, Mutetami

The Word of God proclaimed in the hospital at Kajiji has reached not only the church posts and bigger villages, but has been carried by patients to smaller villages which we as pastors or evangelists cannot reach. Patients have even carried it across the border into Angola and then back into the Baholo area. Villages where we have never been have believers. Someone ill had been taken to the hospital, accepted Christ there and then brought the message back to his family and relatives. The people say they prefer to go to the mission hospital because they do not give them only medicine but also the Word of God.

Three men from the Mutetami area were attacked by a leopard in 1959. They came to the hospital in Kajiji. Dr. Schmidt was used by God to save their lives. Dr. Schmidt shared with them the story of Jesus. All three, leaders in their community, accepted Christ as personal Savior and became leaders of the church established at Mutetami.¹⁸

Pastor Tshimika (Isaac), Kajiji

The village clinics, prenatal and baby clinics were one of the most effective means of gaining the goodwill of the people. People still lament the fact that these clinics were discontinued in 1966. The women say, "When the nurses used to come around every month we would all sit around first and listen to the Word of God, then they would tell us how we were to look after our own children. After that they would look at each one of them and tell us what to do with those that were not well or take us along with them to the hospital to treat the child." [This ministry had to be discontinued for lack of personnel and funds for the travel and maintenance.]

Even though the institutional aspect placed great strain upon the resources of personnel, time and finances, the fact must be accepted that without the medical program the wide proclamation of the gospel into Zaire could not have been accomplished.¹⁹

Nurses Training School

Central Africa for many years was known as "the white man's grave." One-third of the missionaries who came to Zaire in the early years died within a few weeks, months, or a year or two at the most. The cemetery at Matadi has many graves of pioneer young people who gave their lives for Zaire while they were only in their twenties.

The early efforts by the colonial government were inadequate to combat the many diseases. During the 1930's the government sought to establish a wide-ranging public health program to overcome the constant threat of disease. Hospitals were built in most major trading posts. A sanitary agent was stationed in each territory to visit the villages, take a medical census, administer vaccinations, enforce certain sanitary measures such as the building of toilets, counsel on the location of villages away from breeding places of mosquitoes and flies, enforce treatment of venereal diseases, check for sleeping sickness. They eventually launched an all-out drive to eradicate sleeping sickness in the 1950's.

The need for trained personnel to assist in the fight against death-dealing diseases was critical. The first legislation providing for medical training was instituted in the 1950's. The medical assistant with a minimum general training of grade six was given four years of practical instruction in diagnosis, treatment through minor surgery, and placed into service. With this limited background these men became assistants to the doctors — and often replaced the doctors.

A second group of personnel were the diploma nurses who also had only a sixth-grade educational background and four years of nurses' training. They became the head nurses in the hospitals and often were in sole charge of the dispensaries.

The nursing care was done by nurses' aides whose training was very irregular and mostly on location. Practical experience was given according to the needs of the hospital at the moment; theory was given sporadically as time and interest would permit.

Midwives were trained in much the same way. The only entrance requirement seemed to be that the person was able to read and write and know a little bit of French.

The mission hospital staff were convinced they needed to introduce a more efficient program of training, as well as prepare their personnel for the spiritual emphasis lacking in all state efforts. Yet frequently missionary doctors and nurses were too preoccupied to spend a great deal of time with the training program.

Early schools in Zaire which attained renown were the schools of the American Baptists at Sona Bata and Vanga. But there were not sufficient graduates from these institutions to supply the needs of their own mission.

One of the Mennonite Brethren nurses, Katy Penner, became deeply burdened about the absence of a standard for medical practice. She began to work on a course of study that would train personnel in the rudiments of the laws and principles of health. Proceeding on her own, she prepared several small manuals outlining basic nursing techniques, hygienic principles, and simple laboratory procedures.

With the arrival of Dr. Schmidt at Kajiji, Miss Penner added instruction in sterilization and operating room procedures. A class of five students in nurses' training was begun in 1955. Despite the effort, Miss Penner refers to it as so elementary that she could hardly call it a nursing training school.

By the second year twelve students were enrolled, all of whom had a fifth grade education and understood some French. Though the brief courses were written in French, the teaching was done in Kituba. After two years of training, they had to present themselves for an examination before a government jury.

Arlene Gerdes, 1955, and Sarah Peters, 1956, joined the staff at Kajiji. Dr. Vogt, who replaced Dr. Schmidt during his furlough, and Elsie Fischer, another graduate nurse, also made major contributions to the program. By independence (1960) a sizeable core of trained men could perform the basic rudiments of health care even though facilities and equipment were very primitive.

The substantial investment in both human and financial resources for the improvement of the physical condition of the people was more than merely a humanitarian effort. Katy

Penner, in describing the objectives of the school to which she had given such a large part of her life, states:

We recognize as our responsibility to assist the student to develop his capacities to a maximum, to give emphasis to Christian character in the nursing profession and in the society where he lives, and to learn to live an exemplary life that will draw others to the fulness of life in Christ.

1) We seek to develop their Christian character so that they will recognize their responsibility before God, to society and to the profession and to themselves.

2) To develop in them the desire for continuous growth and development.

3) To assist them to acquire the knowledge of the art of nursing with the aim to help maintain, recover and improve health.²⁰

Graduates from the nurses' training school became a major factor in the leadership in the national church. Kashama Jackson, for example, was a graduate of 1959. He serves as one of the elders in the church in Kinshasa. He was one of the organizers of the church in that large city. He continues to give of his time to the needs of the church and also serves as one of the lay ministers.

Mashete Pascal, who finished his program in 1959, has been an elder of the church since 1960. He also became a member of the standing medical committee which was organized at Kajiji in 1970 and is still serving.

Nari Jean, a 1958 graduate, carries the responsibility for the dispensary at Kipungu. The pastor of the Kipungu church says, "He is a great leader. If it weren't for the nurse, the Kipungu church would not be in existence today." According to Nganga Paul, the church's legal representative, Nari Jean was recommended for ordination as pastor but declined until someone could assume responsibility for the dispensary. As a nurse he is known for his compassion and honesty. He is accurate in all of his financial transactions, an important trait in Zaire.

Tshabakuau Felix, a 1959 graduate, serves as sanitary agent in the Panzi area. He has a reputation as an honest man and that he will do everything possible to help the people. During his village inspection he first calls the people together,

gives them a Bible lesson, prays for them, and then gives them instruction concerning hygiene.

Kibwila Erastou, a graduate from the Kafumba Bible School and the nurse's training school at Kajiji, moved to Kinshasa to assume responsibility for a clinic. He was instrumental in establishing a Mennonite Brethren church in Kingasani and became the pastor of the fellowship.²¹

THE BIBLE SCHOOL

The early years of intensive missionary activity in the Kafumba area (1920-1936), distinguished by the struggle for economic survival, provided little opportunity for a cohesive program for leadership training. Lack of personnel and organized support from North America accounted for the slow progress in the development of a Bible school. As an alternative there was a general emphasis on Bible truth in the educational program, with the missionary providing special Bible instruction as time and strength permitted. The leadership developed gradually in the fellowship of the missionary. After serving as co-workers they assumed responsibility for the church work.

In 1937 the first regular Bible school course was established at Kafumba and the first class of four was graduated in May, 1939. Djimbo Kubala and Nganga Diyoyo, two leaders of the church today, were in that first class. The second class graduated in 1940. Again several significant leaders emerged, including a leader in the church, still serving as a pastor, another leader in the church today.

Since there was no New Testament in the Kituba language, Bibles in Tshiluba or the Kikongo dialects were used. These were difficult for the students from a Kituba background. Lessons in Old Testament history, a survey of the books of the Bible, the life of Christ, the life of Paul, a study of the Epistles, Bible geography, and some preaching helps were handwritten by the missionaries and duplicated on primitive gelatin hectographs.²²

When the Kafumba Bible school was made the central institution for the expanding work on the other stations, it created several tensions:

1) Missionaries representing the other mission stations felt there were distinct advantages to Kafumba from such a training center in the development of the station program.

2) The sociological differences between the various ethnic groups on the mission field presented a second obstacle to one central Bible school for the entire field. Inter-marriage between men and women with different tribal backgrounds generated tensions equal to those in the U.S. today as a result of interracial marriages.

Kafumba did eventually emerge as the central Bible school. The station was, however, destroyed during the rebellion of 1964, and the Bible school with it.²³

A new day dawned for the Bible school with the arrival of the New Testament in Kikwango (Kituba) in 1949. The availability of the text of the Scripture made a more effective teaching curriculum possible. Missionaries who made major contributions to the Bible school were the Irvin Friesens, Henry Brucks, Robert Kroekers, Alfred Schmidts, Henry Derksens, Margaret Dyck, Anna Enns.

With the improvement of the primary school the qualifications for Bible school students also stiffened. The curriculum was upgraded to fit students with a fifth grade education. Three years of intensive biblical studies plus practical experience in evangelism became the core requirement for the leadership training program.²⁴ The 1959 report on the Bible school gives a registration of sixty students, the majority of them married men with a degree of maturity and stability.²⁵

THE PRINTED PAGE

As earlier indicated, the pioneer missionaries found no written languages among the tribes they contacted. The first assignment was to reduce the language to writing. The translation of the Gospel of John into Kikweso, the language of the Kafumba area, became the first important advance.

In 1929, efforts were initiated to translate parts of the New Testament into Kituba, a trade language used by all the tribal groups of the area. Ernestina Janzen was the pioneer in the translation effort, devoting much time to it in addition to

her other roles as mother to her own family and the mother of many native Zairians, to whom she was "The Mother of Love." In addition, Paul Nganga, an orphan trained in the home of the Aaron Janzens, has been a major contributor in the translation and publication effort.

In 1930 a small hand-operated printing press was acquired and a print shop improvised on the veranda of the A. A. Janzen home. As a result of the expanding effort to teach the population to read and write, the demand for written materials for class instruction increased. A larger printing press was installed a few years later, and in 1954 a special print shop was erected at Kafumba. A new publishing center was opened in 1957.

Over the years thousands of hymn books, pamphlets, tracts, school books, and devotional books have been produced. At Kafumba the first Kituba English dictionary was printed and in 1945 the first Kituba grammar was produced by the Kafumba staff.

Key men in this great effort to produce a written language and adequate literature, plus a translation of the New Testament, were Djimbo Kubala (Timothy), Kalama (David), Nganga Diyoyo, Sukulu (Theodore) and Tau (Silas).

As early as 1948 a bi-monthly periodical called "Mwinda" (The Lamp) was published. Ten years later this became a monthly periodical. It continued its ministry until 1968, when by government decree many religious periodicals had to be discontinued.

In 1960 a Christian book center was established in Kikwit. In 1965 a second book store was opened in the commercial center of Kinshasa, which now serves the public of this growing metropolis with Christian literature.²⁶

The foresight of the early missionaries in concentrating so intensely upon reducing the language to writing and then making major investments in printing presses and literature production must be recognized. The resulting literature was a key factor in the establishing of the church. The slogan, "A drop of ink can make a million think," proved to be true in the building of the church in Zaire. This literature will continue to play a major role in the years to come.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 7

1. To what extent should missions cooperate with local governments? Should they seek or accept government aid for supporting schools and hospitals? Should they contract with secular agencies or governments in programs of rural development? Or should they keep separate from other bodies?
2. In view of the high cost of specialized mission programs, such as seminaries, radio, T.V., education, medicine and literature, many have advocated inter-denominational co-operation in these ventures. Discuss the advantages and dangers in such an approach. Under what conditions ought it to be considered?

Part Three

The Church in Zaire Comes Into Its Own

8

ANTECEDENTS TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF ZAIRE

The universal cry of the post-war years (1940-1945) for an end to colonialism found a strong echo among the people of Zaire. Leo II had laid claim to Zaire as a Belgian colony in 1887 when Henry Morton Stanley ended his historic trek across Africa. The promise by King Baudouin in 1959 to grant Zaire its independence brought new life, hope and aspiration to a people endowed with great potential in their rich culture, untapped social and natural resources, and a spirit which yearned to come into its own as a nation.¹

K. S. Latourette refers to the colonial era as the great century of modern missions in all parts of the world. Missions and colonialism followed parallel courses, with considerable inter-relationship. Belgium, a predominantly Catholic country in which church and state operated in mutual alliance, regarded itself as a guardian of Christianity and acted accordingly.

Colonial imperialism appeared in a three-fold dimension: political objectives represented by the diplomats; economic development and a program of exploiting natural resources represented by merchants and industry; and cultural-religious change introduced by missionaries. Missions normally had the responsibility for education, sometimes with some assistance from the colonial government. The cultural and religious confrontation with animistic societies also came through the missionaries. Many of the people had no reason to distinguish between the three forms of imperialism. As far as the national people were concerned, all the efforts came from the same

source and served the same end — the claim of land and people for the benefit of the colonial power.

For the people of Zaire it was difficult to distinguish between the aims and operations of Catholicism, which was an integral part of the colonial structure, and evangelical Protestant missions, which called for the establishment of a believers' church fully separated from the state and its pursuits.

The colonial governments, according to the Berlin Convention of 1884, generally looked with favor on the work of missions. They recognized the vital contribution missions made to the development of the nation. Norman Goodall writes:

Except for the relatively small class of educated Zwahilles at the coast, there was no other source than mission centers to which they could look for their minor officials, clerks, interpreters and policemen, for their semi-skilled builders and joiners, or even for reliable unskilled labor, messengers, orderlies, and domestic servants. At a time when law and order, the introduction of currency, the promotion of local trade, and the beginning of taxation were the main preoccupations of government, mission employees and adherents stood out from the rest as prosperous and orderly. They paid their taxes and they understood the new regime. Until private European settlements became extensive, the mission plantations alone produced the sorely needed cash crops and also provided the source of income for many nationals.²

The above observation, however, does not make the missionary an agent for imperial expansion. The statement by Roland Oliver pertaining to East Africa applies also to Zaire:

There is no evidence from the African territories to suggest that this early community of interests between missions and government was regarded by either side as anything more than a happy accident. Neither agency had any idea of deviating from its own natural course in order to form a more powerful combination with the other.³

In general it must be said that mission boards in the homeland looked with disapproval upon any attempt on the part of missionaries to relate themselves to political processes.

Missionaries were instructed not to get involved in the government. The milieu in which the missionaries found themselves, however, created a degree of identification with the colonial government that could hardly be avoided.

Mennonite Brethren missionaries, coming from an Anabaptist free church tradition, with a strong emphasis on a believers' church separated from all government and political involvements in particular, sought to avoid any occasion which would identify them with government processes. This was one reason for the long delay in accepting government subsidies for schools and hospitals. Nevertheless they were identified all too often with the colonial powers. The close relationship of the Catholic Church with colonial governments, and the absence of a Christian code of ethics among many white men in general, made it extremely difficult for the nationals to distinguish between true Christians and non-Christians among white people.

THE FACTOR OF NATIONALISM

Colonialism, a force dominating the world in the nineteenth century, was challenged by the nationalism of the twentieth century. Nationalism may be defined as a fusion of patriotism with a consciousness of nationality. Man by nature needs to express his individuality and achieve self-identity in the society he lives in, in a nation, and in a community of world nations. It is more than the influence of physical geography or biological race or tribe, but rather a natural expression of cultural and historical forces.

The foremost expression of nationality is possibly language, which is a tangible tie between present and preceding generations. Other forces that nurture a consciousness of group identity are a people's religious past, its territorial past, its ancestral soil, or love for the homeland.

In a tribal social structure such as in Zaire great value is placed on the traditions of a warring past, the exploits of valor in the struggle to preserve independence from a would-be conqueror. A people may be more united in nationalistic or tribalistic ties through grief over defeat than through celebration of triumph. Traditional crafts that identify a people

with specific historic events and value systems also bind people together. The preservation of such values from the onslaught of foreign forces, be they political or cultural, is a life concern to a people. The same tendencies that lead to cultural and tribal nationalism lead also to political nationalism and the struggle for independence.

The holocaust of tribal and political rivalry which followed the declaration of independence in 1960 cannot be interpreted merely as a revenge of the Zairian people against the white man. It must be recognized as an expression of the nationalism which may emerge in tribal relationships as well as in the liberation struggle against a common colonial oppressor. A graphic example is the barbaric civil war in the heart of Zaire in 1959 between the Lulua and the Baluba. It was fought with primitive spears, bush knives and arrows dipped in deadly poison. The savagery of the fighting was a forerunner of the nationalistic explosion once the restraining influence of the Belgian authority ceased on June 30, 1960. Tribal fighting and killing and the flight of frightened Europeans were an expression of tribal and national cries for self-identity from a people who for years had been governed by a foreign colonial power.

Missions as a force for change nurtured nationalism. By establishing schools, reducing local languages to writing, and widening the frame of cultural reference of people who for centuries have been captives of an isolated environment, missions created an awakening national consciousness. Mission schools produced the intellectual elite who later provided leadership for the independence movements. Mr. Shtole, an African nationalist, in his book *Africa Nationalism* asserts that the missionary movement was the mother of African nationalism, even though unconsciously so. Many of the leaders of Zaire's independence movements and men in the government of modern Zaire received their basic training in mission schools.

Nationalism as a universal phenomenon resists any foreign ethnic group that threatens the development of an independent political, economic, and cultural nation. However, colonies that achieve nationhood are faced with the hard

realities of creating a viable state. The first decade and a half of independence in Zaire have underlined the perplexities of such a process. J. Herbert Kane writes:

The white man was a convenient whipping dog during the last days of the colonial era when the politicians wanted to unify the country and galvanize the people into action. Politicians of every stripe can always be sure of a following so long as they denounce the evils of colonialism; but once colonialism is a dead issue the politicians quickly change their tune. They and the people soon discover that not all the problems can be blamed on the colonialists. They realize that it is one thing to overthrow the colonial government; it is quite another thing to run the country. For that they need massive aid from the outside — investment capital, raw materials, technical know-how, tools and even weapons to keep the peace. Some former colonies . . . which expelled thousands of white settlers, business men and colonial officials have already invited many of them back. Of course these expatriots are now on an entirely different footing; nevertheless it is interesting to note that they are there.

Notice, nationalism has not always lived up to its own expectations. It promised the people a new life with all kinds of freedoms — personal, economic, and political. In many instances civil rights, social justice, and personal freedom have not been fully achieved. White officials in various government posts have been replaced by brown and black officers. Democracy in many places has given way to military dictatorship. In the past fifteen years coups, counter-coups, civil war, and military dictatorship have plagued the continent of Africa.⁴

Zaire, along with many other African countries, has shared in the painful growth of developing nations who have accepted responsibility for their own nationhood. In spite of the very heavy cost in blood, sweat, and toil, the Zairian people are rising to their new responsibility and struggling successfully to become an important entity in the world-wide family of nations.

THE GOAL OF AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

The birth of an indigenous church in Zaire was the goal of pioneer missionaries A. A. Janzens when they came to Africa in 1913. The planting of a Mennonite Brethren church

motivated their relocation to Kafumba in 1922. The Board of Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church also pursued the central objective of planting churches in Zaire. The guiding principles and policies of the Board speak to this in the following statement:

1. Missions is the response to the command of our Lord to preach and teach the gospel to every creature. The objective of evangelism is the calling out of a church for the Lord Jesus Christ. The church itself is God's instrument for evangelism. The planting of local churches as agents of evangelism is thus the central objective of the missionary program.
2. The character of the true church must find its expression and test in scriptural discipleship of the believer. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). The consistent relationship of a professing faith and a sanctified life constitute the basic testimony and strength of an evangelistic church.
3. The permanent aspect of the mission program rests in the national church with its roots in Jesus Christ, its direction in the Holy Scripture and its organizational operation adapted to its respective culture. The missionaries and the mission program are a means to an end and must be looked upon as temporary in the building of a national church.
4. The criterion for the evaluation of every phase of the world-wide mission program is to rest in the issue: how does it contribute to the building of a national evangelistic church?
5. The value of the witness of a new convert is to receive central importance in the establishment of a national church. If the new convert is not encouraged to witness immediately after his conversion and become part of the fellowship of true believers, the most effective avenue of contacting people for Christ is lost.⁵

Over the years the movement toward the fulfillment of this objective was slow. Why was there no more progress in four decades (1922-1960)?

There is no question about the motives of the missionary. These messengers of the gospel came out of love for God and the people of Zaire. This motivated them to leave their homeland, their loved ones, and a convenient life-style to share their lives with the needs of people on the African continent.

To communicate the gospel the missionary learned the local language. After learning the oral language, he created a written script. Then he taught that script to people willing to learn. This long process required many years of labor and toil.

J. Herbert Kane writes:

It takes the average missionary the best part of ten years to become proficient enough to do translation work. He must know not only the fine points of the language, including grammar, syntax and morphology, he must be thoroughly acquainted with the culture of the people. That is why the British and Foreign Bible Society will not consider the publication of a manuscript unless the translator has lived in that particular culture for ten years. It takes again approximately ten years to complete the translation of the entire New Testament and another twenty years to complete the Old Testament. Today Bible translators are trained linguists; but in the early days we had no technical expertise at all. They had to do the best they could with the tools and talents they had. Their monumental achievements are nothing short of a miracle. Today the entire Bible is available to ninety percent of the world's population. The New Testament is available to another five percent.⁶

The development of the Kituba Bible must be considered in the light of these facts. The project was begun by the late Ernestina Janzen and was continued by her co-laborers when she died in 1937. Today the Mennonite Brethren churches in Zaire have a new translation of the New Testament and the prospect of a revised translation of the entire Old Testament. This Bible translation project is in itself one of the major reasons why there wasn't an indigenous church after one or two decades of the ministry of missions.

No less important was the task of the missionary to provide educational opportunities for the people of Zaire. In Zaire the first schools were mission schools. As a result any evaluation of the growth of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire must be made in the light of the many years of effort that preceded the opening of schools and teaching the people to read and write. When Isabella Thoburn opened the first school for girls in India she had to go from door to door imploring the parents to permit their daughters to attend her school. One indignant Hindu father is reported to have said: "You want to

educate my daughter? Next you will want to educate my cow." Our early missionaries to Zaire can tell of similar incidents regarding the prejudice against the opportunities for education.

It must also be pointed out that it was the missionary who opened hospitals, clinics, and medical schools. Often missionaries provided emergency medical and dental treatment under the open sky. They pulled teeth, set bones, lanced boils, washed wounds and dispensed pills using the sun as their light. In larger cities they established some of the finest hospitals in the world. Thus the development of this ministry also helps us answer the question, "Why wasn't there an indigenous church earlier?"

