



## 86 ❖ Denis Muamba's gift for sharing

**D**énis Muamba Tshishimbi is director of the primary school sponsored by the Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM) in Bufuki. Denis is not a man of means, but he has a gift for enthusiastically sharing everything God puts into his hands.

One time, for example, he reached into his own pockets for the transportation and hosting costs of a delegation of the CEM Leadership Committee to the Bufuki congregation, when the parish failed to gather the needed resources. The instances of his generosity are legion, and all visitors to Bufuki have been the recipients of it. His pastor at Bufuki says, “Muamba Tshishimbi is a child of God who has a keen sense of sharing. All visitors to the Bufuki congregation are his personal guests. He is the man on whom the congregation and I count. He gives with a joyful heart.”

Born in 1966 to Presbyterian parents in Mwene Ditu, about 130 kilometers from Mbuji Mayi, Denis Muamba Tshishimbi confessed the faith of his parents. After primary school, he registered at the CEM's pedagogical institute and was baptized into the CEM's Bufuki congregation in Mwene Ditu. In 1994 he became director of the Bufuki Primary School, a position he holds to this day. He has also served as president of the young people and president of the laity in the Bondoyi missionary district.

Denis has inspired others to be generous. He engaged congregation members in providing assistance to a member who lost a child,

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photo—Denis Muamba

as well as to Pastor Célestin Kabengela<sup>1</sup> following the consecutive deaths of two of his children and his grandson. As president of the laity of Bondoyi district, Denis conducted similar actions, including a “worship walk” in which he and his administration were able to assist a struggling member in an outlying congregation.

As youth president from 1990 to 2000, Denis Muamba mentored and supported young people as partners. He offered soap to the unemployed in order to attract them to his congregation. For those young people who became interested in the word of God, Denis organized a campaign to promote their integration into the congregation. He established a youth choir to sing in Sunday services. Unfortunately, his leadership has not been matched since, and many of the youth have now gone elsewhere in the absence of dedicated mentoring.

The qualities of a conscientious Christian are evident in Denis Muamba’s exercise of his functions as director of the CEM Bufuki Primary School. With more than 1,500 students, it is the largest of the CEM primary schools. All is well in the management of goods and staff and in the implementation of large projects. He was responsible for the construction of the school building with six doors. He is also responsible for the clean, neat appearance of the courtyard of the Bufuki congregation where the school is located.

It is a miracle of God, he says himself, that he became director of the school. A previous director had deserted the school, leaving it leaderless and inactive for two years. Denis cannot say exactly what prompted him to bring his fellow teachers and some students and their parents together to resume the school’s activities. Today the school is stable and sustainable. Also thanks to Denis, most of the staff are servants of God and members of the church. Quarterly evangelistic services are held at the school.

Justifying his stance of generosity, Denis acknowledges that according to the teachings he received, the layperson is called to share what he has with others, like Jesus Christ. In sharing, he says, “I also am blessed.”

One day, he recalls, he received a phone call announcing the visit of dignitaries to his school. Such visitors would have to be hosted, and this always requires money. However, Denis had only 5,000 Congolese francs on hand, about enough to buy a single rooster. More-

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1 See “Saved from suicide by a vision” (chapter 70).

over, the money had been intended for the rations of his own household, which included many children. But Dénis asked his wife to go buy a rooster for their guests, and dinner was offered to the visitors.

Two days after the visitors had eaten and returned home, Dénis received a phone call from one of his sons, whom he had not seen for many years. The son gave him the code to retrieve \$100 at the bank. Dénis told his wife, Monique, “This is how God does things. The day before yesterday we spent all we had for the visitors. Now today your son sends us \$100.”

After retrieving the money, Dénis went home, amazed at the blessing received from God. He says, “God has rewarded me many times that way.”

Jean Félix Chimbalanga