

## The vision of our church in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Mike Samuel Makenda  
January 2015



*The ballroom in the Hotel Apocalypse during the UPF conference*

The church in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), which will be forty years old next year, set a major goal -- to increase the number of members through witnessing, and to strive to achieve, if possible, the plateau of 10 percent of the nation's population accepting True Parents.

What makes this feasible -- beyond the ambition shown by the national staff after the coming of the West African regional president, Rev. Cho Dong-ho -- is the devotion of members having resulted in the number of members increasing significantly between 2013 and today.

Two projects were initiated, one focused on the spiritual aspect. It calls for us to organize and hold UPF rallies and lectures for ambassadors for peace. Regarding the social aspect, the government's National Economy Department (DEN) has initiated farming projects, raising pigs on the outskirts of Kinshasa, even if the efforts are still fragile the potential for benefits is there and we intend to participate.



*Mike Samuel Makenda is testifying for True Parents on TV*

### **A shift in society's views**

Since the rallies started, people began to view us differently. After the national leader began having our activities broadcast on television, reflecting True Parents' accomplishments, public opinion toward the church started to change. We had had a poor image, but today, apart from blessing activities, people are looking with approval on True Parents' vision of an ideal world. Local television channels even broadcast parts of our last rally, which added something. They do not show highlights of only the rallies, but of many different Unification Church activities, such as UPF, WFWP, FFWPU and CARP activities.

In the past year, our church membership in DR Congo increased by 38 percent compared to 2013, thanks to the

education received by blessed members who established a home church structure as an internal foundation for the establishment of Cheon Il Guk.

### **What we must overcome**

The church faces difficulties when we try to reach truly eminent figures in society; in other words, actual government ministers. No modern church can influence people here without the use of television. The other difficulty comes from the size of our membership, which has reached seven thousand individuals, among more than seventy million Congolese.

We need to carry out certain projects to be succeed in DR Congo. The church proposes to create education centers

for contacts from those in the upper levels of society, Divine Principle broadcasting and distribution of CDs of these teachings in order to provide people living far away with the opportunity to receive the same standard of education. Regarding our members, DR Congo has a reputation for producing excellent lecturers and our members tend to be very good at witnessing. These are our strong points.



*The emcee, the West African regional president Cho Dong-ho, and Rev. Futilla, the emcee*

### **Moving toward Vision 2020**

Starting from 2015, the church in DR Congo wants to improve our strategy for conducting activities focused on achieving the 2020 Vision. Many religious leaders on television today make disparaging comments about True Parents, but we lack the funds to create a televised defense of True Parents' position. Our current focus is on gathering funds to strengthen our witnessing activities and members' education. Funding is one area that is pulling us down. Realistically, the church needs the necessary facilities to compete with other more firmly established churches, most of whom own their own television channels over which they broadcast messages about our church that can be offensive. Poverty is a problem of our national environment, the effects of which we cannot entirely avoid, even in the way it limits our individual members.

Vision 2020 is seen by Congolese members as the grace to catch up for our lateness in completing our mission as tribal messiahs. Yet, for most of the people we questioned, they assert that Vision 2020 allows them to create one global family under God with recognition of True Parents as the Messiah. To center education on the principles and True Parents' teachings is also to offer a nation to God.



*Tribal leaders that were at the event*

### **Zacharie Mbumba's Testimony**

Mr. Mbumba organized the rally under the direction of Rev. Futilla.

I will describe our witnessing strategy for the field. I mobilized all the leaders from the home groups and the leaders from the east for a technical meeting. It lasted a week. We started with a twenty-one-minute prayer condition and a forty-bow condition. Then we decided the date and the theme and we printed invitations.

We started in the area surrounding the hotel hosting the event. We went door-to-door to explain the importance of the lectures while giving these invitations.

We gathered all the departments of our district and we contacted other local churches. For the rally, the presence of the traditional chiefs was of major importance because people still consider them shaman or witchdoctors; curiously, they even accepted to follow the Divine Principle lectures at a much more advanced level. People asked many questions about the church, marriage, the Messiah and his teachings.