Yet we must also recognize that some missionaries considered their culture superior to the culture of the national people and under-estimated the ability of the nationals to assume responsibilities. This paternalism became an even stronger negative factor when in some instances it failed to differentiate between Christianity and western culture. J. Herbert Kane points out:

Religion has always been an integral part of culture; and when the two elements have been together for hundreds of years it is virtually impossible to separate them. It would be as easy to extract the salt from the sea as to remove Christianity from western culture. This fact should also be born in mind when one is tempted to castigate the missionaries for their failure to do a better job.⁷

The denominationalism brought by western missionaries may have been another factor in the slow development of a national church. Many of the divisions in the West are unnatural and are meaningless to cultures in the third world. However, this denominational fragmentation may also be considered from a positive standpoint. Stephen Neill reminds us that, "In point of fact Christian divisions have wrought less harm than might be expected. Both Hinduism and Islam are themselves religions of many sects."⁸

The close identification of the missionary with the colonial power in the mind of the African was no doubt also a delaying factor in the movement toward indigenization. Kane writes,

The colonial administrators and the Christian missionaries travelled on the same ship, served under the same flag, worked in the same countries, and were mutually helpful.⁹

Yet the wrongdoing by missionaries was not as great as some twentieth century nationalists have maintained.

The Mennonite Brethren missionaries carried deep concerns for the establishment of the indigenous church in Zaire in keeping with the basic principles and policies governing their assignment in Zaire. The minutes of field discussions reveal the inner struggle of the missionaries as they pressed forward toward the fulfillment of their goal of indigenization. A statement prepared and adopted by the field administration in 1957 points out the problems which impeded the progress toward indigenization of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. The document points to a three-fold difficulty:

1. The colonial government, through its system of control in the educational, social and economic development of the nation, influences every aspect of the life of the Zairian. This makes progress toward the indigenization of the church extremely difficult.
2. The institutional ministry in terms of educational and medical services is beyond the resources of the national church administratively and economically.
3. The program of the church, developed in a framework foreign to the Zairian culture, cannot be absorbed in its existing forms by the national church. A revamping of our organizational and functional structures must precede genuine progress. This will require years of effort.¹⁰

The continued concern for a more rapid indigenization in the face of rising nationalism in the 1950's finds expression in repeated discussions among missionaries and nationals, and the call for increased efforts towards that goal by the Board of Missions. In 1959 national Christians were added to local church committees, with the missionaries assuming more an advisory role, transferring major responsibilities to the national leadership.

The announcement of the colonial government in 1959 that independence was to be granted to Zaire in 1960 gave a strong impetus to the transfer of responsibilities to the national church. The concerns for the indigenization of the

church culminated in a document transferring the responsibilities for the policy-making processes and their implementation to the national church. It included a provision for a continued co-laborer relationship between the mission and the church. The document, entitled, "Points of Understanding in the Future Relation of the American Mennonite Brethren Church and the *Association des Eglises des Freres Mennonite Au Congo*," makes the following points:

I. Relationship of the AMBM* and the AEFMC**

The AMBM considers the AEFMC a part of the world-wide Mennonite Brethren fellowship. God in His plan extended to us the privilege to bring to you the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. This has created a most intimate relationship. We are one in faith, love, and hope. The change of our working relationship, in which you assume the full responsibility as a New Testament Church, is not to affect our spiritual fellowship. We are prepared to serve with you as brothers, not divided in spirit even though we are geographically widely separated.

II. Status and Position of the Missionary

1. The missionary sent by the AMBM is to serve as a co-laborer with the AEFMC to the extent that this is desired by the AEFMC and possible by the AMBM.
2. As a representative of the AMBM, the missionary is responsible to the Board of Foreign Missions in America. He remains a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church of his home country while he serves as a co-laborer of the AEFMC. Offerings and tithes of the missionary are to be channeled to the program of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America at home or abroad.
3. The areas of service of the missionary as a co-laborer with the AEFMC are to be in the fields of evangelism, Bible instruction and professional services in institutions: schools, dispensaries, and hospitals.

*American Mennonite Brethren Church

***Association des Eglises des Freres Mennonite au Congo*

4. The AMBM has the confidence that the AEFMC will extend to the missionary the privilege to share in the responsibility of administration in areas which affect his assignment. The missionary, in return, is expected to follow the biblical principle of brotherly cooperation with the AEFMC and does not seek to impose his personal will and desires upon its program. The organizational details of such a relationship are to be defined in the constitution of the national church.

5. The AMBM accepts the full responsibility to provide all financial means for the support of the missionary while he is in service as a co-laborer of the AEFMC. The church in America also assumes full responsibility for all matters pertaining to housing, transportation, and supplies, and provides for the education of the children of missionaries.

6. All matters related to the personal life of the missionary, his personal relationships and standards of Christian conduct, are the responsibility of the church which has sent him. Problems arising from the missionary's service or personal relationships affecting the program of the AEFMC are reviewed by representatives of the church in America. In consultation with the AEFMC, final decision in such difficulties remains the responsibility of the church in America through representatives in charge of directing the program of assistance to the church in the Congo.

7. The assignment of the missionary to a specific field of responsibility is the duty of the Board of Foreign Missions in North America in consultation with the executive committee of the AMBM and the AEFMC. Due consideration is to be given to the needs and wishes of the AEFMC as well as to the personal wishes and inward leading of the missionary.¹¹

The full document of understanding also made provision for the transfer of all properties to the national church, and contained a statement of agreement with regard to continued financial assistance of the mission to the national body of believers. The church had become a national entity, beginning a new era in the relationship between the mission and the national church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 8

1. In the post-colonial era missions are faced with the question of their relationship to the governments where they serve. In view of the current move in Zaire towards government intervention in church and mission affairs, what should the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services policy be towards the national government? Discuss several alternative policies and the likely consequences of each upon the growth of the church.

2. Nationalism has become a powerful world force in people's search for identity. But it also leads to divisions, hatreds and conflicts between nations. What should the church's position be towards nationalism? Remember, the principles you choose should apply equally to nationalism in the U.S. and Zaire as well as to Latin America, Russia and other countries of the world.

3. It is not clear just what the role of the missionary should be in the post-colonial era. How should the missionary relate to the national church in terms of administrative authority, task assignment and control of finances? In view of the local standards of living what type of housing, level of salary, mode of transportation and style of dress should the missionary have in our modern day?

9

A TIME OF TRANSITIONS

THE BIRTH OF A NATION

On June 30, 1960, Zaire became an independent nation. The time of Belgian colonial rule — 1884 to 1960 — became history. King Baudouin of Belgium had come to Kinshasa — then Leopoldville — to make the official declaration of Zaire's independence. Kasa-Vubu was declared the first president of Zaire, with Patrice Lumumba recognized as the first prime minister.

A formal steak dinner celebrated the occasion. In the official address by Prime Minister Lumumba he described the era of colonialism as a period of suffering, enslavement and humiliation for the people of Zaire. This so insulted King Baudouin that he walked out of the official meeting in protest and left for Belgium. The relationship between the new national government and the remaining Belgian officials and army officers assigned to assist the new national government assume responsibility for self-rule became very tense.

On July 7 the soldiers of the Zaire national army refused to recognize the authority of Belgium military command, occupied the armory of the main military base at Mbanza-Ngungu, and disrupted the administration of the military and civil government. The new feeling of independence thus found expression in disregard for law and order. A wave of hatred and expressions of revenge against the Belgian population spread out from the capital and engulfed the young nation. The new government lost control over the inflamed passions of the masses.

Europeans who found a way of escape left the country. Foreign governments demanded the right to protect their

citizens. Mass evacuations followed in the midst of unorganized opposition to the efforts of thousands to escape. The United Nations under the able leadership of Hammarskjold dispatched military detachments into the country to restore order and to prevent the continuation of unrestrained lawlessness, especially in the larger centers.¹

AN UNCERTAIN CHURCH

The Mennonite Brethren missionaries, adults and children, were advised by the embassies of the United States and Canada to select the shortest route to escape the country. On June 12 under the cover of darkness the missionaries and families chose the route to the south and crossed into Angola. The Methodist Mission in Malange inside Angola offered the first place of refuge for some 200 missionaries from the southern part of Zaire. Luanda, the east coast port of Angola, became the evacuation base for thousands of Europeans, Americans, and Canadian refugees. English, Canadian, and American army transport planes, which brought United Nations military personnel and supplies into Zaire, evacuated the refugees.

At first the unexpected turn of events left the national church stunned. With the missionaries gone, a large part of the Christian community dependent on employment by the mission were without income. The suddenness of the disruption left the church unprepared to cope effectively, though local Christians did assume leadership roles. Not until a decade had passed was the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire ready to assume full administrative and operational responsibility as a national entity.²

LOVE UNDER TEST

The missionaries of the Mennonite Brethren Church, with the exception of the Harold Fehderaus in Palla Balla near Matadi, escaped to Angola and were evacuated with other refugees. All contacts with the Christian community within Zaire were cut off for some time.

Missionaries who had committed their lives to the cause of

Christ in Zaire found this sudden departure extremely difficult. Could they leave their fellow believers in Zaire without assistance in a time of trouble? Their love for the brethren and sisters constrained them to search for a way to be of continued help to them. After much consultation and prayer the decision was reached that some men ought to remain in the proximity of Zaire to stand ready to help their brothers as soon as the doors might open. Two men, Henry Brucks and Bob Kroeker, consented to send their families home to America, while they remained in Africa to seek contact with the church. George and Margaret Faul and family, just returning to Zaire from a furlough, joined the two brethren who remained.

Three weeks from the day of the sudden evacuation, on July 1 these men could return to Kinshasa, where United Nations personnel had restored a degree of order. Every word of news from the interior about the community of believers was a reward for their separation from loved ones during this time of danger and uncertainty. In mid-September, more than three months after their evacuation, Brucks and Kroeker received permission to enter Kikwit and establish personal contact with the church community.

The sudden interruption had resulted in serious hardships in the life of the church. The call for help found a willing response from the missionary medical doctors, Ernie Schmidt and Vernon Vogt, who offered their services in spite of the unsettled circumstances and dangers in the Zairian situation. Orville Wiebe returned to Zaire to give counsel for the continuation of the educational program. Henry Derksen also returned to Zaire to assume the administrative responsibilities as the legal representative, while Arnold Prieb and Bob Kroeker gave counsel to the work of the church.

The conditions in the interior made it inadvisable to establish residences for families in Kikwit. Assistance to the churches was dependent on periodic visits to the interior from Kinshasa. The years 1960 to 1962 became a testing period for the missionaries in their desire to serve their brothers and sisters in Zaire and the broader Zairian community despite separation from their loved ones. The statement of Jesus, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and

wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple'' (Luke 14:26), was realized in the life of missionary personnel asked to be separated for six, nine, ten months and even a year from their families to serve their God and His people.³

The gradual improvement of conditions for foreign personnel and the return to a more stable government permitted a group of brethren to establish residence in the interior. The team who had served without their families in 1960-61 were relieved by a second relief team consisting of John Kliever, Harold Krueger, Abe Esau, Irvin Friesen, Alfred Schmidt, and Bob Kroeker. A few months later Fred Epp also joined this group. The Bible school was re-opened at Kafumba. The schools were assisted to return to normal operation. Dispensaries and hospitals were re-opened.

In the summer of 1962 the families of mission personnel were permitted to return to Zaire to join their husbands and fathers. The new beginning, after two years of political unrest, militated against the re-occupation of mission stations by missionaries. Only Kafumba, because it had the Bible school and the print shop, and Kajiji, the medical center, were staffed with some missionary personnel to assist the national church. Kikwit became the center from which the broader program of the church was administered. The era of a station-centered missionary ministry had come to a close.⁴

The withdrawal of professional personnel from colonial assignments resulted in a severe shortage of medical personnel. Government hospitals were without doctors. Missionary doctors from the Mennonite Brethren constituency in America and Canada volunteered their services for Zaire despite the difficult situation. Dr. Ernest Schmidt for a time took charge of the hospital in Kikwit. Dr. Art Gerdes for a two year period assumed the responsibilities for a hospital in Pai Kongila. Dr. Vernon Vogt assumed the direction for the hospital at Masi Manimba, while Dr. Ferdinand Pauls assumed responsibility for the medical program in Kajiji. A ten-year contract with the Zaire government to provide medical personnel for the Pai Kongila hospital extended the ministry beyond the immediate

emergency. Dr. Dan Konrad, Dr. Ed Neufeld, Dr. Elmer Kennel, Dr. Rudy Hamm, Dr. John Willems and Dr. Abe Voth and other medical men gave of their time to minister to the needs of the suffering.

The medical ministry of these professional men and women was not without reward. In some areas, especially in Pai Kongila, the medical personnel became the key to a wide response to the gospel. The churches of that area are the visible fruit.

The extensive relief program channeled through Menonite Central Committee during the years of political, economic and social disruption was of utmost significance for the survival of many of the church people in Zaire.⁵

THE GOSPEL BY RADIO AND THROUGH THE PRINTED PAGE

The use of radio to reach the vast rural population of Zaire concerned missionaries through the years. In 1959 the Protestant Council of Zaire was given a short time slot on government-controlled radio to speak in behalf of the Protestant community of Zaire. Soon after independence in 1960, when all previously made concessions for radio time had been cancelled, the director for information in Kinshasa granted Arnold Prieb a 15-minute slot on Sundays to broadcast the gospel.

The radio ministry began inauspiciously with primitive recording equipment and part of the bedroom in Prieb's residence serving as a recording studio. Yet this was destined to become a major channel for the gospel in Zaire. Because of the disruption of direct contacts with most churches in the interior, the radio for a time became the major channel of communication. Small radio sets distributed to many distant villages became the voice of God in terms of biblical instruction, devotional edification, and spiritual encouragement. For a period of several years radio waves became a major carrier of the gospel in Zaire.

To augment the voice from Kinshasa a contract was made with missionary radio station ELWA of Monrovia, Liberia. By

1961 a daily broadcast from Monrovia was being beamed into Zaire. The first 90 programs in the Kituba language for this daily release were prepared by the Priebes in Inman, Kansas.

Missionary William Baerg, who with his family was evacuated during the upheavals of the initial days of Zaire's independence, was residing in Canada, yet he could not find release from the responsibility for the thousands in Zaire who spoke Lingala. On his own initiative he produced radio programs of message and song for the Lingala people. These programs were also beamed from Monrovia to Zaire. The voice of ELWA increased the ministry provided through the Mennonite Brethren personnel until in 1965 daily programs could be received in Zaire in French, in Lingala, and in Kituba. For a period of time the Zaire national and international radio stations aired the programs regularly on Sunday. Even provincial stations like Kikwit, Mbandaka, Kisangani, and Bukavu provided time for them. Now the gospel message covered the cities and the countryside of all of Zaire.

In 1962 the production center for the radio ministry was transferred to Kinshasa. Lusangu Petelo gave full attention to the rapidly developing correspondence course offered on the radio broadcast. National pastors and technicians were trained to assume responsibility for the program. Mubaybul Lampimi Ekaka (Joseph) was named the radio pastor in 1965.

The Mennonite Brethren mission purchased many transistor radios and placed them in strategic localities to reach the people during the days of the rebellion in 1964-65. During the time when the entire northern area of the Mennonite Brethren church constituency was engulfed in waves of destruction, fear, and death, the voice from the little radio became the word of God to many, sustaining them in the hiding places of the Zaire forests along the rivers. The following testimony from a letter sent to a radio office is typical of the response: "Every evening I gather my family around the radio and we listen to God's Word. Do not grow weary in preaching God's Word."

Facilities in Kinshasa were now acquired by the mission. Two well-equipped control rooms were in daily use from seven-thirty in the morning until five in the evening by a qualified staff of national personnel.

The open door through radio also led to the development of a Bible correspondence school. This developed into a major arm for gospel distribution and Bible instruction.

By 1966 the correspondence school was housed in a building in the city of Kinshasa. It was strategically located on a busy thoroughfare in the commercial area of the city. A bookstore was opened as well and Christian literature made available to many thousands of people.

From a small beginning with one Bible course in one language, the school grew. By 1970 seventeen courses were offered in four different languages—French, Kituba, Lingala and Kikongo. Students from universities, military personnel, professional people, teachers, and industrial workers made up the student body. The significance of this ministry in terms of sowing the seed cannot be over-estimated.⁶

THE CHURCH MOVES ON

The new circumstances in independent Zaire became a major test of the strength of the church. The years of dependency on the mission to carry major responsibility for the work had come to an end. The responsibilities were being transferred to national leadership.

The call to reopen the schools in the rural areas and extend the educational program to meet the increasing demands for education became an urgent priority. With the assistance of the mission, secondary schools were opened in Kafumba and at Kajiji. The training of leadership demanded an expanding educational opportunity for the many young people. The hospitals and dispensaries needed men and women with secondary school education to qualify for the training demanded by these institutions. Another priority was the reopening of the Bible institute to train leadership for the churches.

The participation of the national brethren in this process helped establish the qualifications demanded for the on-going work of the church. The responsibility for evangelism was also transferred to national pastors and evangelists. This transition testified to the harmonious relationship between the missionaries and the national brethren.⁷

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 9

1. In times of war, like that in China, Viet Nam and Zaire, the missionary force must face the question of whether to stay and face possible death or imprisonment, or to leave for the sake of safety. What are some of the factors that need to be taken into account when such a decision is made? Who should make the decision? And how should the churches at home respond to those who leave the field and those who stay?
2. In a world full of unrest, the likelihood of North American missionaries being captured and held for ransom is high. When such an event happens, what should be the policy of the mission board, the churches and members of the family in responding to such demands?
3. Often our mission structures have assumed a peaceful political situation. Yet the early church grew rapidly in times of turmoil. What strategies can the church use in times of conflict to proclaim the gospel, and what would be the cost of such a course of action?

10

THE CHURCH TESTED AND TRIED

The initial years of independence did not bring the promised better life to the Zairians. "They do not bring what they promised. It is worse than before independence. Let us get rid of this government," became the slogan of dissatisfied rebel leaders. The deteriorating national economy fueled rebellion. The value of the franc decreased in 1961 from sixty-five francs to 400 francs to a dollar.

Prices soared, even for the necessities of life. Funds sent by the central government for the operation of local programs were not distributed, finding their way into private bank accounts. Teachers, nurses, road crews and others dependent on government pay often worked months without any remuneration. These conditions created a lot of unrest in the interior.

An insurgent youth movement popularly identified by the French term for youth, "jeunesse," emerged in Kwilu province under the leadership of Mulele Pierre. Mulele had been trained in China in revolutionary tactics and terrorist warfare. In Zaire he prepared youth for rebellion secretly in the forests of Zaire. When the revolt started, initial attacks were directed against tribal chiefs and rural government posts. Detachments of young rebel armies struck suddenly under cover of darkness. They beat, burned, slashed, and then retreated to the forest hideouts to prepare under cover of darkness for their next attack.¹

Initially many villages welcomed the rebels as "liberators," who would free them from the "corrupt government." Those who hesitated supporting the movement were quickly whipped into line by threats effectively punctuated by drawn bows and arrows. All younger men were forced to join the

roving bands; the older people were assigned the responsibility of supplying the bands with manioc, goats, and chickens. If a father refused to give his boy, the rebels would threaten the father with immediate death. So the fathers had to consent to the induction of their sons into a movement which they, based on their limited background were unable to interpret. Nettie Berg writes:

How did the Christians fare in all this? asked one of the leading men rhetorically. This was the first time such a movement came our way. We didn't know what to think of it. Many of us believed Mulele's teaching. Didn't he teach us not to steal? not to take another man's wife? isn't that what the Bible teaches?

Yes, everyone entertained high hopes for improvement in the country. But, oh, the disillusionment that followed. When they saw the school buildings ruined, their churches burned down, the missionary's home going up in flames and the missionaries leaving with tears in their eyes, sorrow and bewilderment etched on their faces, they would say, "This isn't what was supposed to happen. We weren't told it would be like this!" In good faith they had identified themselves with this movement that supposedly aimed at political reform, but instead it robbed them of everything held dear.

Shallow Christians enjoyed the new-found freedom. No one was there to ask, "Why weren't you in church on Sunday?" No one objected if they took a second wife. No tithes to pay. Some took this opportunity to haul their enemies of long standing before the rebel courts. A teacher who was a member of the church deserted his large family and by force took a young girl to be his wife.

A former Bible school graduate rejoiced in his sudden promotion to group leader under Mulele. With arrogant pride he judged a mission teacher for having preached God's Word. At his stern command that leader was tied hands and feet and left for hours in the scorching sun.

Even more brutal was his treatment of an older Christian who was supposed to possess valuables. When he was unable to produce the valuables he was reported to have hidden in the forest, the rebel leader ordered him tied hands and feet, hung up on a pole, and a fire built underneath. He died after days of suffering from those burn wounds.

Lusasi Bernard, leader of the Kikondji church, was buried alive by one who formerly had been a member of the church. How hard can a human heart get?²

THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH OF ZAIRE IN HIDING

The continued harassment of the people on mission centers and villages and the danger of death at the hands of rebels left no other alternative but flight into the forest to escape the threat of martyrdom and death. The story of sufferings experienced by the church in Zaire is an echo of the suffering of the believers church of past centuries. The following examples serve merely as illustrations of the experiences of the church of that era.

Bernard Kasai, the assistant pastor of the Kafumba station, had refused to leave because of the responsibilities he felt. Pastor Djimbo, the main minister responsible for the church, had fled because he was a special target of the rebels. One evening under cover of night Kasai felt constrained to take his wife and children and his friend's family on a canoe across the Lutskima river to their home village. They fled through a dense forest and then he returned to get the belongings that had not fitted into the canoe. As Kasai returned, he was stopped by rebels who ordered him to dig a grave for himself.

"We shall not hear your preaching any longer, that we will end," they told him.

With much difficulty he dug a grave with a hoe that was handed to him. The grave completed, he was asked to kneel while the soldiers shoveled the earth back into the hole. When the dirt came up to his shoulders, the rebels began arguing among themselves. Some wanted to finish the job, kill him and close the grave completely. Others, even though they bore the name rebel, were quite a different brand. Some of them were Kasai's former Sunday school pupils. They felt for him and resisted covering his head with earth. After a lengthy argument they left him, still buried up to his neck.

Three days later, having received permission from the local rebel commander, one of the former Sunday school students returned. Finding Kasai still alive, he went down on his knees and clawed away the dirt. "Now run," he whispered. At first Kasai's cramped muscles refused to move, but gradually he was able to move his muscles. With much

difficulty he reached the hiding place of his family. God spared Kasai's life for a ministry which he is continuing today.

One of Kasai's co-workers, Kakesa Pierre, who was also hiding in the forest, felt inwardly constrained to go back under the cover of darkness to visit some of the people that had remained on the Kafumba station. A group of students who were stranded there after everyone else had left needed his help and comfort. From time to time he would return in order to read with them the Word of God, pray with them and give them the necessary encouragement. One evening while he was again attempting to reach Kafumba to perform his mission, he was ambushed by a group of soldiers and executed.

Pastor Djimbo Kubala, the elderly, well-beloved pastor from the Kafumba station, also went into hiding. Equipped with a bush knife to build a shelter and a fire, he and his family lived in the forest for months. So as not to lose track of time they carved a calendar into the tree to know what date of the month and what day of the week it was. Eventually they were arrested by rebels and taken hostage. As prisoners of the rebel armies they lived in the forest under constant pressure to become collaborators of the revolutionary forces. Pastor Djimbo's life was spared, and eventually he was able to return to freedom and to continue as a shepherd of the flock.

Families were also separated. After a prolonged period in hiding, Pastor Philip Nzelenge felt it was impossible to continue under these conditions. He decided to give himself and his family up to the soldiers, requesting mercy. He was separated from his wife and his daughter, who were taken to a distant rebel camp. More than a year passed until they were again reunited. The experiences of his dear wife and daughter are indescribable.

These and many more were the trials of the Congolese brethren in the faith. Some denied the Lord in the course of suffering. Others for a time became collaborators with the revolutionary forces in order to save their lives and those of their children. Many, however, fearlessly refused to hide their faith and willingly bore the consequences.

Many tears were shed in those forest hideouts. Mothers lost their children to the cruel hands of hunger and sickness.

Husbands lost wives willing to give every morsel of food to their starving children. Children missed out on two years of school, learning instead the art of stealing to still the unceasing pangs of hunger. The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire was entered into the records of a suffering church, not considering their life dear in order to remain faithful to Him who had called them out of darkness into the marvelous light.³

THE CHURCH IS REGATHERED

In 1965 the central government of Zaire sent out an army to bring out the people held prisoners in the forests and subdue the rebel movement. The aftermath of the conditions which followed brought people into a difficult dilemma. While the rebels controlled the area they demanded food from the villages under the threat of death. When the soldiers of the central government moved in they considered any past assistance to the rebel movement as collaboration. People who were held prisoners and were part of rebel-controlled camps frequently were considered part of the rebel movement and treated accordingly. Today many victims walk the streets in these areas of Zaire with hands and ears cut off, maimed and mutilated for life. Hundreds of people kept by the rebel captors died together with them when the army moved in and overcame the rebels.

Often people who had been rescued went back into the forest at the risk of their own lives to encourage the rest to come out, proclaiming that order was restored. Some who had lived in the forest for months and years had worn out their clothes, and could not appear naked in public. Among them was Pastor Daniel Pshene. Like others he had reverted to wearing grass skirts. He sent a note to the church office in Kikwit asking for a shirt and a pair of trousers. The MCC warehouse, stocked with supplies, quickly provided the needed clothing. So Pastor Daniel came to Kikwit some thirty pounds lighter but well-groomed.

Pastor Djimbo tells how civilians would enter the outskirts of the forest calling, "Come out, Pastor Djimbo, come out, come to your village, make your fields." Suspicious lest such a call would be a trap he would answer, "If you call a

dog don't wave a stick." The people looking for him would understand the parable and called back "No, we have no guns with us. No soldiers, just come out." Despite their response he was afraid and withdrew even deeper into the forest.

The rains set in, and for several days Pastor Djimbo and his wife Luta sought to find shelter. They were completely soaked through. Becoming weary of the hardships, he said to his wife, Luta, "This must be the Lord telling us to go out. Otherwise he would stop the rain." There was great joy among the Christians when they saw their veteran leader coming out of the forest alive. Though weakened, he was still able to greet them with a message from God, praising the protecting and keeping mercies of God they had experienced so bountifully during the past months. The severe headaches from which Pastor Djimbo had suffered for many years had disappeared while in the forest; a blessing that emerged from a time of suffering.

Pastor Djimbo reports that during those days of reunions the Sunday morning services in Kikwit had a way of deviating radically from the regular pattern. In one morning service Pastor Petelo announced: "Brother Immanuel wants to tell us something." Immanuel came forward leading his nine-year-old boy. The boy, with hollow cheeks and spindly legs, vividly illustrated part of the story.

"You see this boy?" Immanuel began, "He is my boy. In 1964 I had sent him to Kafumba to school. The rebels came. The children ran to the forest. For almost two years we knew nothing of him. Now he is here with us again."

At this point the father's voice broke with emotion. When again able to speak he said, "To prove my thanks to the Lord for having saved his life I will sing for you the song 'God will not forget.'" With a clear voice he sang the song as a personal expression of his experience. Then he went over to the offering box and put in 500 francs.

While father and son walked back down the aisle someone in the audience spoke up: "I can tell you that what Immanuel just sang is true. God does not forget." It was the voice of Pastor James from Shimuna, who only two weeks earlier had come out of hiding with Miriam, his wife, and their six

children. After someone closed in prayer, Mamma Elizabeth Sambu quickly stood to her feet. She hadn't been given an opportunity to speak, but just couldn't keep silent. Her prayer was a song of praise. "Yes, Lord," she concluded, "you took my boy in the forest but you left me my girl, I thank you much, much."

Every week more believers came out of hiding. Gideon, an assistant pastor in the church of Kikwit, is supposed to have said: "The church is a body that has life. It could not die, even though many Christians were hidden for a time." They carried this promise in their hearts, "In death or life you belong to God." Some were buried alive. Others were hauled before the rebel courts. Some were killed. Others were set free by a miracle.

The experiences of the church during the 1963-1965 period must be evaluated carefully. The rebellion of that period was not in particular directed against the Christian believers. Thus the incentive for the persecution of the church came largely from within the Christian community itself. People who professed to be Christians and had been disciplined because of inconsistent lives, others who had negative attitudes towards brethren in the church or the leadership of the church, took this period of anarchy as the occasion for revenge. They assumed leading roles in the persecution. The words of Jesus, "And brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death" (Matt. 10:21), became a historical reality.

How people stayed alive in the forest for up to one year and seven months is not easily understood by people not acquainted with the hardships of survival in a tropical forest. The jungle offered both protection and resources to sustain life. Roots, leaves, and wild fruits became their diet. Their shelters were built of palm leaves and banana leaves, which did not last long. One of the leading brethren from the church reports that during nineteen months they had built twelve shelters. One house built of leaves lasted only about forty-five days because of the rapid deterioration caused by rain, heat, and high humidity.

What was the effect upon the church that went through these difficulties, with many believers, especially in the Matende area, losing their life? A leader offers the following answer, "Some Christians have been purified through these tribulations. However, generally speaking, it is my impression that even the severe tribulations have not made a major change in the level of commitment to Christ."

Some members of the fellowship who participated in the cruelties of the rebellion have repented and have been received back into the fellowship of the church. Others have not found their way back to the fold and are not in the immediate vicinity of the church.

A NEW BEGINNING

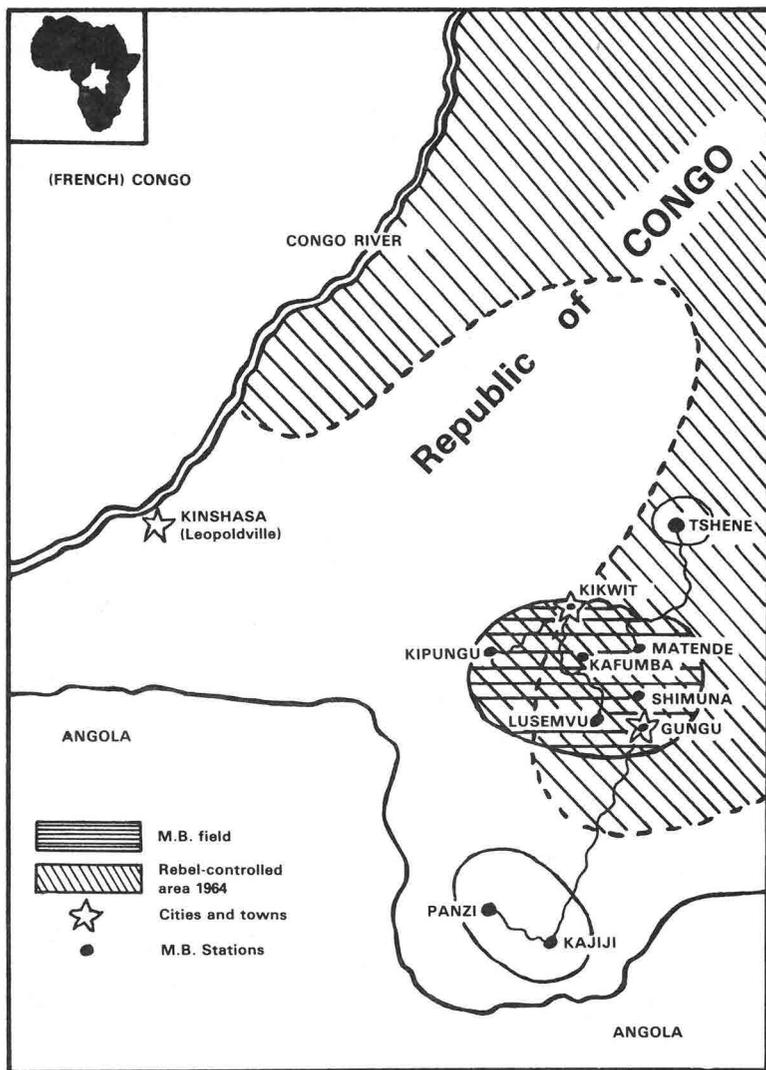
The months of suffering made heavy demands upon the church. The wheat was separated from the chaff. As the faithful believers regrouped they found many in their fellowship before the rebellion missing. Some had died a martyr's death, others lost their lives through the deprivations of the fugitive life in the forests of Zaire. Others had proven unfaithful, having become the prey of satanic onslaughts upon the church. The wounds caused through spiritual defeats in the fiery heat of the years of tribulation demanded a healing ministry of love and patience on the part of pastors and people.

Many of the church buildings were destroyed or damaged. Families were without homes and stripped of the limited possessions they had owned before the rebellion. Their poverty and the demand for a new beginning stirred their faith.

In July, 1966, the first post-rebellion conference convened at Gungu. Nine church areas had sent forty-two delegates for this reunion fellowship. The believers at Gungu, even though poor in material possessions, served as the host for this gathering. They rejoiced in the opportunity to meet again the brethren with whom they had shared the testings of the past two years. The statement of purpose for the gathering was defined as, "To encourage ourselves with God's Word."

The Scripture under study was the New Testament church according to the book of Acts. The experiences of the recent past were tested in the light of the Scriptures. Business

discussions were given a clearly secondary place on the schedule. The focus of their concern was the urgent need for evangelism. As a church tested, tried, and purified, they were



Mennonite Brethren Fields and Rebel-controlled Areas

not concerned for their own personal well-being. They deeply sensed the urgency to go and tell the story of redeeming love.⁴

The loss in terms of facilities and equipment was devastating. On the Kafumba center eight residences for mission and national personnel were burned. The Bible school, students' living quarters, a new, seven-room classroom building of the primary and secondary school, and the print shop with all its equipment, much literature, and many valuable manuscripts, had gone up in flames. The medical facilities, dispensary, and the maternity wards including all equipment, were totally destroyed. The church was burned out, with only bare walls remaining.⁵

The Lusemvu and Matende centers experienced a similar fate, with all buildings for residences, schools, and medical programs destroyed. The loss in terms of financial capital by conservative estimates amounted to \$354,950. The Kafumba property loss was \$229,500, Lusemvu, \$38,450, and Matende, \$87,000.⁶

The map on page 151 identifies the geographical areas of the Mennonite Brethren Church and the sections which were affected by the rebellion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 10

1. In times of revolution Christians are often forced to cooperate with the local revolutionary forces. The alternative is death and the loss of one's children. To what extent should Christians cooperate in such situations, and what other alternatives are open to them? Remember that the cause for which these movements fight is not always totally evil (note

the American Revolution) but that revolution draws people into violence.

2. Faced with anti-Christian governments, the church must often go "underground." In such situations how can Christian fellowship and evangelism be maintained, and how can children be raised in the fear of the Lord? What type of organization and leadership is possible?

3. What should the Zairian church's response be, after peace returns, to the revolutionaries who persecuted them, and to the Christians who left the church and turned against it? (Keep in mind the experiences of the European churches after World War II, and the trials of the "war criminals.")

11

THE CHURCH IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

PERSONAL IDENTITY

The guiding principles and policies of the Mennonite Brethren Church indicate that, "The national church is to be established in its own culture with utmost care to avoid strong influence of a foreign culture upon the development of the national church."¹

The intent of this statement and the actual realization of it in the church planting process may differ considerably.

The motive of the missionary in his relationships to the African people was genuine. He came in obedience to the command of Christ, "To preach the gospel to all nations." The absence of a written language, and the lack of the kind of social and economic structure known to the western missionary predetermined his relationship to the African. The basic premise of the relationship was that of the white man with an ample endowment. In religion—the gospel of Jesus Christ—he was the carrier of the ultimate, the message of God.

For communication he brought the educational tools to create a written language, to translate the New Testament, and to present truth unchallenged by the recipients in the African community. From the west he came with economic resources and the know-how of industrial and practical processes. These made him the object of admiration and a symbol of authority for the nation. A relationship to the white man became the way to improve his life and advance toward new discoveries along the pathway of knowing, doing, and becoming.

The missionary compound of the colonial era became an island on the vast expanse of the African continent. The missionary, in his sphere of influence, was the symbol of power. He built the schools for the African and taught them to read and to write. He had the medicines which cured malaria and saved them from the plagues of smallpox and dysentery. He built them the roads and taught them to raise better crops. The white man also taught them to build better houses and to improve the care for their goats, their chickens and their pigs.

The missionary brought hope. He also became the pipeline for financial resources, which, to the African, appeared inexhaustible. The mission compound meant for many employment, education, social improvement. To be part of the Christian community meant a favorable status in relationship to the benefits which came with the message concerning the Christ.

An increasing number of missionary personnel were sought to man the ever-expanding ministries. There was considerable pressure to train the nationals to assume personal responsibility for their economic, educational and religious development. The Christian message was interpreted as a part of western culture and became a disturbing element in the cultural structure of African society.

The frequent furloughs of missionaries gave the impression that they were not totally committed to Africa. As a rule the missionary was not a member of the national church, retaining his major ties with the church at home. The missionary family thus constituted a social unit with considerable distance from the national's social environment. The day-to-day mission affairs affecting the life of newly-founded Christian communities came more and more under the domination of the West, especially after the introduction of the telegraph, telephone, radio, and more modern travel facilities. Missions in some cases became a service to people and less a relationship with people.

The results of western efforts to evangelize the Africans without enough regard for the relationship of the gospel to the native culture receives special attention in the book by David B. Barrett called *Schism and Renewal in Africa*.

While Africans appeared to accept the new religion enthusiastically, a sub-conscious alarm at this assault on their society took root across the continent. What was being attacked through the gospel message varied from tribe to tribe, and from mission to mission, but was usually one or more component features of the following traditional complex found to a greater or lesser extent in all tribes. Affected were especially the following areas: community structure — polygamy, family structure, and extended family, clan structure, lineage and kinship traditions, genealogies, age grades, the status of women, the sacral nature of politics, land and property — tribal land rights, ancestral ownership of the land, the cattle complex, the earth as a mother or female deity, fertility rites, rain and harvest ceremonies; laws and taboos — tribal law, kinship obligations, authority of the elders, codes of marriage behavior, sexual mores, bride wealth, sanctions, taboos; religious concepts — mythology, the tribal world view, concepts of power, tribal concepts of God, the ancestral cult of remembrance of the living dead, the concept of the sacred, the unity of natural and supernatural; rituals — religious rites at birth, initiation rites, circumcision, funeral rites, burial societies, trial by ordeal, exorcism, rites for combating witchcraft and sorcery, ritual use of water, river cults; worship — sacrifices, food offerings, libations, native beer or palm wine, drinking customs, possession cults, religious joy, ecstasy, emotionalism, singing, dancing and drumming, the mediacy of the spiritual world.²

These traditional features were often so closely interwoven into the social structure that to suppress one feature by force in any given society was liable to disrupt the whole structure, despite the traditional flexibility generally shown in African cultures. The domination of a western interpretation of the Christian message and the application of the gospel to the social and religious structures of the African society had an uprooting effect upon their cultural foundation.

These circumstances could not but affect a large segment of the African people in the post-independence era of Zaire. The village life had retained a strong cultural structure, and the foreign influence had not uprooted them totally. It was different for those people who had left their villages to follow educational opportunities and employment with missions or in industrial or urban developments.

An additional factor affecting the national church was the discrepancy between the biblical interpretations of Scripture and the day-by-day expressions of love that were to characterize the redeemed community.

The translation of the Bible and the increased literacy led many to develop an interpretation of truth as it emerged from their cultural background. The biblical vision of social renewal, prosperity, peace, love, justice, racial equality before God, and restored relationships became the aspiration and hope of their faith. To many there appeared a discrepancy between mission and biblical faith as it affected them as individuals and as a people. Many cultural institutions listed earlier appeared to fit into the economy of the Christian faith as it related to the family, the land, fertility, the important role of women, the authority of the elders, and the subordinate role of young people. They found this pattern in the Old Testament. The Christian faith proclaimed by the western missionaries had, by contrast, uprooted believers from their social moorings, their tribe, their clan, their family, and demanded the destruction of family structures in cases of polygamy.

The major attribute of God as revealed in Christ, and to be reflected in the redeemed community, is love. In some areas this love was evident in the services provided by the mission and in the churches built for new Christians. Yet the level of personal and social identification with the national believers was not that strong. The missionary all too often assumed the role of an authority instead of that of a brother.

We cannot minimize the significant cultural barriers which make full identification extremely difficult. Missionaries removed from their homeland, culture and family, yielded to the need for meeting together as white groups for social and spiritual interaction—teachers, doctors, nurses, evangelists, pilots, wives and children—without a sense of disrespect for their African counterparts. The effects of this practice, however, on the true Christian community needs a careful scrutiny in the light of Scripture and in the light of the example of Jesus.³

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire, which has shared the weakness and imperfections in the expression of

Christian love in this area of full identification, has often been a lonely community. The Christians were not part of their tribal and social entities, and were often disowned by their immediate families. They believed the Bible to be the Word of God and clung to the hope of eternal life. Their development, however, was seriously hindered by the absence of full identification with the brothers and sisters who were carriers of the Good News, but not always their brothers in the identification that supercedes cultural and racial barriers. The stature of the National Mennonite Brethren Church, shown in its faith, endurance, and hope in times of extreme hardships following Zaire's independence, through the political upheavals, civil wars, through the rebel youth movement, and compounded by the loneliness created through the sudden removal of the missionary, stands as a testimony to the promise of Christ: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁴

NATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

The church is in the world but not of the world. Since it is in the world, it demands an organizational identity to communicate with the world, the nation, the government, and the society of which it is a part. Until independence in 1960 the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire had functioned under the legal charter of the Mennonite Brethren mission. The advisability of incorporating the church under a separate charter, "Personalité Civile," as a national entity was repeatedly considered following 1960. The transition from a colonial government structure to that of a national government was very gradual, thus a separate registration of the Mennonite Brethren church, even though applied for, was delayed for several years.

NATIONALISTIC MOVEMENTS

The move toward independence released numerous national aspirations which affected both the Protestant and Catholic communities. Various groups declared themselves as independent fellowships, severing their functional relationship from

the established church bodies, although many still had western ties through the missions which had founded them. The names adopted by some of these groups reflects somewhat their character:

Church of Renaissance Love
 Church of Faith by the Prophet Isaiah
 Church of the Working Saints of God the Father
 Third Testament Religion of Love
 Jehovah's Church of Men of Good Will
 Israeli Army of Builders of the Kingdom of God, etc.⁵

Also significant was the revival of the national movement of Kimbanguism founded under the leadership of Simon Kimbangu (1889-1951). The movement is animistic in background, with close relationship to the Christian message in areas of faith and ethics. Because it was strongly nationalistic, it was suppressed by the colonial authorities. Since the western version of Christianity did not fit into the people's cultural and religious need, they looked for a messiah to emerge from their own midst. As a suppressed and rejected people they accepted Kimbangu's claim of a special revelation from God and followed him with hope and confidence. Oppressed for several decades, they accepted independence as the time for a rebirth of their faith in the leader from their own midst.⁶

The interaction between such religious movements as Catholicism, Kimbanguism, and the wide variety of Protestant movements with their denominational and mission affiliations created real difficulties as the demand for national identity grew.

PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The emerging Zaire Protestant church reflected several diverse tendencies, the consequences and implications of which are not yet fully known.

There was a strong leaning towards the organizational union of all Protestant churches, desired and advocated by many African Protestant leaders. The large mainline denominations in Zaire were generally related to the World Council of Churches through their home bodies. In the Zaire Protestant

Council, however, where all missions had equal voting privileges irrespective of size, the majority leaned against cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

The upheaval in 1960, however, required intensive aid from abroad to care for the many displaced people. Since then the economic resources to operate institutions, hospitals, schools, and theological training centers has continued to come largely from the World Council of Churches and international organizations. All these circumstances added to the demand for the organizational union of all Protestant churches. The evangelical wing of the Protestant churches strongly resisted the trend towards union, recognizing the movement as syncretistic.

ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS

The creation of the Church of Christ in Zaire to replace the Protestant Council of Zaire was a major milestone. Made at a meeting of the Protestant Council in Kinshasa on March 8, 1970, this move was to have far-reaching effects upon the evangelical churches in Zaire, who at the time had 1,644 national workers and 1,100 missionaries.

The object of this move was eventual church union, a development strongly advocated by members of the ecumenical and national movements.⁷

With the creation of the Church of Christ in Zaire, all Protestant entities were to be legally registered as part of a national religious community. Missions ceased to be recognized as legal entities and were integrated into the national church structure.⁸

The implications of the actions of March 8, 1970, emerged very clearly in the 1972 Christmas message of Dr. Itoto Bokambanza Bokeleale, president of the Church of Christ in Zaire. In his address, Dr. Bokeleale announced that the church was an integral part of Zairian policy of authenticity. All Christians (men and women, old people, young adults, and children) were members of a movement of popular revolution (the French expression for it is *Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution*) which draws its policies from the sources of authenticity. Based on an action of the national executive

committee of the Church of Christ in Zaire on February 2-9, 1972, he emphasized the unity of the church with the national, political, social and religious life of the nation. The individual member within the church was called upon to recognize the African cultural structure of the unity of the family, the clan, the state, and the nation, in which the individual surrenders his identity to that of corporate national interests on the basis of love, as an expression of the heart of the teachings of Jesus Christ.⁹

The broader backdrop for this emphasis on the union of the church and state has its roots in the theological interpretation announced by Dr. Bokeleale in 1964, when as general secretary of the Disciples of Christ Church he said:

I repeat with force that this disunity which exists between denominations of churches is clearly or must be categorized as sin and not only in error or a simple inerrent imperfection of all human work. This signifies, my brother, that all action that is separating the Disciples of Christ, children of God, is a sin and this sin is a transgression of the will of God. For the will of God is by the teaching and the death of His son on the cross and by the action of the Holy Spirit that His children are saved and rest united in love by union. All the denominations and churches that are separated must die to the separation and come alive again in the uniting by the aid of God — the union of the churches in Congo in an integral obligation. Jesus speaks of that in the Gospel of John without question. We shall be one even as He and the father are one, whereby the world will know that we are His disciples. Therefore, the world does not yet know God because we are separated, divided. We must unite and the world will come around the father.¹⁰

The national organizational structure at the present time permits the function of closely related fellowships—denominational groups in historical context—to relate to each other as communities: Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites and others. The continuation of their present liberty in the Church of Christ in Zaire is somewhat difficult to predict. The trend appears to be towards an authentic Zairian church.

Although Catholic and Kimbanguists church leaders are notably silent on this score, members of the Church of Christ in Zaire secretariat have spoken repeatedly about one

national church which will encompass all the existing groups. In an interview with a Zaire magazine, Dr. Bokeleale said, "You want to know how I look on the problem of uniting the Protestant churches? But you talk to me only about the Protestants. Why not their unification with the Catholics and Kimbanguists as well? The church is one and indivisible. She has her founder Jesus Christ. The others, we are nothing more than servants."¹¹

An article which appeared in this African magazine on March 13, 1972, adds additional interpretation:

The search for an African theology must stir all the three churches of Zaire, with the result that, in the future, authentic Zairian ecumenicity will end up with only one Christian church in Zaire. The church which is neither Catholic nor Protestant nor Kimbanguist; a Zairian church conceived by the theological ideas and Bantu principles.¹²

The idea of a single national church is thus quite clearly expressed as an alternative to the continued existence of three major religious bodies in Zaire.

History will reflect the results of the trend towards an ecumenical unity that appears to move toward full identification between church and state. It is possible that future developments may resemble what happened in the third German Reich, where a movement called German Christians declared:

The church is for Germans the community of believers who are pledged to a battle for a Christian Germany. The goal of the German Christian faith movement is one evangelical German national church. The state calls the church; the church must obey this call.¹³

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire finds itself in the midst of forces demanding national identity and the search for its own authenticity. The tensions for a believers' church community may be severe and last long. In their desire to be in the world but not of the world, they need God's guidance, direction, and enablement to fulfill their commitment toward God and their country.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 11

1. One of the great questions of our day is justice—and how do we achieve it. If injustice and exploitation has taken place in the past (as in the case of racial segregation and colonial rule) is it enough to “begin now” trying to be equal? Or should special privileges be granted to the oppressed so that they can “catch up?” People in former colonies feel that their former rulers owe them something. How should North American churches respond to this type of feeling? Keep in mind that as Christians we are not called to win an argument, but to win the lost and build the church.
2. The Zairian Protestant churches are being forced by the government to join the same church organization. Should our mission board cooperate with such an organization? And what would we as churches do if such a move took place in our own country?
3. If our churches abroad seek closer cooperation or even merger with churches of other denominations in their country, what should our response be—break relationships with them, continue relationships with them, send missionaries, or join cooperative tasks, etc.?

12

EGLISE DES FRERES MENNONITES *AU ZAIRE* (THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN ZAIRE)

The national independence of Zaire in 1960 did not precipitate an immediate radical change in the structure of the church. Church and mission were closely inter-related and carried the responsibilities on the basis of the official agreement of inter-relationship as adopted prior to independence under the title: Points of Understanding in the Future Relationship of the American Mennonite Brethren Church and the *Association des Eglises des Freres Mennonite au Congo* (EFMC).* The mission and the church, though technically two defined entities, worked functionally as a unit, with the mission continuing the official contacts with the government of Zaire. The harmonious working together for a decade after political independence is a tribute to the brotherly spirit of the national church and the staff of the Mennonite Brethren mission.

The necessity for the church to become an independent entity was well recognized by the national congregations, as well as by the mission. In August, 1970, at the annual conference of the church at Panzi, the ground rules were laid for the church and the mission to be fused, thus creating the full identity of the national church. The documents for the

*Statement of agreement adopted in May, 1960. See Appendix C.

creation of a church under the name *Eglise des Freres Mennonites au Zaire* were drawn up at a meeting at the church center of Kwange.¹ National brethren who had served in the administration of the church program over a period of years were assigned to present a slate for an Executive Committee to assume responsibilities for the church after the fusion.

On June 9, 1971, the government of Zaire officially approved the incorporation of the church as a national entity with the following officers of an Executive Committee of the EFMZ: Arnold Prieb, president; Djimbo Kubala, vice-president; Mukoso Matthieu, secretary; Diyoyo Ngango, legal representative; S. V. Epp, treasurer and assistant legal representative; Matsitsa, second assistant of the legal representative; Hartmut Schroeder, assistant secretary. Then on August 7, in a conference held at Kafumba, the American Mennonite Brethren ceased to exist as a formal entity in Zaire. The *Mission Eglise des Freres Mennonites au Zaire* assumed full responsibility.² The proclamation of the president of the executive committee, Arnold Prieb, outlined the course of responsibilities and assignments assumed by the church.*

The administrative headquarters for the EFMZ is located in an office building in Kikwit erected after the transfer.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN ZAIRE (EFMZ)

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire is divided into sixteen different areas. A brotherhood assembly with delegates from the sixteen areas is the basis for the organizational structure. From each of these areas the delegates select one representative to serve on the administrative committee. This committee is constitutionally the administrative body, which in turn appoints an executive committee responsible to the administrative committee. The executive committee at this time (1975) has a membership of seven. Five of these members

*Full text available in the archives of the Mennonite Brethren Study Center, Fresno.

are national, two are missionaries appointed by the national administrative committee. The members of this committee serve as the conference in the interim and report to the administrative committee, which meets once per year.

THE CHURCH AT THE GRASSROOTS

The communities of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire registered an official membership of 11,829 in 1973. The sixty local communities of believers are divided into eighteen districts. Each district consists of a central church with additional fellowship groups in the immediate geographical area. Twenty-five ordained pastors shepherd believers assisted by sixty more ordained church leaders. The following gives a breakdown of the eighteen centers, with total membership in each area.

MEMBERSHIP BY CENTERS

District	1972 Members	1975 Members
1. Kafumba	2,248	3,409
2. Lusemvu	645	828
3. Shimuna	454	659
4. Gungu	406	392
5. Matende	403	601
6. Kikwit	641	794
7. Kwenge	1,128	2,739
8. Kipungu	220	641
9. Pai-Kongila	448	1,331
10. Kajiji	456	1,167
11. Shauyanga	330	664
12. Kingwangala	472	560
13. Panzi	417	539
14. Mbandu	425	621
15. Tambu-nseke	585	2,284
16. Kinshasa	284	617
17. Kibenga	158	168
18. Kitabi Bakwese		72
Total Membership	9,720	18,086 ³

For the evaluation of the communities it is important to observe that only 28.7 percent of the actual membership are men, 37.0 percent are women and 34.3 percent are young people. The economic base of the communities is indicated by the fact that only fifteen percent of the church fellowship have a cash income. Most of the communities live from the fruits of the land, produced by the fields which the women work, preparing the soil, doing the seeding, weeding and harvesting.

The fifteen percent of the community who earn income in addition to the fruit from the land are divided occupationally into the following categories: teachers and educational administration, 5 percent; carpenters, 1.3 percent; nurses, 1.5 percent; chauffeurs, 5 percent; clerks, 1.5 percent; various other occupations, 5 percent.³

The educational level of the pastors and church leaders must also be noted. Sixty percent have had some primary school education; a few have finished the primary school. Twenty-five percent have received some Bible school training in addition to their primary education. Sixteen percent have completed the primary school plus part or all of secondary school and have some theological training. The average age of ordained Mennonite Brethren pastors is 53 years.⁴ A rather limited number of younger men in leadership positions of the local church has important implications for the future of the church.

THE AIM OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN ZAIRE

The stated aim of the church community is evangelism and the building of the church. The program which is to accomplish this aim reflects three levels of activities: 1) supporting agencies in the form of education, medical services, transportation, and economic developments; 2) auxiliary programs to the central aim are: religious education in the schools, leadership training, Bible correspondence school, and a communication center for the distribution of Christian literature; 3) the building of the church through worship, teaching and preaching to edify the believers and invite men and women to accept redemption in Christ.

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

The program of education which missions started in Zaire has been a major channel for the communication of the Christian message. Christian teachers and a Bible-oriented curriculum became cornerstones for the building of a church in an animistic culture.

The unrest following independence in 1960 had adverse effects upon the education program through temporary closing of all schools. In view of the rising nationalism, the directorship of the schools was transferred to national personnel.

A second serious interruption in the program came in 1964 during the Mulelist rebellion. The stations of Kafumba, Matende, Lusemvu and Gungu were in the Kwilu area dominated by the rebels for a period of 18 months, and all educational institutions were closed.

However, the educational program grew rapidly in the 1960's in spite of the interruptions. This is reflected on the following table.

REGIONS, DISTRICTS AND CENTRAL CHURCHES WITHIN DISTRICTS OF THE C.E.F.E.Z (1973) Pastors 25—Districts 16—Lay Leaders 60—Churches 60

District Central Church	Members	Churches within District
NORTHERN REGION		
I. KAFUMBA	2,588	1. —Kikongo 2. —Malela 3. —Kitabi 4. —Mbutu 5. —Kikandji 6. —Ngngo 7. —Kibo 8. —Bunga
II. LUSEMVU	687	9. —Matiti 10. —Kauzi 11. —Kisongo 12. —Kanapumba

III. SHIMUNA	202	13. — Totshi
IV. GUNGU	413	14. — Mukulu
V. KIKWIT	684	15. — Kapalanga
		16. — Bangi
		17. — Kanzombi
		18. — Kazamba
		19. — Lunia
VI. KWENGE	1,424	20. — Kiyongo Fioti
		21. — Kavanda
		22. — Katenda
		23. — Kilemba
VII. MATENDE	403	24. — Masamanga
		25. — Indele
VIII. KIPUNGU	309	26. — Kipungu
		27. — Muzungu
		28. — Mbanza Muzinga
		Kibunda
IX. PAI-KONGILA	1384	29. — Kikiadi
		30. — Mangulu
		31. — Kitombe

SOUTHERN REGION

X. KAJIJI	784	1. — Shakalongo
		2. — Mutanda
		3. — Mukelenga
XI. SHAUYANGA	408	4. — Mutetami
		5. — Shakafutshi
		6. — Shamatau
XII. KINGWANGALA	472	7. — Maturi
		8. — Kikalaba
		9. — Shamukinzi
		10. — Kazanga
		11. — Mbanza Kipungu
XIII. PANZI	444	12. — Poste Panzi
		13. — Kasandji
		14. — Luwombo
		15. — Kipungu
XIV. MBANDU	441	16. — Kisadi
		17. — Swayamvu
		18. — Tshamba
	176	19. — Kibenga
		20. — Kaungula
XV. TAMBWU NSEKE	580	21. — Kimwanga
		22. — Kidima
		23. — Manzengele

KINSHASA REGION

(No separate

District Central Church) 432

24. — Bumbu

25. — Ngaba

26. — Camp Leopard

27. — Kinsuka

28. — Kingasani

29. — Binza Yemo

TABLE 2
TABLE OF COMPARISON IN HIGH SCHOOL
EDUCATION — 1962-1970

Class	1962-1963		1969-1970	
	Number of classes	Number of pupils	Number of classes	Number of pupils
1st year	50	1592	75	2538
2nd year	39	1171	59	1997
3rd year	20	643	35	1277
4th year	14	461	26	990
5th year	12	489	20	855
6th year	5	247	15	656
Total	140	4603	230	8313

In November, 1974, all schools were placed under full administrative control of the Department of Education of the central government of Zaire. Today the church has no authority in the selection, appointment, or dismissal of teachers.*

The educational program in the schools is to aid the drive toward stronger national authenticity. Each local school is

*The government's policy regarding schools was changed in 1977. The government of Zaire requested that missions again assume administrative responsibility for the educational program. When this was being written the new policies and new agreements with mission agencies were being formulated.

closely related to the national youth program of Zaire, called the *Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution*, abbreviated JNPR. The long range implications for the church of this strong identification of the schools with the drive for national identity in character and function cannot be fully established. The daily hour for religious instruction in the school program is being retained for the present, but the attendance is not obligatory.

Several statements from leading educators in the secondary schools established and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire until 1974 may shed some light on the possible relationship of school and church for the future:

There is a continued relationship between the schools and the church, because of the past when the school was dominated by the church, and this influence has not fully disappeared.

Through independence in 1960 and the developments that followed we must recognize that the entire religious disposition towards Christianity in Zaire has seriously suffered. The religion which was imposed upon us was a white man's religion and the schools were also dominated by the influence of a western culture.

The school at this time is not obligated towards the church, neither are the students obligated to attend the church. Formerly all chapel attendance in the schools was obligatory, now the choice is left with the student. Such liberation no doubt has a major effect upon the relationship of education and the church.

Once the attendance of children in the schools was determined by their willingness to subject themselves to the rules and regulations of the Catholic and Protestant schools. If they did not obey those rules they were disciplined and the opportunity for education was withdrawn from them. Today education has become the privilege of every citizen of Zaire and can in no way be influenced by religious particularism, be it Roman Catholic or Protestant.⁵

The medical program, with the two centers in Kajiji in the south, Kikwit and Pai Kongila in the north, have served as major avenues for spreading the gospel. Doctors and Christian staff provide a witness that even in a time of change in Zaire cannot be over-estimated, for these centers are an expression of

caring love and compassion.

The political upheavals of independence in 1960 and 1961 interrupted the training, but the school at Kajiji was re-opened in 1962.

Independence brought with it many changes that required flexibility on the part of the medical staff. Constant communication with the Department of Health in Kinshasa was maintained. Yet the rebellion of 1964 in the inner part of Africa again affected the medical activities so that the staff was evacuated. The program was re-opened in the spring of 1965. New standards for medical training were adopted in 1966 and 1967 by the Department of Health of the Zairian government. These resulted in a great improvement in the total curriculum of nurses' training. The school has left a great impact upon the spiritual life of the church, as well as having provided medical personnel.

The aid for economic development is provided on three levels: 1) the Protestant agricultural program, with an emphasis on developing the stock of domestic animals to improve the economy of the country; 2) the Mennonite Economic Development Association assists qualified families within the church through projects in the area of agriculture, animal husbandry and the establishing of small businesses; 3) a community development program in Zaire with emphasis on training rural people how to improve the "how" of agricultural operation towards greater efficiency in food production and animal husbandry.

There is clearly a direct relationship between economic development and the building of the church. Economic stability, for example, provides resources for the church to maintain institutions, improve qualifications of workers, and strengthen the operational base of the church program. Yet a veteran leader and spiritual father within the church openly questions the validity of the broad economic development programs. He comments, "In principle these programs are good, but I question whether the increase in things will make a better church. It is not how much the people have that makes the difference. The church is first of all dependent on its relationship to Jesus Christ." ⁶

AUXILIARY PROGRAMS

Religious Education in the Schools

The opportunity for a mission-related program of religious instruction through the schools in the centers (formerly the mission stations) and in the villages is at this time affected by the transfer of the schools to the national government. Recruitment for the church, in the past an integral part of the program of education, must be done in new ways and appeal to new motivations. To reach the children and youth with the gospel requires different tactics. The successful development of new approaches to the evangelistic ministry of the church will determine its future.

The Bible Correspondence School

The development, writing and production of Bible correspondence courses began in 1959 through the effort of the Irvin Friesens. The program grew rapidly in the 1960's and the 1970's, becoming a major factor in the instruction by radio as well. With an enrollment of 6704 and a program of seventeen courses, the Bible Correspondence School at the moment provides a most dynamic opportunity for the church to sow the seed of the gospel. Twenty-six percent of the students are between eighteen and twenty-four years old; forty percent between twenty-five and thirty-four; twenty-seven percent between thirty-five and forty-four; and seven percent between forty-five and eighty years.

Forty-two percent of the students have completed primary education; forty-five have a secondary education; and two percent are university students. Out of 400 students who have completed five to eight courses, eighty are students at secondary or university level; seventy-four are office workers; seventy-four are tradesmen, cooks, mechanics, tailors, etc.; thirty-nine pastors and evangelists; twenty-nine teachers; fifteen businessmen; thirteen nurses; and nine not specified. This outreach may not have much potential for church growth of the Mennonite Brethren churches, yet its evangelistic potential is great. A major factor in the development of this ministry was the untiring work of Margaret Dyck, together with other missionaries and national workers.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Reference has been made to the pioneer efforts to translate the Scriptures into the Kituba language. The New Testament was completed in 1945. Mrs. Martha Janzen, Miss Kathryn Willems, Mr. and Mrs. Angus Brower, and Djimbo Kubala must be credited for providing the first translation into the Kituba vernacular. Recognized as very faithful to the original text, the translation enjoyed a broad circulation throughout the southern part of Zaire.⁷

Through the efforts of Harold Fehderau, anthropologist and linguist, the analysis of Kituba grammar and vocabulary was greatly advanced between 1959 and 1961. Once this was ready, the Bible societies recommended a new translation of the Bible into the language common to the majority of the Kituba-speaking population. Dr. Fehderau now initiated the revision of the Kituba translation of the Scriptures with assistance from members of the Baptist churches in Zaire, particularly Donald Deer. A pilot edition of the Gospel of Mark appeared in 1963. To speed the work Hartmut Schroeder from Winnipeg joined the translation teams in 1965. Nationals who made major contributions during the revision of the translation include Joseph Mbulungombe, Edmund Makwala, Damien Maleme, Jonas Mwanga, and Corneille Nkumu. The New Testament was finally completed in 1971.

The new Kituba translation had the benefit of the latest biblical manuscripts, anthropological knowledge, and linguistic advances. The missionary translator served only as a technician who with his knowledge of biblical languages and linguistic problems guided the national men in the preparation of the new Kituba translation. Commentaries, various recent translations, and technical helps from the Bible societies provided major resources for the more accurate translation of the Scripture into the Kituba language. Such concentrated efforts hopefully will result in a complete Bible in Kituba in a few years.⁸

Christian Literature

In 1965 a strategic site was purchased and developed for a bookstore and literature center in Kikwit. The next year a

large building was purchased in the capital city of Kinshasa to serve as a bookstore and a reading room for the many residents of Kinshasa. The destruction of the printing facilities in Kafumba at the time of the Kwilu rebellion added to the significance of the Kinshasa location. The combined efforts at these two locations have greatly added to the distribution of Christian literature. The following table reflects the sale of Bibles, New Testaments, Scripture portions, books and tracts. It is most impressive. Such a ministry promises many spiritual dividends, although the level of effectiveness cannot yet be established.

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION REPORT⁹
CENTRE D'INFORMATION CHRETIENNE, KINSHASA 2
January 1, 1972 — November 15, 1974

	1972	1973	1974	Total
Bibles, New Testaments	1,548	1,772	1,892	5,212
Gospels, Scripture portions	2,020	2,710	5,583	10,313
Christian books, booklets	5,370	5,475	6,790	17,635
Mottos, Bible fiches, calendars	2,285	1,078	1,755	5,118
Christian magazines	446	189	79	714
Picture rolls, Bible picture sets	214	120	501	835
Records and Tapes	109	117	217	443
Tracts	63,100	75,035	85,352	223,587

Leadership Training

The Bible school established at Kafumba early in the history of the mission has unquestionably offered the most effective channel for leadership training. The growth of a national consciousness and the increase in general and professional education now appears to make the Bible school of the past unable to meet the educational needs of today's young person. Pastor Tshimika Mutondo of Kajiji describes the interest in Bible school training as follows:

The rapid development of education in Zaire and the professional prestige that it offers has diverted the interest of the young people from the needs of the church to personal advancement. Who from the people at present would send

their children to a Bible school when it does not have an academically recognized program? Our people look to the schools that assure them economic advantage and social status. This the Bible schools do not offer.¹⁰

As a result, Bible school was closed for a number of years but was reopened in Kikwit in 1976 with a new program to serve in the preparation of church workers.

The opening of an advanced school of theology as a cooperative venture of the American Mennonite Brethren Mission and the Congo Inland Mission at Belle Vue provided a temporary solution for the lack of leadership training facilities during 1963 to 1968. In February 1968 the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire accepted the opportunity to join the inter-mission and inter-church venture in establishing the Evangelical Theological School of Kinshasa (ETEK).¹¹

In recent years six men were graduated from ETEK, four completed the Evangelical School of Theology in France, one was graduated from the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, Canada, and one from Pacific College in Fresno, U.S.A. The twelve men with advanced theological training could provide a nucleus for strong leadership in the church. Their present ministry, however, indicates that most of the men with this preparation will be unable to give their full time to the church. All of them, with one exception, are engaged in programs of education and administration.¹²

It is not a lack of concern for the church nor an unwillingness to give priority to the spiritual needs of the flock that leads these brethren to accept assignments other than church ministries. The churches at this time do not provide them with economic resources to devote themselves wholly to the churches. All of them give part of their time to the needs of the church, taking no wages. The practice is not new and finds strong historical examples in the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

At this time there is a strong trend to introduce a change in the curriculum at Kinshasa to correspond academically to that offered at universities. Such a change will result in entrance requirements equal to that of the universities. Many students now in training would not qualify for the program,

thus decreasing the number of men in training substantially. With the dearth of leadership in Zaire, this will retard the growth of the church.

The need for medical personnel and facilities continues to be critical, especially in the vast rural expanses where they do not have an efficient road system. Numerous hospitals formerly operated by Protestant mission personnel are now closed.¹³

CHURCH BUILDING AND EVANGELISM

The community of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire has accepted evangelism and church planting as a primary assignment. The eighteen districts of the church communities are divided into three regions to plan the program of evangelism and church planting—the northern, southern, and the Kinshasa regions. The office of the CEFMZ in Kikwit serves as the base for planning and directing the program.

Each region has one brother to direct the work in the churches of the area. Lumeya Nzashi serves as the coordinator of the program and carries responsibility for the northern region. Lusanga (Petelo) is the director of evangelism in the southern region. Mubaybul Lampim carries the responsibility for the region of Kinshasa. One missionary, Abe Esau, currently assists in the program.

Assistance to local churches in evangelism and church ministries has taken the form of a mobile Bible school. The evangelists, assisted by the missionary or a second national brother, visit the major centers in their region and conduct a school of instruction for the pastors and leaders of the church.

The preparation of the pastors and church workers has proven effective as is evident in the growth of the church, with 2,112 baptized believers added to the church in 1972-73.

The limited financial support for local pastors and church workers is a difficulty. A pastor from a larger congregation in the southern region reports that his weekly income from the church is \$4.80. In the villages this amount may be even smaller. As a result most of the workers in the church give their major time to earning their livelihood in agricultural enterprises and to raising the food for their families.¹⁴ The

dedication of the pastors to the Lord and His church in general is exemplary.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

Zaire is no exception to the world-wide trend towards urbanization. The larger part of the church is in rural areas—in the villages scattered through the regions of the Bandundu province. The rapid growth of Kikwit and Kinshasa presents the church with a new challenge in evangelism: reaching the urban population.

The social structure in rural areas is closely-knit and homogeneous. In the cities much of the village cultural characteristics are disturbed. Tribalism cannot continue to survive in its native mold, undergoing social modifications. Hence the changes in cultural patterns disrupt many of the identity patterns, resulting in a social and spiritual vacuum.

The Mennonite Brethren Church communities number three in Kikwit, seven in Kinshasa. In Kikwit the churches function more as independent cells, with only occasional inter-fellowship meetings. In Kinshasa all churches share the ministry of one salaried pastor, Mubaybul Lampim. All churches of the area contribute to a central treasury for the support of the one pastor. The combined membership of the seven fellowship groups in 1975 was 617. The pastor divides his schedule to give equal time, one day per week, to each of the seven groups and rotates on Sunday to give each group equal attention.

Two of the fellowship groups in the city are intertribal in character and their cultural differences are gradually being overcome. The other five groups, however, are strongly tribal in their orientation. The Bajakas and the Bachoks from the Panzi area and the Badings and Koliapis from the Tshene district nurture a tribal culture, resisting the removal of tribal distinctions.

Evangelism starts with the nurture of fellowship among believers during regular weekly meetings. This is supplemented by a special series of services once a year. Most of the decisions for Christ are made in such special evangelistic

services. The major response to the gospel comes from young people related to Christian homes, while the response from the general metropolitan population is limited. Men who earn their livelihood in a variety of ways give much time to building the church as lay leaders and ministers. Pastor Mbayamvula, for example, earns his living as a bank employee. At the same time he is an aggressive spiritual leader, highly respected by his flock. Other men who are lay leaders in the churches in Kinshasa include Batahuna, who started a church under a tree in his yard, Antoine Malungu, Kuma-Kuma, and Mwamba Kavuya. Bible courses and instruction in sermon preparation offered in the Christian Center operated by the EFMZ are of special help in equipping lay leaders for service in their congregations.

The rapidly expanding population of Kinshasa, which has grown from 350,000 in 1960 to over one million in 1976, offers unlimited opportunities for evangelism and church planting.

The membership of the church comes mainly from the wage-earning, laboring class. A few hold specialized positions as masons, carpenters, or clerks in stores. Membership in the professions will probably increase gradually during the next two or three generations.

The social and economic status of church members in Kikwit is similar to that of Kinshasa. An exception are the larger number of young adults who have found their way into the ranks of tradesmen and the professions, improving their social and economic status.¹⁵

The rural churches in Zaire will continue to be the major strength of the church for some years. Strong leadership, however, will emerge from the metropolitan congregations.

The Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire today is a living body demonstrating commitment to Christ and His church in the midst of many cultural and political tensions. The words of I John 4:4 are true in Zaire as well: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

THE CHURCH FACING THE FUTURE

The promise of Jesus that He will build His church and "the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18)

applies to the church of Zaire. The assurance of the continuing growth of the church and its progress rests in Him who is the cornerstone of the building, Jesus Christ. This assurance is vividly reflected in a statement by Djimbo Kubala, a spiritual father in the church of Zaire, who says: "Our difficulties are many, but the church will live because of Christ, who has said 'I live and ye shall live also.'"¹⁶

Worth considering are the words of Dr. Raymond Davis, director of the Sudan Interior Mission: "Neither missions nor the church in Africa accurately anticipated and consequently planned for the magnitude of today's demand. We face an unexpected crisis in many areas of Africa today as the result of unprecedented changes and church expansion."¹⁷ The future of the church therefore must be viewed with a willingness to understand the tensions it faces. For a review of the possible areas of tension facing the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire we limit ourselves to those particularly related to this fellowship.

1. *Priority of Commitment.* Evangelism has been announced as the primary aim of the church, to make Christ known as the Son of God and the only Saviour of the world. As a church in a developing nation which struggles for national identity, authenticity, education and economic progress, sustaining the priority of evangelism and church planting will be very difficult. From the standpoint of the 1974-75 budget of \$62,250 available, only \$6,840 was applied to evangelism. In contrast to that, \$13,200 is designated for administration, \$21,100 for religious education, including scholarships for advanced theological training in leadership training, \$4,780 for education, and \$8,000 for the medical program. The proportion of personnel assigned to these areas corresponds closely to the budgetary provision.

The above budget does not include an appropriation of \$30,000 from other sources for personnel involved in economic development projects. Does this budget really give top priority to the stated central objective of the church in Zaire? How important are the supporting programs in education, medical services, administration, and economic developments? How do

they relate to the life of the church, the commitment to evangelism and church ministries?

2. *Population Mobility and the Future of the Church in Zaire.* The strength of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire still rests in the rural village churches. The changes in lifestyle and occupation aid the strong movement of people toward the large population centers, the cities. Many young people who gain advanced education do not return to their native village, finding employment in metropolitan areas. Thus the village church membership consists of a majority of women with limited strength in male participation. The church will not remain unaffected by these trends. The rapid changes in cultural patterns and the stronger economic base of the wage-earning work force will require major adjustments in the church program. Leadership and economic resources will need to come increasingly from the younger generation. Their task is to provide a model of church life for the new Zaire.

3. *The Relationship of Education and the Church.* The mission-church is the mother of education in Zaire. Placing all schools under the supervision and support of the government removes a major area of primary influence from the church. Professional people speak out freely on the need for an intimate relationship between teachers and administrators of primary and secondary schools. The following statements by leaders in the field of education speak for themselves:

There is a continued relationship between the school and the church since past domination of the school by the church has left a continuing level of influence. Through independence in 1960 and the developments that followed, the entire religious disposition towards Christianity in Zaire has seriously suffered. Both religion and the schools were previously dominated by influences from a white western culture.

The school at this time is not obligated towards the church, neither are the students obligated to attend the church. Formerly all chapel attendance in the schools was compulsory, now it is the choice of the individual student. Such liberation has a major effect upon the relationship of education and the church.

It is clear that religious influence in Zaire will continue to decrease. If religion intends to have a part in the future of Zaire, new approaches must be found and a new level of motivation created, otherwise the time for Christian religion in Zaire is rapidly coming to an end.¹⁸

The existing sentiment in Zaire regarding relationships between church, school, and young people is further revealed in a statement submitted by a teacher of a secondary school in the Bandundu province. He says:

The Popular Movement of the Revolution in Zaire (N.P.R.) at this time takes the place of the religious movements of the past. It offers to the people the needed stimulus both in opportunities and pleasures. The N.P.R. now rapidly takes the place of the church and the need for the church in Zaire is diminishing. Its prestige is lessening and its influence upon the people of this country is becoming minimal. Before the church, as the mother of education, was drawing the children; now the child will need to draw the mother. Before the school looked to the church for help and guidance; now this is being reversed. The church now will need to look for help to the school.¹⁹

The history of the church of Jesus Christ is a record of attack and persecution. The greatest danger for the redeemed community is not persecution from without, but the attack from within. The above sentiments, recorded by young leaders in schools, reveal a serious tension within the church as well as pressure from without. The church of the future must face these tensions realistically and find the power and wisdom to constructively deal with them.

4. *Evangelistic Outreach.* The social, educational and economic dawn which has come to Zaire through independence after many years of colonialism has also created an openness to withdraw from traditional systems of faith and consider the gospel of Jesus Christ. This openness represents a challenge to evangelism.

The principle of supernaturalism, however, does not remove the basic cultural laws in the proclamation of the gospel message. The gospel becomes a living message to a people only to the extent that it speaks to the life needs of the

people in their specific situation. Harold Fehderau is right on target when he says:

The world view of the African, in which evil forces and witchcraft play such a large part, is a tremendous barrier to the penetration of the gospel; it needs to be dealt with directly, not shunted aside or ignored. Other sociological problems such as persecution, the difficult life of widows and divorced women, polygamy, sex among young people, excessive demands for dowry payment, marital strife, having children, have a numbing effect on the people and their receptivity to the gospel. The gospel just does not seem to have anything to say to them the way it is usually presented; or if it does say something it does not go far enough in offering a solution to the problems in which people find themselves.²⁰

The message of the gospel in the western frame of reference has not provided a solution to the above cultural issues. The Zaire church must emerge from the western frame of reference and apply the gospel in the context of its own culture.

Another factor when considering effective evangelism for the future is the importance of the patterns of solidarity and group responsibility in African culture. Harold Fehderau comments:

Without taking away the importance of individual commitment to Christ, evangelization must aim at the family unit or village group rather than simply at a single individual. An individual is reluctant to come out with a commitment in the face of the pressure of the group to which he belongs. Some are willing to do this, but often such a stand could be helped immeasurably by making group contacts and appeals. Where the entire group has been ministered to in preaching and teaching, solid results have been seen. The individual approach is perhaps more workable in a city situation, but on a village level the solidarity factor should be taken into account.²¹

The evangelistic effort of the future thus must remove the over-emphasis on individual responsibility and recognize the need for a re-interpretation of the gospel so it finds application in group, family and village responses. The record of New Testament passages such as Acts 11:14 and Acts 16:31 confirm the biblical endorsement of the principle.

5. *Theological Foundations.* The test facing the young church in Zaire demands a careful look at its biblical and theological foundations. Dr. John Mbiti of Makerere University, Uganda, is aware of this when he writes, "Mission Christianity was not from the start prepared to face a serious encounter with either traditional religion and philosophy or the modern changes taking place in Africa. The church here now finds itself in the situation of trying to exist without a theology."²² The words of Dr. Mbiti describing Africa's need at large also apply to Zaire.

A similar concern is voiced by the late Dr. Byang Kato, secretary of the Africa Evangelical Association:

In a frantic mood, African theologians from both left and right have embarked upon the task of formulating a theology for Africa. Major features of this theology, however, include the use of sources other than the Scriptures as in equal standing with the revealed Word of God, and a strong emphasis on things African for their own sake. Dr. J. K. Agbeti of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, also an ecumenist, states: "Materials about African religion are being collected and collated regionally. From these regional sources could grow later a religion which could be truly called African Religion. It will be from this source that an African theology may be developed."

This great enthusiasm about African religions is one sad danger evident in some of the formulations by these theologians. Many of them fail to see the unique nature of biblical revelation. They hold the view of a unique Christ in an errant Bible. But the uniqueness of Christianity must cover more than the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. How can I know for sure about Jesus Christ in an errant Bible? Inerrant, authoritative Scriptures alone can give us reliable facts about Jesus Christ and man's relationship to Him.

That Africans have a unique contribution to make to theological debates is undeniable, but theology as such must be left alone in its essence. The Bible must remain the basic source of Christian theology. Evangelical Christians know of only one theology — biblical theology — though it may be expressed in the context of each cultural milieu.

Most African universities have a department of religions. Their basic philosophy appears to be a search for peaceful coexistence between religions in Africa. The prevailing attitude in these universities is that Christianity

is only one of the many ways of salvation, though it may be viewed as the fulfillment of all other religions.

The evangelical church in Africa, as a whole, is at an historic turning point. Her future will be decided by what happens in the next few years. If she is to meet the challenge, theological training must be strengthened. This must be done at every level, but particularly at the highest leadership level. While it is true that Africa needs missionary help of many kinds, it is in the area of church leadership that evangelicals are most lacking. This is an expensive proposition, but it must be done. Every possible means of teaching the church must be expanded and deepened and strengthened.²³

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire will also be strongly affected by the need to integrate a biblical theology into the lifestyle of a nation searching for its historical identity in authentic cultural, political, and religious values.

The leaders in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire who received advanced theological training are engaged in other professional pursuits to earn their livelihood. They are unable to give their full attention to leading the church in establishing a basic biblical theological understanding of the Scriptures in the context of their cultural and national environment. The major test for the church in Zaire may well focus on the question of theological foundations.

Kilabu Bululu, one of the leaders of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire, speaks about the hope and dangers of the church as follows:

The church in Zaire was seriously tested during the years of the rebellion 1963-1964. Recognizing the weakness of the church before it came to the test, nobody would have believed that it could survive. That which man thought would destroy the church became a blessing towards the establishing of the church. For many this became the occasion of their dedication to God. After the rebellion they joined together to build that which was destroyed. God's Word will survive, the church is in His hand.

Some pastors have regretted that they have baptized people who were not truly born again. They have proven unfaithful. Those who truly were His children have remained faithful.

That God continues to call out servants into the work of the church at a time when we face many difficulties and hardships is a further assurance that God is building His church.

The circumstances that we have people in our churches who earn good salaries but are not willing to be stewards of God and share their finances to further the work of the church is one of our serious weaknesses and dangers. The background of our tribal system of the clan and the extended family placed an economic responsibility upon each member of the clan. The practice of sharing financial resources is part of the African culture. The refusal to assume the same responsibility as members of the redeemed community opens the question whether they have truly been born again.

Tribalism is another danger for the African church. A man owes his life to the clan. The clan to which he belongs has its traditions which he must obey to the letter. The tension between the demands of the clan and the tribe in contrast to the demands of the Scriptures became a serious danger for the life of the church. It tends to force the people into a life of dual standards resulting in a synthetic ethic which destroys the supreme commitment to Jesus as Savior and Lord.

All that I have said and more confronts us today as dangers for the life of the church in Zaire. But we do not lose heart. God Himself is the master of every situation. He has ways and means to preserve and build His church. We cannot afford to preoccupy ourselves with dangers and difficulties. God has undertaken to build His church. Our task is to be sensitive to His Word and His will and to obey Him.²⁴

The national, cultural and economic transitions in Zaire present complex tensions unique to our modern era. The rapidity of change imposes upon the church in Zaire a reorientation that will test the faith and character of the fellowship of believers. The Apostle Paul speaks of the benefits of such testing when he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:8-10).

Distress and struggle are the pathway to full realization of

the glory of God in His redeemed community. The difficulties in the life of a living church became stepping stones in the process of purification, development, and maturation. The slogan of Adoniram Judson, "The prospects are bright as the promises of God,"²⁵ finds application in the life of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. The dynamics of the Zairian people expressed in their earnest search for the authenticity of a strong national people contains the inherent potential for a strong witnessing church. Their courage and trust must find expression in the words of William Carey, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."²⁶

The superscription over the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire for the present and the future may well be stated in the word of Scripture recorded in Hebrews 10:35-39: "Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God, and receive what is promised. For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 12

1. In the past the primary task of the Mennonite Brethren mission program has been to start Mennonite Brethren churches abroad. In view of the rising nationalism, of movements to unify churches in many of these countries, and of the rapid growth of indigenous Christian movements, what should the priorities of our mission program be? To what

extent should we cooperate with indigenous Christian movements by sending them Bible teachers when these are requested (it is clear most of these will not become Mennonite Brethren)?

2. Church leadership is a critical question in poor countries where it is difficult for Christians to support a paid ministry. What alternatives are there to a paid ministry, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these alternative approaches to leadership? To what extent should North American churches support a paid leadership in such churches?

3. Africa is rapidly urbanizing, but in the past most of our work has been in the villages. What are the channels of communication in a modern city, and what mission strategies might one use in order to make effective use of these channels?

APPENDIX A

A STUDY GUIDE

Paul G. Hiebert

We live in the illusion that somehow our times are absolutely unique—that at no other time have people faced the same problems or uncertainties. This is particularly true of those of us who live in a modern society with its rapid changes. But, as Dr. J. B. Toews points out, our forefathers struggled with many of the problems we now face in missions, while those which are new often have their roots in the past.

Here we will look at only a few of the more critical issues raised by Dr. Toews that have affected the growth of the church in Zaire. We do so in order that we may understand it better in its contemporary setting. We also hope to gain some insight into the processes that affect the planting of churches so that we may learn from the past how and how not to carry out the mission that God has given us today.

1. The Cross-cultural Translation of the Gospel.

God's message of salvation must be expressed in human languages if people are to understand it. Therefore, the early missionaries had to learn to speak and write the languages of the people with whom they worked.

But words in one language do not correspond exactly to those in another. Some languages have words that other languages do not. And even when both have words that refer to the same thing, the connotations they carry may be different.

In translating, we must make a distinction between *form* and *meaning*. The form of a word is what it refers to. For example, "cross" refers to a particular shape of an object. A word's meaning is how the people think and feel about it. To some people, the cross is a symbol of salvation and hope. To others it is a shape to be despised.

The fact that languages differ in form and meaning raises a serious question in translating the gospel in speech and print. Should the translation stay true to the form of the original, or to its meaning? For instance, how should one translate the word "snow" (as in Ps. 51:7 "whiter than snow") in a Zairian language that has no word for snow? Would it be best to coin a new word, or use the English word "snow" and then try to explain what this means to those who have never seen snow (and find it hard to believe such stuff exists)? Or should the translator stay true to the meaning of the original by using a word in that language that symbolizes pure white, such as "lily"? Is it "snow" that is critical to what the psalmist is saying here, or is it "whiteness"? We cannot stress both, for if we stress "snow" the people will lose the sense of "whiteness", but if we use an object they know to represent "whiteness" we lose the sense of "snow."

To the extent we try to retain the form of a message in translation we are in danger of losing its meaning. The people will not understand the message, and will read into the forms their old traditional meanings. The result is syncretism. On the other hand, if we stress only meaning, what happens to our view of scriptures, particularly to a literalist view of divine revelation?

Like language, most human behavior and products carry meaning. A handshake, a cross, a wedding and the Lord's Supper each take on particular messages within our culture. But when we translate Christianity into another culture, which cultural forms will best express it? For example, is it important that all Christians wear clothes? Or sit on pews in church? Or have only one wife?

Polygamy has been a very critical issue in African mission history. One of the greatest hindrances to the rapid spread of Christianity in central Africa was the fact that most missionaries required that converts with more than one wife get rid of their second and third wives before they were allowed to join the church. Is having one wife essential to salvation, or is it a matter of Christian growth? The Bible requires it of church leaders, but is it binding upon all Christians?

Before we jump to an answer, we need to understand the

role of polygamy in African tribal societies. There, as in the Old Testament, it was used as a way of dealing with social crises created by the premature death of a man (a common occurrence in those societies). The death of a husband creates a widow and orphans who need to be cared for. Who is to provide for them economically? Who is to be a father to the children, and a partner to the wife? Who will bear more children so that the family name and heritage do not die out? If we look closely at our own society, we will see that we do a poor job of meeting these needs. We are concerned primarily with their economic needs and deal with this through social security and insurance. We, even in the church, do little to meet their social, sexual or religious needs. There is no real place for widows in our society, and they are terribly alone.

In Africa and in Israel, the people solved these problems by making the brother or cousin of the deceased responsible for the widow and orphans. Just as we replace a dead president by a new president, they replaced a dead husband by a new husband. But the new husband often already had a wife.

The point here is not to justify polygamy, but to understand its importance in a society, and to raise the question what happens when we change such a custom among converts. If we require men to give up all wives but one, what should he do with the others? How are they to live? Most of those who were set aside ended up as prostitutes or slaves; they had no other place in their society to go. And what happens to children abandoned by their father for the sake of Christ? How will they respond to the gospel?

On the other hand, should we permit men to join the church with their many wives, but practice monogamy for young converts? In that case polygamy will continue for several generations, but then die out.

There is another facet to this question. If we eliminate polygamy, how will the church deal with the needs of the widows and orphans formerly met by this practice? We cannot simply subtract a custom without creating serious cultural problems. We must find some new way to meet these needs.

Today we face an even more critical question of translation. The gospel must be translated into new languages

and new customs. But what about theology? Today many African church leaders are calling for an African theology—a theology based on the Scriptures as these are understood in the African setting. Mbiti points out that traditionally Africans have had a belief in a high and distant God, one who did not communicate with the people. Mbiti raises the question whether we should preach that it is this God who has now revealed Himself in Christ (the way Paul does on the Acropolis). Or must we reject this faith in a high god and replace it with a faith in a different high God? The question is also raised whether the African beliefs in demons and good spirits is not closer to the biblical perspective than our modern, western culture, which has done away with spirits and angels for all practical purposes. Can we trust that the Holy Spirit is as much at work revealing the Scriptures to our African brethren as we assume He is at work within us? This is becoming one of the critical questions in the international church.

2. Mission-Church Relationships

Dr. Toews points out that the Mennonite Brethren mission work began in Zaire during the colonial era. This era had several important characteristics. There was a sharp segregation between the Africans and the foreign whites. The latter came to rule or to serve, but not to immigrate. They expected to return to their “homeland” when they retired, and to marry their children to other whites. The Africans were seen as another kind of people. This segregation was true not only in the church but also in government and business. In some churches it went so far that there were separate Lord’s Supper services for the blacks and the whites.

Missionaries also came with a particular model of how mission work should be done. They were part of the “mission” and the mission was different from the “church.” It was the task of the mission to start the church, but the missionaries did not then become members of the African church. They retained their membership in their North American church.

This structural division between the mission and the church created several problems. First, how should the

missionary relate to the Africans—what was his role? Generally speaking, the missionary was seen as a spiritual father. But this placed the missionary above the African, and reduced fellowship and brotherhood.

Second, what about identification? How should the missionary and his national counterparts live? Should one live in a bungalow and the other, a brother, in a small hut? On the other hand, could the missionary raised in the west survive if he lived on the level of the local people? Where should the missionary children go to school—to local schools, schools for missionary children, or left with relatives to attend schools in North America? The frequent deaths of the early missionaries should warn us here against jumping to a simplistic answer.

Third, when and how should the work be indigenized? It was assumed that at some time the church would be strong enough to take over the work. But when are the people ready to do so? And when the work is transferred, what becomes of the missionaries? And how will the church finance the schools, hospitals and other institutions started by the missions and funded from abroad when the church can hardly support its own pastors? Should these be left to die? The problems of indigenization are accentuated by the fact that there were two distinct structures and the work had to be transferred from one to the other.

Today, we have inherited the structures of the past. But we have moved into a post-colonial era, and the colonial survivals are a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel. This poses serious questions we must face in an honest and Christlike way.

What about the role of the missionary? Today he is a guest in the country where he serves. In the church, he no longer can be the superior. He must find his place within the church as an equal and a brother. This means he must be willing to work under the direction of African church leaders. He must be willing to step aside when his foreignness is a hindrance. And he must respect the national and cultural aspirations of the people. His task is not to import a foreign culture. He must plant the gospel in the local soil and let it take root there. But what does all this mean in the every day life of

the missionary, and in the image of the missionary as we know it?

What must happen with identification in the new era? With modern medicines, diseases are no longer the problem they were in the past. Should the modern missionary live closer to the people? Would not his effectiveness be greater as was demonstrated in the case of the John Kliewers (p. 82)? Should missionaries have cars when the people do not? Should an African leader get the same salary as the missionary for the same task?

What about church-mission relationships? After the work is turned over to the church, is there no place for missionaries? The church is inviting them to come and help. Should the missionary join the national church as his adopted church, or is he always the outsider? What should the mission board do when the church requests that a certain missionary not be sent back to the field? What is the responsibility of the board if a church ceases to be evangelistic, and yet does not want outsiders to come and evangelize? And how do you build relationships between the church and the mission that express the autonomy and yet the brotherhood of both?

Other new questions also arise in our day. Should the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire not become a full member of our General Conference, its activities and its boards? Or what should be the relationship between the Mennonite Brethren churches in different countries? What should our response be if one of our sister churches abroad seeks closer cooperation, or even merger, with other churches in that country?

Along another line, what about financial aid? Should the wealthier North American churches continue to aid churches abroad to carry out their work? In many cases the mission has built large schools, hospitals and literature programs to provide a solid foundation for the work. At times these overshadowed the evangelistic work, and yet they did serve an important task. But are they needed now, and, if so, who should finance them? It is unrealistic to expect the African churches to shoulder so heavy a burden. Is the answer, then, to restructure these institutions in a way that the churches can

operate them?

Finally, when we start a new work today, should we not eliminate the distinction between mission and church? Is it not more biblical and strategically better for the missionaries to be a part of the churches they found rather than a separate body? Indigenization, then, would consist of their being replaced by national leaders who take their offices. There would be only one structure—the church. But this approach would radically challenge our present mission models and call for major changes in the ways in which we view missions.

There is no area more critical in modern missions than that of interchurch and church-mission relationships.

3. Church-State Relationships

The church desperately needs a theology of power. It is not of the world, but it is in the world. Today it must deal with governments ranging from democracies to dictatorships and communism, with political revolutions and unrest, and with the uses of power and leadership of all types.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Protestant missions in Zaire had an equivocal relationship with the colonial government. On the one hand, they were dependent on this government for access to the country and for protection. Moreover, in conflicts with native leaders, they could often count on the support of the white rulers. On the other hand, the colonial government was Catholic and, therefore, did not support their activities. At times it even opposed them.

But we must remember that to the Africans, the missionaries were white, had a western lifestyle, and were able to deal with high government officials—which meant they must be part of the colonial regime. This feeling was reinforced by the cultural gulf between the missionaries and the people.

One might ask, how else could the early missionaries have related to the colonial government so as not to be identified with it? Possibly the missionaries should have identified more closely with the nationalist movements. A more relevant question today is how should missionaries relate to nationalist and popular movements where colonial rule or oppressive governments still exist. Should they side with the people, and

face persecution and expulsion? Or should they side with the existing government (arguing that a stable government and peace are necessary to plant churches)? Or should they remain neutral (which is to tacitly accept the status quo and alienate themselves from the people)? How should missionaries respond to people's aspirations to be free and self governing? And how should it respond to revolutionary nationalistic movements that seek these ends?

In Zaire this is no longer the question. The question now is, how should the church and mission relate to a strong nationalist government that exercises control in matters of the church. What should they do when the state orders a merger of all Protestant churches into a single organization? Should the church join the new national church and obey orders such as the one that all Christians should take African names? Should the mission send its missionaries and aid to the new united church that may differ doctrinally from the contributing churches? The alternative is to abandon our brothers and sisters.

The question in the future may well be how does the church relate to a government that seeks to control the church organization for nationalist and ideological purposes (as is the case in Russia). At what point does the church cease to go along with the government, and beyond that what alternatives does the church have in its struggle for survival under persecution?

We need a theology of politics that guides the church not only in its relationship to oppressive governments, but also to governments like our own where the danger is the loss of the church's prophetic stance, and the rise of a civil religion.

4. The Rise of Independent Church Movements

During the colonial era, the goal of Mennonite Brethren missions was generally clear: evangelize and build strong Mennonite Brethren churches. Village evangelism, schools, hospitals and literature programs were all directed to this end. The result was the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire.

Today a new opportunity has arisen, and with it a question of mission priorities. Numerous independent religious

movements are sweeping central Africa, some Christian and others of varying syncretistic mixes of Christian and traditional beliefs. Together they constitute the most rapidly growing religious movements in the continent.

Many of these independent churches are open to, and, indeed, inviting missionaries who will come and teach them the Scriptures. But they are fiercely independent and not willing to join a denomination based in the west.

The question is, should Mennonite Brethren missionaries be sent to minister to them? The result will not be new Mennonite Brethren churches. But it may well be the most effective way of rapidly building truly biblical churches in Zaire — churches that are culturally adapted and reaching the people.

The question is one of priorities. What really is our goal in missions? Kenneth Scott Latourette, an outstanding church historian writes:

If we have been at all accurate in analyzing the conditions of the new day, it must be clear that the primary object of the missionary enterprise must be to strengthen the ongoing Christian communities in these lands of the younger churches. This does not mean that the evangelization of the world . . . should be neglected. It does mean that only as vigorous and growing Christian communities exist can this goal be attained . . . The rising spirit of nationalism . . . (demands that) all mission programs must be: 'What will most contribute to an ongoing Christian community?'¹

However, we cannot make a decision to work with the independent church movements in Zaire alone, for we have a church there. We need to know how they would respond to such a move, and how they would relate to independent churches we might assist.

5. Tribes and Cities

In the early days mission work in Zaire concentrated on reaching the unevangelized tribes. This was for two reasons: first, the missionary motto of the day was "occupation of the whole world in this generation," and second, central Africa at

that time was largely rural and tribal. The result, as Dr. Toews points out, was a constant striving to reach out beyond western settlements and mission outposts.

The product of this strategy in Zaire was the widespread birth of the church. Missions did not compete for the same space, but moved on to unoccupied territories. There was little competition between different Protestant denominations for the same converts. And churches sprang up throughout the whole of the land.

Tribal populations have been particularly responsive to the gospel. Often mass movements occur in which whole villages and large segments of a tribe convert to Christianity and seek baptism *en masse*. These movements raise questions of theology. Are all those who come truly converted? Should they be sent back and told to come individually upon personal conviction of sin and the need for salvation—or is this approach a product of the extreme individualism of western cultures? But to send them back is often to close the door for further witness to them. They lose interest in Christianity.

One thing is clear, the most rapid growth of the church has always taken place through such people movements. This is not to say that all those who come are believers, but the community is now open to instruction and further spiritual ministries. The greatest need is for follow-up so that these movements lead to continued spiritual growth and maturity.

Such group decisions need not surprise us. In many tribal societies all important decisions—including marriage, the use of the lands which are owned by the tribe and not individuals, and punishment of offenses—are group decisions. One cannot expect, then, that a decision so important as changing their religion would be made by any single individual alone.

Today a new field is rapidly opening up, namely cities. The growth of cities in Zaire in the past decades has been phenomenal. They are centers of mass education, growing literacy, intellectual ferment and revolution. They are places where people from many different tribes live together, often lonely and desperately searching for a sense of community and identity. Many of them are open to the gospel. And many of the tribal Christians are moving to the city where they are

often lost in the anonymity of urban life.

What is our priority? Should we continue to focus on tribal work—on strengthening the churches we already have, and on reaching out to neighboring tribes? Or should we concentrate on the cities—on building a church among the young and educated who will be tomorrow's leaders? But we have not yet developed adequate strategies for planting churches in the cities. There group decisions and communication with tightly knit social communities does not occur. How do we reach the lonely, the individual lost in the masses, the transient of the city?

How also do we communicate these priorities to our home churches? There is something exotic about going to the "unreached," the "uncivilized" where living is hard, even though they may number only a few thousand. This has a strong appeal to many who support the work. There is little glamour to live in a modern city apartment and with the millions of city workers and students. But work in these cities may be more important in the long run in building strong, growing churches.

6. Ministering to the Whole Person

Along with nationalism, one of the driving forces in the world today is that of development. In one hundred thirty countries with three billion people the per capita gross domestic product is less than \$300 per year. Most of the poor in these lands earn less than \$50 per person in a year, less than what many in the west spend on recreation or pets. In seven countries, including Canada and the U.S., with less than three hundred million people, the same figure is above \$7,100. The U.S. has less than one fifteenth of the world's people, but it consumes a third of the world's production of such items as gasoline, steel, aluminum and fertilizers.

Alongside the vision for development is the spectre of famine and poverty. Rapid population growth and urbanization are placing ever-increasing demands on the world's resources. And all reasonable projections predict famines and wars for resources will multiply. How should the North American churches respond to these needs?

The Mennonite Brethren theological heritage is clear: a stress on a simple lifestyle, a zeal for evangelism and a concern for human needs. We have provided relief and aid around the world. There are questions on the details of its implementation—should rehabilitation take priority over relief? Should aid be given primarily through the local churches, etc.?—but the general commitment has a firm theological and personal base.

But how does development relate to missions? On the one hand, if development is part of the mission program, there is a danger that development will overshadow evangelism and church building. This is because development programs often take large investments of funds and personnel, and these resources are generally available from secular sources (which raises the further question, to what extent and under what conditions should missions use outside funds and personnel?). Whether we like it or not, money does speak loudly, even where people are poor.

On the other hand, to divorce development programs from mission outreach is to fall into the trap of ministering to the divided person. One ministers to the “body,” and the other to the “soul,” and neither message is complete. Is the Christian and the missionary not concerned about those, including our church brethren, who starve?

Closely related to the question of development is that of institutions. Early missionaries built schools to teach students how to read the Scriptures, and hospitals to help them live. Today the government of Zaire is taking over these institutions. How shall the church in Zaire respond to secular education systems, and how should the mission respond to the government’s invitation to send missionaries as teachers under government pay? And to what extent should the church and mission respond to the cry of the young people for aid in getting higher education that will get them jobs in the cities—knowing that the educated elite will become increasingly influential in the future, but also that many of the young people will be lost to the church (at least the rural church) if they get this education?

7. Questions of Leadership

The history of Mennonite Brethren missions in Zaire poses

a difficult question. The pioneering work done by charismatic leaders such as A. Janzen and H. Bartsch, men who had a vision and began a work on their own. The church leaders and mission board in North America did not support, and at times even resisted, the taking on of the new work. However, in time the field was accepted by the church organization.

This raises a serious question in terms of the sending churches. Should we, in fact, look to independent movements led by charismatic leaders to pioneer new work, and to prod the institution to do its job? Or should the mission board be responsible for charting a course of future action? What happens if our mission outreach is splintered into a great many independent (sometimes called "faith") movements? What happens if the churches and their official agencies lose the vision of missions?

The church in Zaire faces a different question in leadership. Early it looked to missionaries for direction. Today it is autonomous. What about the leaders at the congregational level? Should they be a paid ministry? Many of the churches are poor and can barely afford to support a pastor. Some suggest that the North American churches should continue to help pay their salaries. Should local pastors be highly educated? If they are too highly educated they no longer fit into the rural congregations, but if they have little schooling they cannot minister to the young who are rapidly becoming educated. Or should congregations turn to lay ministries to meet their local needs? The mobilization of the laity has always played an important role in Mennonite Brethren church polity.

The questions of leadership on the conference level are equally difficult to answer. In much of the developing world, the highest level church leaders must relate to the international church scene on one hand, and on the other, they must retain close ties to their local churches. But the gap between the two, culturally and economically, is staggering. They must be able to travel abroad on jets and handle complex negotiations. This often requires advanced education, and a higher standard of life. But the local churches, who can barely support their local pastors, cannot support the institutional superstructure of the conference. Consequently, these leaders are often supported

indirectly through foreign funds. This makes them vulnerable to the vagaries of international politics. At any moment these funds may be cut off, and then they have no place to turn for a livelihood. It also alienates them to some extent from their local churches.

But conference leaders are also expected to live like their rural brethren. They must cycle many weary hours in the hot sun, and live on a local salary. If they fail to keep strong ties to their churches, they are even more isolated when international turmoil strikes, for they no longer can turn for help to their brethren.

We need to realize that the leaders of our national churches, like our missionaries, are marginal persons who have no real home, and often have little job security. The question arises, what is our responsibility to these whom we have educated and drawn into leadership positions? In the long view we must ask, how can the conference leadership be structured so that its primary ties are to the local churches, but so that it can speak for these churches on the international scene?

8. Missions in Times of Turmoil

The colonial era, for all its faults, did provide a measure of peace and stability in many parts of the world. The result was missions expanded and churches grew with little question of how to handle political instability.

Today this has changed. The turmoil following the independence of Zaire awakened us to the fact that in the future we will have to be increasingly prepared to work in the midst of revolutions, wars and tensions. How should the mission and the church respond?

In Zaire, as in most similar situations, the question facing the mission was, do we leave for the sake of safety, or do we stay to show our identification with the people? If the missionaries leave, would this negate the message of love and brotherhood they preach? When revolution comes, the missionary can leave, but the nationals cannot. Should we leave them to face the difficulties alone? But if the missionaries stay, do they not only accentuate the "foreignness" of the local Christians, and therefore make them even more vulnerable to

accusations and attacks?

If some chose or are asked to stay, who should they be? Single missionaries? Men? Married couples with children? And are the sending churches willing to make the same sacrifices they ask of their representatives?

What if some missionaries are captured and held for high ransoms? We are concerned with preserving their lives, but at what cost? The North American conference could raise the money, but to do so would be to invite further kidnappings. It could refuse, but the relatives and missionary's home church might seek to ransom them, and charge the conference with indifference. We need a clear strategy to cope with such situations. More than that, we need a theology that can deal with political violence and threats of death as we carry on the work of the Kingdom.

The question facing the church is how to survive and grow in times of political unrest. How should it face persecution, the imprisonment and death of its leaders, the breakdown of its institutions, and the suppression of worship and witness? How should it respond to persecutors, and when peace is restored, to those Christians who denied their faith in times of stress? The apostolic church and the early anabaptist movement shows that churches can survive and grow in such times. After decades of relative peace in our land, have we lost the theology and coping mechanisms necessary to flourish amidst war and anarchy? This may well become an important question also for the North American churches in the not too distant future.

Churches are called to the mission of proclaiming God's message of salvation and a new life to the world. But the church and its proclamation takes place in the lives of people—of their particular histories, cultures and sociopolitical contexts. This is why the questions of missions are so complex.

We need, again, to hear God's voice as it calls us to minister to people in sin and need. We need to hear not only what we should say, but how we should say it, for this often speaks more loudly than our words. We cannot sit back unconcerned because we have the gospel and live in peace and comfort. We are an international church, and our brethren in

all parts of the world are faced with the multitudes who have never heard the gospel, with poverty and disease, and with wars, revolutions and political oppression. We cannot sit back unconcerned because never before has there been so great a need to hear the whole of God's Word to humankind, nor the means and opportunities to do so.

APPENDIX B

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH MISSIONS

1963 Edition

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. The Biblical Basis

The missionary responsibility, as conceived by the Mennonite Brethren Church, is stated in the Great Commission of our risen Lord. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. It is exemplified in the Book of Acts, which gives the record of the first witnesses going forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is expounded in the New Testament epistles, as the early apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to lay down the fundamental principles of all mission activities. Passages bearing out these principles are: Rom. 1:14-17; Rom. 10:11-17; 1 Cor. 1:24; 1 Cor. 2:1-10; 1 Cor. 3:5-15; 1 Cor. 4:1-5; 1 Cor. 9:14-19; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 3:1-12.

Accepting the biblical teaching as a basis and guide, it shall ever be the endeavor of all our missionary activities:

1. To present the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone in the area of a mission field.
2. To baptize those who accept Jesus Christ by faith.
3. To organize and establish such believers in local churches for nurture, mutual edification, fellowship, instruction and service.
4. To unite the local churches of a field into an organized conference and national convention which is the church that continues the proclamation of the gospel, directs and regulates its own church affairs and meets its own financial requirements.

B. Fundamental Concept and Purpose of Missions

1. Missions is the response to the command of our Lord to preach and teach the gospel to every creature. The objective of evangelism is the calling out of a church for the Lord Jesus Christ. The church itself is God's instrument for evangelism. The planting of local churches as agents of evangelism is thus the central objective of the missionary program.

2. The character of the true church must find its expression and test in scriptural discipleship of the believer. "So likewise whosoever

be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). The consistent relationship of a professing faith and a sanctified life constitute the basic testimony and strength of an evangelistic church.

3. The permanent aspect of the mission program rests in the national church, with its roots in Jesus Christ, its direction in the Holy Scriptures, and its organizational operation adapted to its respective culture. The missionaries and the mission program are a means to an end and must be looked upon as temporary in the building of a national church.

4. The criterion for the evaluation of every phase of the worldwide mission program is to rest in the issue: How does it contribute to the building of a national evangelistic church?

5. A mission program is subject to periodic evaluations on the basis of accepted standards established for a specific area to govern the development of the national church.

6. Instead of concentration of sizable groups of missionaries on stations or one area, the strategy is to assign missionary personnel to specific departments of responsibility relating to the whole field.

7. The value of a witness of a new convert is to receive central importance in the establishment of a national church. If the new convert is not encouraged to witness immediately after his conversion and become part of the fellowship of true believers, the most effective avenue of contacting the people for Christ is lost.

8. In close observation of each field and in consultation with the national church and missionary personnel, the home board, through its administrative staff, seeks to give direction and counsel in matters of mission strategy. The church fellowship on the field, in consultation with the missionary, determines the most effective tactics of procedure.

9. The churches at home, in obedience to the scriptural exhortation, (Acts 4:23-31; Eph. 6:18-19) accept the responsibility for continuous intercession that the gospel of Christ will be preached in boldness and with power and assume the responsibility of faithful stewardship to provide the necessary means to carry out the assignment of Christ to His church.

II. THE CHURCH

A. Main Objective

In keeping with the biblical basis as outlined under *General Principles* on page 7, it is the first objective of the missionary program of the Mennonite Brethren Conference to win souls to Christ

and to establish the church. The church itself is God's instrument for evangelism. The planting of churches in our mission fields as agents of evangelism constitutes the central objective of the mission program. Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:47; Acts 20:28.

B. The National Church

The national church is to be established in its own culture, with utmost care to avoid the influence of a foreign culture upon the development of the national church. The biblical pattern has proven sufficient for all times and places and does not prescribe any particular organizational form of operation. Directives offered in a later paragraph are suggestive and may be modified to fit different situations and cultures.

C. The Local Church

1. Powers

The New Testament teaches the organization of local indigenous churches with powers of self-government. 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 14:23-40.

2. Leadership

The spiritual leadership in the local church is not necessarily a paid leadership. It may be exercised by elected leaders, elders or deacons who are self-supporting. 1 Tim. 3.

3. Instruction and Propagation by the Local Church

Every local church is a center of worship, of instruction in the Word of God, of spiritual ministry, of instruction in the way of Christian living, and in the ministry of prayer, witnessing and self-propagation. 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.

4. Organization

The organization of the national believers is to be simple, with main emphasis on fellowship and mutual counsel and with a minimum of centralized authority. Local groups of believers must assemble or worship regularly and by fasting and prayer ask God to direct them in the election of their local spiritual leader. At the initial organization of such a fellowship, the missionary offers the necessary guidance and assistance. After a spiritual leader has been provided, other offices can be filled by a procedure of election or appointment.

5. Self-support

The local church makes provision from the beginning for gathering the support for maintaining its services and buildings for worship. Such support shall be included in its stewardship, offerings and contributions gathered in a systematic manner. "God loveth a cheerful giver." The bringing in of tithes and offerings for the worship

of the Lord is a part of worship and a part of the life of a church. Deut. 16:16b and 17; Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.

6. *Itinerary Ministry*

It is sometimes found to be expedient to have an itinerant ministry where one pastor has the oversight of several indigenous churches. In such cases all groups served contribute to the support of the itinerant pastor. 1 Tim. 5:17, 18; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14; Matt. 10:10.

7. *Establishing New Local Churches*

Every church established shall be self-supporting from the beginning. In cases where a pastor is salaried, the church shall operate independently of foreign funds. In places where property and materials are too expensive for the group to provide a house of worship, arrangements may be made with the mission to grant assistance for this purpose. Newly-established church groups may provisionally gather in homes for worship. 1 Cor. 16:19.

D. **The National Church Conference**

1. *Purpose*

To foster an interchurch fellowship and create channels for mutual edification of local churches, mutual assistance, expansion of evangelism and operation of needed institutions and promote the general assignment of Christ as given to the Church.

The organization of a conference or fellowship association is to be sought as soon as a number of local churches have been organized to implant in the church in the early stage of its development the consciousness of the unity of a larger brotherhood.

2. *Time and Place of Meeting*

At the meeting of the conference it is to be decided how often and where the conference is to meet.

3. *Organization*

Towards the close of each conference, officers for the following conference terms shall be elected. The officers in a general structure are:

- a. Chairman of the conference, who presides at all meetings and serves as the leader of the conference.
- b. Assistant chairman, who shares the responsibilities of the chairman and acts in his absence.
- c. Secretary, who records minutes and does the corresponding for the conference.
- d. Treasurer, who handles the funds.

The offices of secretary and treasurer may be combined in one person.

The spiritual program for such fellowship gatherings is to be prepared by the above-given officers of the conference together with two elected members who constitute the program committee.

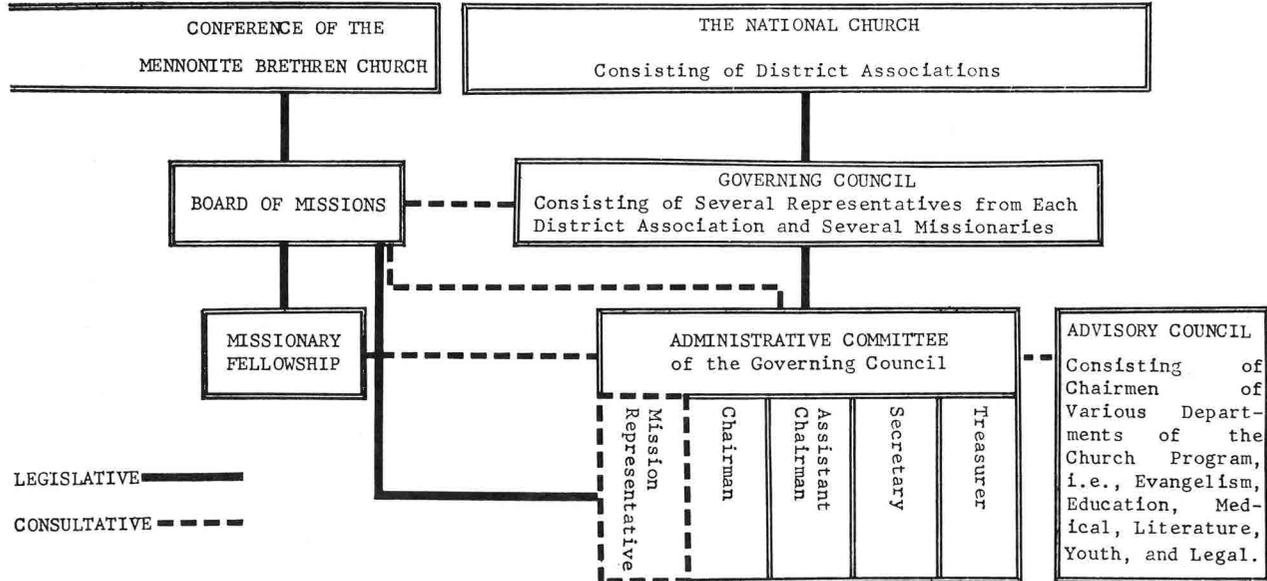
4. *Government*

The government of the conference in organization and responsibility shall be consistent with biblical principles and adapted to the existing culture and prevailing needs of the church in its national setting. Caution must be exercised against over-organization of young churches. The general pattern of conference organization which follows is to serve only as a guide for a possible structure of development in the course of the church growth. See the chart entitled *Organizational Relationship of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church with National Churches Abroad*.

5. *Mission Funds*

Subsidies, in principle, shall be limited to evangelism and the training program of the national church. Even this assistance must be channelled through the organization of the national church as soon as there is an organized body.

Organizational Relationship of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church with National Churches Abroad



APPENDIX C

POINTS OF UNDERSTANDING IN THE FUTURE RELATION OF THE AMERICAN MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH AND THE ASSOCIATION

Des Eglises Des Freres Mennonite au Congo

The American Mennonite Brethren Church, hereafter spoken of as the American Mennonite Brethren Mission and abbreviated A.M.B.M., considers it a joy and privilege to share the responsibility of the gospel with the Association des Eglise des Freres Mennonite Au Congo, hereafter abbreviated A.E.F.M.C. In the relationship as co-laborers, we wish to follow the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ in the extension of His Gospel and the building of His Church. The commandment of love (Jn. 15:12), unity (Jn. 17:21-23) and subjection to one another (I Pet. 5:5) are to govern all areas of our relationship and service.

The A.M.B.M. in its relationship to Mennonite Brethren Churches in other lands has followed a basic pattern of policies and practice. It is hoped that the A.E.F.M.C. will find it possible to accept such a pattern for our future relationship, that our ministry together may not be affected by any lack of mutual understanding and cooperation.

I. Relationship of the A.M.B.M. and the A.E.F.M.C.

The A.M.B.M. considers the A.E.F.M.C. as a part of the world-wide Mennonite Brethren fellowship. God in His plan extended to us the privilege to bring to you the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. This has created a most intimate relationship. We are one in faith, love and hope. The change of our working relationship, in which you assume the full responsibility as a New Testament Church, is not to affect our spiritual fellowship. We are prepared to serve with you as brothers, not divided in spirit even though we are geographically widely separated.

II. Status and Position of the Missionary

1. The missionary sent by the A.M.B.M. is to serve as a co-laborer with the A.E.F.M.C. to the extent that this is desired by the A.E.F.M.C. and possible by the A.M.B.M.

2. As a representative of the A.M.B.M., the missionary is

responsible to the Board of Foreign Missions in America. He remains a member of the M.B. Church of his home country while he serves as a co-laborer of the A.E.F.M.C. Offerings and tithes of the missionary are to be channelled to the program of the M.B. Church of North America at home or abroad.

3. The areas of service of the missionary as a co-laborer with the A.E.F.M.C. are to be in the fields of evangelism, Bible instruction and professional services in institutions: schools, dispensaries and hospitals.

4. The A.M.B.M. has the confidence that the A.E.F.M.C. will extend to the missionary the privilege to share in the responsibility of administration which affects the areas of his assignment. The missionary, in return, is expected to follow the biblical principle of brotherly cooperation with the A.E.F.M.C. and does not seek to impose his personal will and desire upon its program. The organizational details of such a relationship are to be defined in the Constitution of the national church.

5. The A.M.B.M. accepts the full responsibility to provide all financial means for the support of the missionary while he is in service as co-laborer of the A.E.F.M.C. The church in America assumes also full responsibility for all matters pertaining to the housing, transportation, supplies and provides for the education of the children of missionaries.

6. All matters related to the personal life of the missionaries, his personal relationships and standards of Christian conduct, are the responsibility of the church which has sent him. Problems arising from the missionary's service or personal relationships affecting the program of the A.E.F.M.C. are reviewed by representatives of the church in America. In consultation with the A.E.F.M.C., final decision in such difficulties remains the responsibility of the church in America through its representatives who are in charge of directing the program of assistance to the church in the Congo.

7. The assignment of the missionary to a specific field of responsibility is the duty of the Board of Foreign Missions in North America in consultation with the executive committee of the A.M.B.M. and the A.E.F.M.C. Due consideration is to be given to the needs and wishes of the A.E.F.M.C., as well as to the personal wishes and inward leading of the missionary.

III. Properties

The A.M.B.M. agrees to the following principles which shall govern the area of property ownership:

1. As soon as the A.E.F.M.C. has secured its "Personalite Civile" the A.M.B.M. transfers to the A.E.F.M.C. all properties

located off the present mission centers with the exception of properties or installations which are designed for the care of missionaries.

2. The A.M.B.M. is prepared to regulate the ownership of the institutional installations and buildings located on their mission centers properties in keeping with the laws of the state, which will govern the institutional program of schools and hospitals dependent on subsidies for buildings and operation.

3. For the time that the missionaries continue to serve as co-workers of the A.E.F.M.C., the A.M.B.M. retains full ownership and occupational rights of all missionary dwellings and auxiliary buildings belonging to such dwellings, as well as all vehicles provided by the A.M.B.M. for its program of assisting the A.E.F.M.C.

4. Any property which the A.M.B.M. owns or may own in the future not located on mission centers and which are not directly related to the operational program of the A.E.F.M.C. program remain in the ownership of the A.M.B.M. (Included in this category are the missionary children's school at Ecole Belle Vue or any properties which the A.M.B.M. may wish to acquire in the Congo.)

IV. Finances

The A.M.B.M. agrees to continue financial assistance to the A.E.F.M.C. for the operation of its present program. This assistance is to be governed by the following policies:

1. The A.M.B.M. assumes full responsibility for the financial support of the missionaries as outlined in point I, 5 of this document.

2. The A.M.B.M. agrees to give to the church the benefit of government subsidies for the work of qualified personnel — doctors, nurses, teachers, inspectors, etc. — where such assistance is a necessity. Funds received from these sources by the national church must be applied for the operational needs and improvements of the institutions in which the missionary serves. The A.M.B.M. reserves the right to withdraw this assistance and change the application of these subsidies if such becomes necessary for the continuation of the provision of professional personnel.

3. The A.M.B.M. agrees to continue a subsidy for the program of the A.E.F.M.C. for a period of two years to the extent of 500.000,00 francs for the first year and 400.000,00 francs for the second year. The expenditures of these funds are subject to an accepted budget which gives definite designation of purpose for which such funds have been provided.

4. The administration of subsidies from the A.M.B.M., either from the general treasury or through subsidies received for services of missionaries, must be carried out through channels of organization in which the missionary shares the responsibility of distribution.

5. The growth of the church and its increase in the grace of financial stewardship is to govern the extent of the subsidies the A.M.B.M. will provide after the expiration of two years.

V. Legal Responsibilities

As soon as the A.E.F.M.C. receives its Personalite Civile the A.M.B.M. transfers all legal responsibility to the A.E.F.M.C. which affect the operation of the church program. All legal matters related to institutional employment or employed personnel including issues arising from such relationships in the past are assumed by the A.E.F.M.C. and carried out to the satisfaction of an effective operation. Mission personnel serving as directors and administrators of institutions are in the future not to be held responsible for any legal aspects affecting matters of budget, construction, or personnel. The professional areas of their respective assignments are assumed by them before the government.

VI. Transition in the Implementation of the New Program

In consideration of the needs of the A.E.F.M.C. for the assistance of the missionaries in directing the program of the church, the A.M.B.M. suggests the following procedure:

1. The Executive and Administrative Committees of the A.E.F.M.C. and the A.M.B.M. work as one united body in all matters affecting the church program for the duration that a co-worker relationship is continued.

2. That the legal representative of the A.E.F.M.C. work in cooperation with the legal representative of the A.M.B.M. for a period of two to three years before the operational duties are transferred to his sole responsibility.

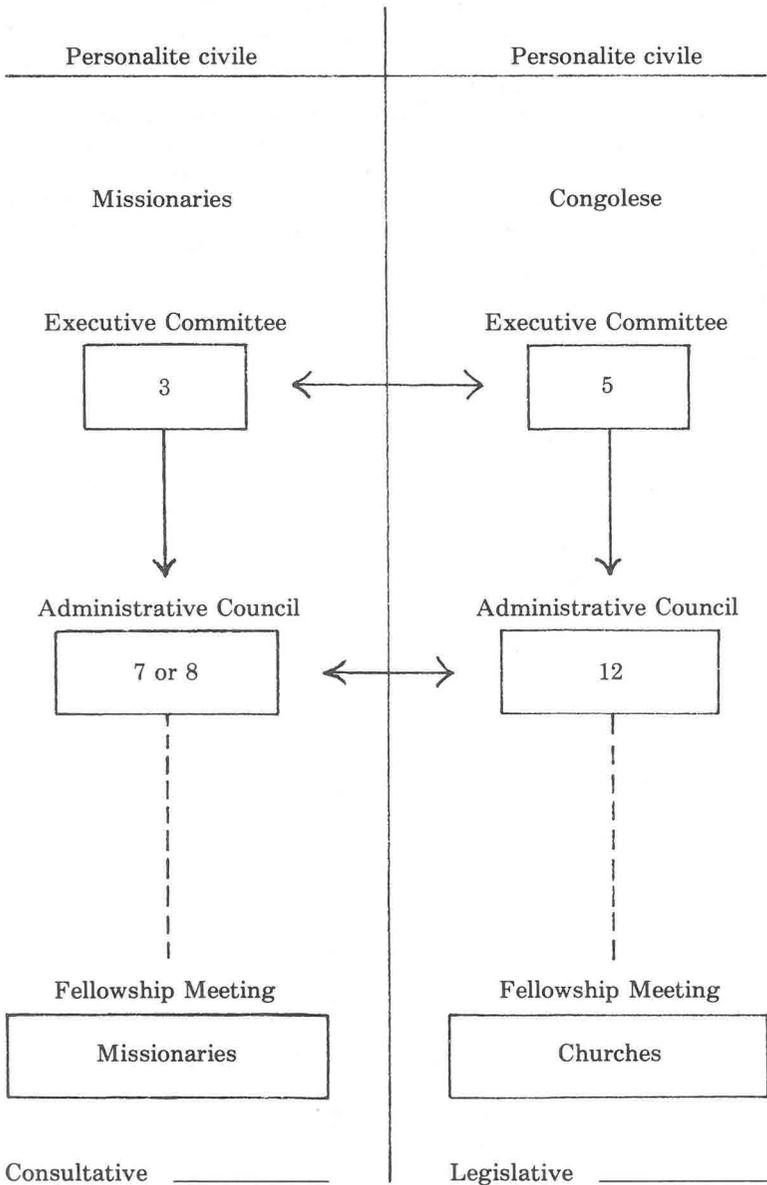
3. Bible School: In consideration of the great importance for a strong Bible School to train the workers for the church, and in consideration of the many demands which will be placed upon the personnel of the A.E.F.M.C., A.M.B.M. is prepared to provide the major teaching personnel for an effective Bible Institute program for the time that such assistance is necessary and possible. For the duration that such co-ministry in the Bible School program is pursued, the administration of the Bible Institute is to rest in a Bible School committee appointed by the Administrative Council with equal representation from the A.E.F.M.C. and A.M.B.M.

4. Literature: To assist the A.E.F.M.C. in providing the necessary Christian literature for the spiritual nurture of its own membership and an expanding evangelistic program, the A.M.B.M. agrees to continue to assist in the area of literature production in the form of direction of operation and editorial staff.

VII. Discontinuation of the Above Agreement

The A.M.B.M. agrees to discontinue the above outlined relationships at any time when it becomes possible to the A.E.F.M.C. to assume full responsibility for the program which God has entrusted to them and assures an effective continued operation and service. In case of the discontinuation of the above relationship, the A.M.B.M. will seek to regulate all questions of property which she has retained or acquired in the Congo, with due consideration for the needs of the national church at such time. However, the A.M.B.M. is not obligated to transfer such properties to the A.E.F.M.C. but has the right to dispose such assets according to decisions made by the Board of Foreign Missions of the M.B. Church in America with headquarters in Hillsboro, Kansas.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF REGISTERED CORPORATION



APPENDIX D

STATUTES

Article 1. Denomination

There is created this 21st day of January 1971 a non-profit organization called "the Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire" — in short E.F.M.Z., which replaces the old organization "American Mennonite Brethren Mission," in short "A.M.B.M."

Article 2. Headquarters

The headquarters are located at Kikwit, B.P. 81, Avenue de Cabine No. 1, Commune du Plateau.

Article 3. Goals

The organization has as its goals:

- Evangelization
- Formation of local churches
- Education
- Medical work
- Community development
- Preparation and distribution of literature
- Radio programming

Article 4. Area of activity

The association carries on its work in the Bandundu Province, and in the City of Kinshasa, and it may extend its work into other provinces of the Democratic Republic of Zaire.

Article 5. Members

- A. The association is made up of three categories of members.
 - a. regular members
 - b. extra-ordinary members
 - c. effective members
- B. Conditions for being a member.
 - a. Any person who conforms to the regulations set forth in the by-laws of E.F.M.Z. is accepted as an ordinary member.
 - b. The delegates of the district assemblies to the Reunion Fraternelle are accepted as extra-ordinary members.
 - c. All of the members of the administrative committee chosen from the members of the Reunion Fraternelle are accepted as effective members.

d. The term of office for b. and c. is three years. The election shall be staggered so that the term of all members does not expire the same year. They may be re-elected.

Article 6. Conditions of entry, of leaving and of exclusion

A. Conditions for a church to enter.

A local church may join the E.F.M.Z. on the decision of a two-thirds majority of its members who have voting power, if it conforms to the statutes and the by-laws of E.F.M.Z. and it is accepted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the administrative committee.

B. Conditions of leaving the organization by a church.

A local church may separate itself from E.F.M.Z. by a decision of a two-thirds majority of its voting members, and if a majority of the members of the administrative committee agrees to accept the separation. Any local church which separates itself from E.F.M.Z. has no right to claim any of the property of E.F.M.Z.

C. Conditions for members to leave the church or their offices.

1. An ordinary member may leave the association by a simple resignation to the local church where he is a member. By this action he renounces at the same time all of his rights as an extra-ordinary member or as an effective member and he may not claim anything from the church except a letter of membership sent to another church.
2. An extra-ordinary member may submit his resignation from his office to the district assembly which he represents, but he may retain his right as an ordinary member.
3. An effective member may submit his resignation from his office to the Reunion Fraternelle, but he may retain his right as an ordinary member.

D. Condition of exclusion.

A member may be excluded for refusing to conform to the by-laws of the organization.

1. An ordinary member may be excluded by the local assembly where he is a member. If he is excluded by the local assembly, he is automatically excluded from his functions as extra-ordinary member and effective member.
2. An extra-ordinary member may be excluded from his office by the assembly which he represents, either local or district.

3. An effective member may be excluded from his office by the Reunion Fraternelle.
4. Because the extra-ordinary members and the effective members represent the local churches and districts which have sent them, they lose their right of membership if they change their place of residence.

Article 7. Administration

A. The organization of the administration or of the direction of the organization.

The administrative committee governs the affairs of E.F.M.Z. It watches over the progress of the organization. All the decisions of the restricted (executive) committee must be submitted to the administrative committee for approval. The administrative committee is responsible to name the various committees it considers necessary.

B. The quorum of the Administrative Committee shall be three-fourths of its effective members.

C. A restricted (Executive) Committee is in care of the administration during the interim of the administrative committee. It is this committee's responsibility to prepare the agenda for the administrative committee meetings.

This committee is composed of:

- a president
- a legal representative
- a treasurer who is also first assistant legal representative
- a secretary who is also the assistant treasurer

Three members who shall serve as:

1. Vice-president
2. Assistant secretary
3. Second assistant legal representative

D. Method of naming and recalling the members of this committee.

The members of this committee are elected and recalled from within the administrative committee by a two-thirds majority vote of the effective members.

E. The quorum of the restricted committee shall be five of its members.

F. The length of their term of service and extent of their powers.

1. Their term of service is fixed at three years and is renewable.
2. The extent of their powers.
 - a. The president presides at all of the meetings of the Reunion Fraternelle, the administrative committee and the restricted committee. He watches over the progress of the program of the organization.

- b. The legal representative represents the organization before others, prepares and signs conventions according to the approval of the administrative committee. He guards the official documents of the association, and is responsible for the supervision of the properties of the organization. No action which engages the whole of the organization may be taken by the legal representative except by the decision of the majority of the administrative committee in legal session or by the restricted committee.
- c. The secretary writes the minutes of all of the meetings of the Reunion Fraternelle, the administrative committee and the restricted committee. Each time he shall send a copy to the office of B.O.M.A.S. in America. He has the responsibility of all official correspondence of the organization. He is also the assistant treasurer of the organization.
- d. The treasurer guards and administers the funds of the association. He replaces the legal representative in the case of his absence. The signature of the assistant legal representative has no value except in the case of the absence or unavailability of the legal representative.
- e. The three members are full voting members.

Article 9. Modifications.

The statutes shall not be modified except by decision of a two-thirds majority of the administrative committee.

Article 10. Dissolution.

In the case of dissolution, the question shall be submitted to the Reunion Fraternelle, who shall submit it to the district and local churches. These churches must give their opinion and a decision shall be reached at the next meeting of the Reunion Fraternelle.

In the case where the organization shall be dissolved, the properties of the organization shall be passed to another organization having the same goals.

A majority of the members of the administrative committee shall determine the destination of the properties of the organization if those foreseen in these present statutes are not realizable.

Made at Kikwit the 21st of January, 1971

The signatures of the effective members of the non-profit organization E.F.M.Z. shall be attached to these statutes.

WORK AGREEMENT**Between**

**Board of Missions and Services (B.O.M.A.S.)
of the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
315 South Lincoln
Hillsboro, Kansas**

and

**Mennonite Brethren Church of Zaire (E.F.M.Z.)
B.P. 81, Kikwit
Bandundu Province
Democratic Republic of Zaire**

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**Article 1.**

The reason for the existence of these two associations and for their working together is for the accomplishment of the Christian mission in Zaire.

Article 2.

Even though the administrative responsibilities have been accepted by E.F.M.Z., B.O.M.A.S. maintains its interest in the development of the work of the church in the Congo, and manifests its intention of continuing to collaborate with E.F.M.Z. in all ways possible according to the work agreements accepted by the two associations.

Article 3.

E.F.M.Z. accepts the responsibility for the coordination of the work of the Church in its region according to the articles of its constitution. It shall also seek to guide the local churches to accept, as it becomes possible, the spiritual, administrative and financial responsibility of the work in their respective regions.

Article 4.

It is our mutual understanding that the departments, the sections and the committees of E.F.M.Z. will enter into no agreements or conventions with other organizations or associations without the approval of E.F.M.Z.

II. E.F.M.Z. AGREES ALSO.**Article 5.**

To coordinate the work of the local churches of E.F.M.Z.

Article 6.

To administer the work of evangelization, the medical work, the educational work, and all other activities under the direction of E.F.M.Z.

Article 7.

To determine and to present to B.O.M.A.S. the needs of foreign personnel to work with E.F.M.Z. She will place and transfer the foreign personnel only in consultation with the individual in question and with B.O.M.A.S. She will watch over the work and transmit a report of the foreign personnel to B.O.M.A.S. at the end of each year.

Article 8.

To present to B.O.M.A.S., at the end of each fiscal year, a detailed financial report of all of the funds received and dispersed by its Churches.

Article 9.

To present to B.O.M.A.S. a request for the necessary financial assistance, with the projects and plans of construction. E.F.M.Z. agrees to use the funds given for the reasons specified by the budget.

Article 10.

She assures B.O.M.A.S. —

A. That the properties of E.F.M.Z. shall be used entirely for the reasons given or for other reasons which shall also contribute to the advancement of the Christian mission in region interested.

B. That the properties shall not be mortgaged nor exchanged in any way for financial gain.

C. That the properties shall not be transferred or disposed in one way or another unless it has been clearly determined that they can no longer be used for the reasons previously determined. If it is found advantageous to exchange the properties it shall only be done with the approval of B.O.M.A.S. If the properties shall be sold, and this with the approval of B.O.M.A.S., the benefits gained from the sale shall be used for the original purposes of the property or another reason which will contribute to the advancement of the Christian mission of E.F.M.Z.

Article 11.

E.F.M.Z. shall see that the missionaries shall be conveniently housed, and this always in accord with B.O.M.A.S. In the case where it is necessary to rent houses from a third party, B.O.M.A.S. shall pay the rent, but all subsidies, or assistances coming from other

sources in recompense for these rentals shall be remunerated to B.O.M.A.S. In the case where there is no convenient housing available a satisfactory solution shall be found and approved by B.O.M.A.S. before the missionary family shall be assigned.

Article 12.

To name a properties committee who shall have the responsibility of watching over the use and placement of all properties of E.F.M.Z., moveable and immoveable.

This committee shall be responsible for the purchase, the maintenance, the placement and eventually the sale of all vehicles belonging to E.F.M.Z. No individual shall be permitted to purchase a vehicle with E.F.M.Z. funds which shall be assigned to the work of this church. The eventual sale shall also be the responsibility of this committee.

This same properties committee shall assume the responsibility or assign it to someone else of seriously maintaining a separate budget of each vehicle belonging to E.F.M.Z.

Article 13.

To prepare an annual report, according to the form asked for by B.O.M.A.S., of the general statistics of the work of E.F.M.Z.

III. B.O.M.A.S. AGREES

Article 14.

To closely collaborate with E.F.M.Z. in all its work and to present these activities to the members of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of the other countries.

Article 15.

To recruit and make available to E.F.M.Z., according to the possibilities, the personnel asked for by E.F.M.Z. for their different activities of the Church, of evangelization, of education, of the medical work, and all other programs which concern the Church, according to the qualifications of the candidates available and according to the possibilities of the budget.

B.O.M.A.S. accepts the responsibility of the expenses and of the needs of its missionaries: including their salary, the education of their children, their vacations, their medical needs, their travel expenses, their transportation and their furloughs.

All subsidies, salaries and benefits, coming from other organizations, for the services rendered by the missionaries shall be used

according to the agreements and accords between B.O.M.A.S. and E.F.M.Z.

Article 16.

To accord financial assistance asked for by E.F.M.Z. for specific categories, for the determined departments, as well as for the requested constructions, and this according to possibilities of the budget as determined by B.O.M.A.S.

Article 17.

To accept the responsibility of the education of the missionaries' children, including the necessary housing so that they may attend the American School in Kinshasa or any other school so determined by B.O.M.A.S. B.O.M.A.S. shall make available to its missionaries in Zaire a special budget for the necessary expenditures to maintain and properly operate a children's hostel, where the missionary children may live who are attending school. The expenses of the operation of this school and of this hostel shall not be included in the budget of the E.F.M.Z. A committee shall be chosen from amongst the missionaries in Zaire and a member of the administrative committee of the E.F.M.Z. chosen there at the place where the meeting shall be held. This committee shall determine the working and use of the special budget.

IV. MODIFICATIONS

The articles of this convention may be discussed by E.F.M.Z. and B.O.M.A.S. A change or amendment to these articles shall go into effect only after it is approved by both parties.

Made at Kikwit January 21, 1971

The signatures of the members of the administrative committee of E.F.M.Z. and the representatives of the office of B.O.M.A.S. shall be attached to this convention.

APPENDIX E

THE MEN AND WOMEN GOD USED TO BUILD

THE CHURCH IN ZAIRE

It has been well said that "the glory and efficiency of the Gospel are staked on the men who proclaim it."¹ The working of God in Zaire is no exception. Men and women with deep dedication were the channels God used to build a church in Zaire. The birth of the church in Zaire was the working of God through such channels as Aaron and Ernestina Janzen and the co-workers that joined them. At an early stage of their effort God, through the Holy Spirit, touched men and women who responded to the gospel and made the ministry of the mission personnel in that land possible. Space limitations do not make it possible to enumerate all the people who were so very vital in the building of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire. The words of the author of the book of Hebrews here is appropriate when he says: "For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, of Daniel and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms—received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness. . . ."² The Gideons, the Baraks, Davids and Samuels of the Zairian people who were servants and handmaidens of God in building the church in Zaire cannot all be named. Our recognition of men and women of the national church and missionaries who came from abroad to minister with the people of Zaire would be inadequate. God will give recognition as each one deserves.

The list of names from the Eglise des Freres Mennonites au Zaire, abbreviated E.F.M.Z. (the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire) was prepared by the church leadership in the main office at Kikwit. The register of missionaries who have labored in Zaire is gleaned from the records of the Office of the Board of Missions and Services in Hillsboro, KS.

National Workers Who Have Been Used of God in the Building of the Church

DJIMBO KUBALA (1934-present)

He developed from a house-boy to become a teacher, then translator of the Scriptures. Was an effective pastor and counselor to many believers, a leader in the Committee of Reference and Counsel, member of the Executive Committee of the Conference, and an example to the church in Zaire as a father in Christ.

NGANGA DIYOYO (1938-present)

A man of many gifts, who has served as a mechanic, as a chauffeur, an effective legal representative, office manager of the conference offices, treasurer of the brotherhood and member of the Executive Committee of the Conference.

MAFUTA MINGI M. (1949-present)

Has served as a teacher, as a carpenter, as a church secretary, secretary in the administrative office and member of the church committee.

LUMEYA NZASHI (1945-present)

Known as a teacher, as a store-clerk, as a pastor coordinator of evangelism, then became the evangelist of the brotherhood and serves as the president of the Council of Pastors.

MUKOSO MBAVU (1948-present)

He has served as a teacher, as a secretary for the local church, secretary of the C.E.F.M.Z., assistant treasurer of the Conference, and member of the Executive Committee.

NZELENGA MULEHU (1932-present)

Church leader and pastor and a counselor of the District church.

KILABI BULULU (1954-present)

Has served for years as a teacher, then became the legal representative, has served as a pastor and member of the Executive Committee of the Conference.

MATSHITSA MATSI (1954-present)

Served as a teacher, school inspector, assistant legal representative and member of the Executive Committee of the Conference.

MABAYA SEFU (1938-present)

By profession a carpenter, a mason, a member of the local church council and a member of the church of long standing.

KIWOMA A. GALUNGA (1941-present)

Known as a church leader, as a pastor and president of the Church District Council.

MANZUMBU MUTHU (1939-present)

By profession a carpenter, leader of the C.E.F.M.Z. carpenters organization, and member of the local church committee.

MUZEBA NKIELEB (1948-present)

By profession a mason, and known as a faithful member of the local church. Has influenced the growth of the believers' community.

KUKU LEMBA D. (1967-present)

By profession a chauffeur and an influential member of a local church.

KUNGA GILAMBA (1948-present)

By profession a carpenter, a cashier and a leader in a local church.

MASALAY KATSHIOKO (1958-present)

By profession a carpenter and an influential member in the church.

MADIDISI KUNIA (1945-present)

Known as a church leader, pastor and evangelist, in charge of the Lusemvu area churches.

POMBO KAHUITA (1953-present)

Church leader, pastor, evangelist, in charge of the church development in the Gungu area.

MALWANO MWEMO (1945-present)

Known as a teacher, pastor and evangelist in the Shimuna area.

BOLOKO WAMBA (1953-present)

Known as a pastor and evangelist in charge of the work in Kwenge area.

KASAI KAPATA (1970-present)

Church secretary, pastor, evangelist, in charge of the church development at Pai-Kongila.

MPIAKONGO NGWEM (1949-present)

Known as a church leader, clerk of the bookstore, a pastor, evangelist, in charge of the development of the churches at Lunia.

MAKANI NGABWAB (1971-present)

An effective songleader, bookstore clerk, salesman in the bookstore distributing Christian literature and treasurer of the local church.

MANGALA SHAKALEMENA (1930-present)

Known as a pastor in church development.

TSHIMIKA MUTONDO (1930-present)

An ordained pastor and church leader in the area of Kajiji.

TSHINYAME YAMVU (1930-present)

Known for his ministry in nursing and as a hospital chaplain at Kajiji.

NAKACHI MANAST (1933-1965)

Known for his ministry as a teacher and as a pastor in the church development.

DIKI THIMBINDJI (1930-1946)

Known as a teacher, as a nurse in the work of the church.

MWATSHIFI BENDEBENDE (1930)

Known for his ministry as store clerk in the distribution of Christian literature and a teacher.

SHATCHUMIKA SHAKWIJUKWENE (1930-1959)

Served the church as a foreman of a working group serving in church development.

MUYEJI MUZAZA (1930)

Teacher, evangelist and a lay leader in the church.

KISINIA MWAZAMBI (1930-1942)

Evangelist in the development of the church.

KOSOMA LOTTI (1930-1942)

Has served the church as an evangelist.

LUSOKI BICHIKU (1930-present)

A pastor of the churches of long-standing.

LUSANGU KAPENDA (1930-present)

Known as a teacher, pastor and co-ordinator of evangelism.

MUSAMBWANZEZE BWALA (1930)

Known as a teacher in the development of the educational program.

MATUNGILA ABELI (1930)

Known as a teacher in the development of the educational program.

**Missionary Personnel Who Have Served in the
Development of the Church in Zaire**

WILLIAM AND MARGARET BAERG (1946-1972)

Ministry in evangelism, church planting and radio, in Djongo Sanga, Panzi, Lusemvu, Kikwit.

GEORGE AND MARY BAIER (1969-1971)

Houseparents in the hostel for missionary children in Kinshasa.

H. G. AND ANNA BARTSCH (1932-1942)

Pioneer missionaries establishing the church in the area of Bololo-Djongo Sanga.

NETTIE BERG (1952-1970)

Served in the area of medical work as a nurse, engaged in literature production, ministering in the areas of Kafumba, Kajiji, Matende, Kikwit and Kinshasa.

SAM AND MAVIS BERGEN (1967-present)

Director and supervisor in the provision of medicines, drugs and medical supplies for the hospitals of missions and the government of Zaire.

HENRY AND ELSIE BRUCKS (1949-1961)

Served in the areas of evangelism, church planting, as teacher at the Bible institute and legal representative with ministries in Kikwit, Kafumba, Kipungu, Panzi and Matende.

SUSIE BRUCKS (1944-1960)

Served in the area of education and medical nursing at Kipungu, Matende and Kafumba.

MARGARET BRYSON (1969-1976)

Served as a Christian Service teacher in the school system at Kikwit.

ROBERT AND JANICE BUHR (1971-present)

Serves as a medical doctor at the hospital at Kajiji.

FRANK AND CLARA BUSCHMAN (1945-1958)

Carried responsibilities as the station administrator and principal of the Bible school at Kafumba and educational work at Lusemvu.

ALVIN AND RUBY DAHL (1969-1971)

Served as the director of agricultural development with headquarters in Kikwit.

HENRY AND HELEN DERKSEN (1951-present)

Areas of service: teacher of the Bible school and the seminary, legal representative, evangelist and church planter. Served at various places in the interior, at present at Kinshasa.

ERNEST AND EVA DOERKSEN (1965-1974)

Served as the Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot with headquarters in Kinshasa, serving the evangelism cause of the various missions.

MARGARET SIEMENS DUECK (1938-1942)

Served during the pioneer years in Bololo as a teacher.

ERNEST AND MARY DYCK (1966-present)

Director of Protestant Agricultural Program and representative of Mennonite Economic Development Association with headquarters at Kikwit.

ERNEST H. AND LYDIA DYCK (1951-1960)

Served as evangelist and church planter and director of the teacher training institute in Matende and Kajiji.

MARGARET DYCK (1947-present)

Her major contribution was in the area of teaching, literature preparation and director of radio correspondence program. Served at Matende, Kafumba and Kinshasa.

IVAN AND ALMA ELRICH (1955-1970)

Served as a teacher in educational development at Matende, Kikwit and Kajiji.

ANNA ENNS (1945-1958)

Serving as a teacher in several places, Djongo Sango, Kajiji, Kafumba and Kipungu.

SIEGFRIED AND IRMA EPP (1957-1973)

Served in the area of construction, parents of missionary children hostel and administrator in the office of the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Zaire. Served at Kajiji, Kikwit and Kinshasa.

A. J. AND SARAH ESAU (1948-present)

Service in the area of evangelism and church planting at Matende, Kipungu, Kajiji and Kinshasa.

JOHN AND AGNES (Deceased) ESAU (1955-1960)

Served as station administrator at Panzi and village evangelist.

HELEN FAST (1958-1969)

Served as a medical nurse at Kafumba and Kajiji.

GEORGE AND MARGARET FAUL (1954-1970)

Director of secondary education in Kafumba, Kikwit and Njanga.

HAROLD AND NANCY FEHDERAU (1958-1968)

Serving as a linguistic specialist in Scripture translation who continued his ministry after 1968 in the same area under the direction of the American Bible Society.

ELSIE FISCHER (1952-present)

Given her time in the area of nursing with major assignment at Kajiji.

IRVIN AND LYDIA FRIESEN (1945-present)

Their area of service in evangelism, director of the Bible Institute and literature development. Places of service at Kafumba, Kikwit and Kinshasa.

BETTY FUNK (1966-1976)

Area of service: teaching in Kikwit and Kajiji.

ERNA FUNK (1948-1960)

Area of service: Nursing at Kafumba and Matende.

ARLENE GERDES (1954-present)

Area of service: Nursing at Pai Kongila, Kajiji, Kikwit, Vanga.

ANNA GOERTZEN (1938-present)

Ministered in the area of nursing and teaching at the various places such as Kafumba, Kipungu, Matende, Lusemvu, Nyange, Kikwit and Kajiji.

WILLIAM AND LOUISE GOERTZEN (1953-1956)

Served in the area of building and development.

J. ROLFE AND EDNA GRAVES (Deceased) (1938-1958)

Served as the pioneer missionaries in the Panzi area, established its station and the church and for a brief period also served at Lusemvu.

ELSIE GUNTHER (1947-1959)

Ministered in the field of education, serving at Kafumba and Panzi.

RUDY AND RUBY HAMM (1966-1972)

Served as a medical doctor in the hospital at Kajiji.

AARON A. AND ERNESTINE JANZEN (Deceased) (1912-1958)

Pioneers in the work in Africa from 1912 til 1958. The founders of the

work of the Mennonite Brethren ministry in Zaire, whose life was laid down as a living sacrifice unto God for the benefit of the millions of people of the continent who did not know of the gospel. His area of service was a pioneer ministry in evangelism, education, church planting, development, etc.

MARTHA JANZEN (1928-1971)

Became the second wife of Aaron A. Janzen after the death of Ernestine Janzen. Served in the days of pioneer work in the area of medical work, translation of Scripture, church development. Served at Kafumba, Pai Kongila and Kikwit.

BEN H. AND ANNA KLASSEN (1954-1974)

Director of education and pedagogical counselor to the educational program in Zaire. Places of service in Kipungu and Kikwit.

JOHN B. AND RUTH KLIEWER (1947-1968)

Served in the area of evangelism, church planting and field administration with headquarters at Kafumba, Kipungu and Kikwit

D. B. AND ROSE ANNA KONRAD (1965-1969)

Doctor at the hospitals at Kajiji and Pai Kongila.

DOROTHY KOPPER (1959-present)

Area of ministry: education, serving at Kafumba, Kipungu and Kajiji.

KARL AND MARIA KRAMER (1938-1942)

Ministered with the pioneer missionaries in the establishment of the church at Bololo-Djongo Sanga.

A. F. AND MARY KROEKER (1932-1952)

Served as evangelist, church planter, station developer and administrator of the mission program in Zaire.

PETER AND RUTH KROEKER (1971-present)

Served in the area of economic and agricultural development.

ROBERT AND WANDA KROEKER (1953-1974)

Served as an evangelist and teacher, and in the literature distribution and radio ministry in areas of Kajiji, Kafumba and Kinshasa.

HAROLD AND SUSAN KRUGER (1954-1964)

Served in the area of education in Kafumba and Kikwit.

HERMANN AND TENA LENZMANN (1937-1939)

Part of the pioneer team that ministered in the area of Bololo-Djongo Sanga in church development.

MARTHA MANZ (Deceased) (1938-1941)

Served in Kafumba as a teacher and assisted in medical ministries.

DAISY MARTENS (1958-1964)

Served in the area of secondary education in Njanga.

THEODORE AND FRIEDA MARTENS (1954-1958)

Served in the field of evangelism and church planting at Kipungu.

ED AND MARGARET NEUFELD (1967-1972)

Served as medical doctor in the hospital at Pai Kongila.

JAKE AND HELEN NICKEL (1966-present)

Served in the area of development, construction and youth ministries with major contributions at Kajiji, Kikwit, Pai Kongila and Kinshasa.

LESLIE AND HOPE ORTMAN (1956-1960)

Served as a teacher in educational development and evangelism at Kipungu.

FERDINAND AND RUTH PAULS (1960-1967)

Medical doctor at Kajiji and at Kikwit.

JAKE AND ANN PENNER (1966-1974)

Medical doctor at Kajiji and at Kikwit.

JAKE AND ANN PENNER (1966-1974)

Gave themselves to village evangelism and literature distribution serving Pai Kongila, Kajiji and Kikwit.

KATY PENNER (1952-1975)

Area of service: the establishment of the nurse's training school in Kajiji and nursing ministries at Kikwit and Kinshasa.

KATIE PETERS (1963-1968)

Served in the area of teaching and medical ministries at Kikwit and Kafumba.

SARAH PETERS (1955-present)

A ministry of nursing at Pai Kongila and Kajiji.

ARNOLD AND ROSE PRIEB (1950-present)

Major contributions in the area of evangelism and church planting, also as radio program director and conference administrator with headquarters at Kajiji, Kafumba and Kinshasa.

JOHN AND EDNA RATZLAFF (1946-1969)

Ministered as teacher of missionary children's school, evangelist and church planter in Kipungu, Kafumba and Kajiji.

CLARA REDEKOP (1951-1953)

Served in the area of education.

WALTER (Deceased) AND IRMA SAWATZKY (1957-1960)

Director of missionary children's school at Kajiji.

ALFRED AND VIOLA SCHMIDT (1958-1973)

Served as a Bible teacher in the institute at Kafumba, Kajiji, and later at the Protestant Evangelical Seminary in Kinshasa.

E. W. AND LEONA SCHMIDT (1953-1964)

Served as a medical doctor at Kajiji, Kikwit and Pai Kongila hospitals.

HARTMUT AND ELFRIEDA SCHROEDER (1965-present)

Is engaged in Bible translation work with headquarters first in Kinshasa, later at Kikwit.

CLYDE AND ELIZABETH SHANNON (1934-1960)

They served as the pioneer missionaries in the area of Kajiji under the Unevangelized Tribes Mission, later the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions. Their ministry was divided in the area of evangelism, church planting, development of educational programs and station administration.

HELEN TOEWS (1958-present)

She served as a nurse in charge at the Kajiji hospital and teacher in the nurses training school.

MARY TOEWS (1947-1972)

Her ministry was in the area of education and teacher training schools at Kafumba, Matende, Kajiji and Kinshasa.

VERNON AND MILDRED VOGT (1956-1961)

Medical doctor serving at Kajiji and Pai Kongila.

GEORGE AND KATHLEEN WALL (1967-1977)

Served as pilot with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship serving the missionary cause in Zaire in general.

MATHILDA WALL (1947-present)

Is spending her life in the area of nursing and has served in various places, Djongo Sanga, Kipungu, Kafumba, Kajiji, Kikwit and Kinshasa.

FRIEDA WARKENTIN (1965-1971)

Served in the area of teaching, literature production and distribution in Kinshasa.

ARTHUR AND ELLA WIEBE (1956-1960)

Served in the area of development and construction.

ORVILLE AND RUBY WIEBE (1952-1964)

Served as educational administrator and school director at Kajiji and Kinshasa.

KATHERINE WIENS (1956-1974)

Served as a nurse at Kafumba, Kajiji, Pai Kongila and Kinshasa.

MARCELLA WIENS (1958-1959)

Served as a teacher in the missionary children's school at Kajiji.

KATHRYN WILLEMS (1936-present)

Her contribution has been in the areas of teaching, womens work, development of literature and distribution, with major assignments at Kafumba and in Kinshasa.

MARTHA WILLEMS (1952-present)

Her ministry is in the area of teaching and library development, having served in Nyanga, Kipungu, Matende and in recent years in Kisangani at the university.

DR. AND MRS. JOHN WILLEMS (1969-1970, 1973-1974)

They served as medical doctors at a hospital in Kajiji.

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THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN ZAIRE

Mennonite brethren involvement in the copper rich heart of Africa began before the turn of the century. It has run the gamut of missionary principles, methods and experiences. The story of A. A. Janzen, for example, typifies the indomitable spirit and innovative daring of the pioneer independent missionary. Yet this book is also the story of the missionary specialist who brought healing, education and literature to the aid of the emerging church and helped prepare it for survival during the fateful days of civil war and the later uprising. Finally, it is the story of an independent Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire moving into the burgeoning cities to plant churches among people learning to cope with a new way of life.

The study guide and questions at the end of each chapter prepared by the general editor, Paul G. Hiebert, help the student focus on the significance of principles and methods employed.

J. B. Toews's fine history of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Zaire is the second in a series sponsored by the Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. The first book, *The Mennonite Brethren Mission in Latin America*, by J. J. Toews, was released earlier. Underway are an introductory volume and a later book on Mennonite Brethren missions in India, and Japan, both by G.W. Peters.